



Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

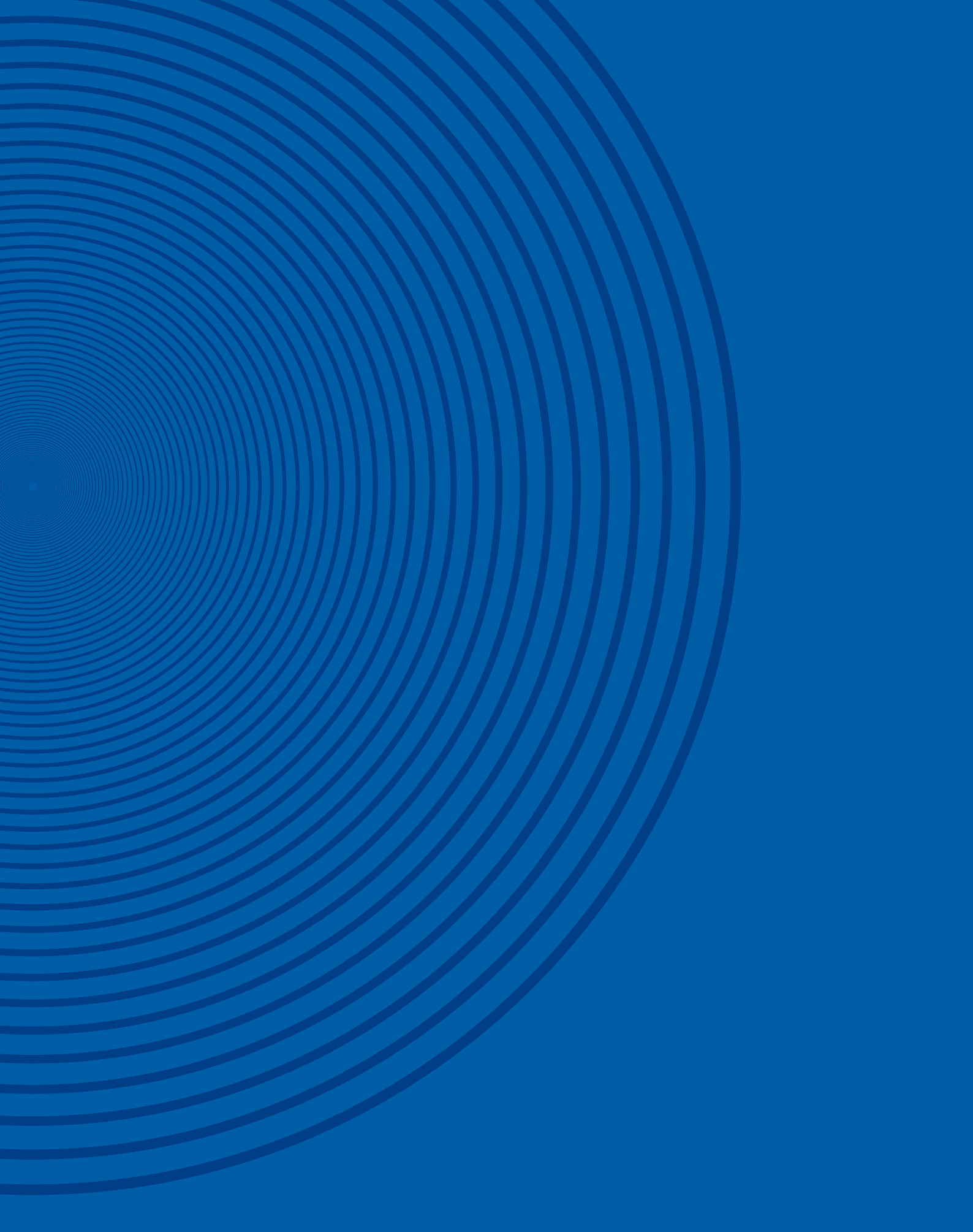
Two Year Monitoring Report 2020-2022

Straitéis Réigiúnach Spásúil agus Eacnamaíoch Tuarascáil

Do Thuarascáil Monatóireachta Dhébhliantúil
Réigiún an Deiscirt 2020-2022



Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040





Cathaoirleach's Message

On behalf of the members of the Regional Assembly, I am pleased to present this the first Monitoring Report for the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region.

The Report demonstrates the extensive work that is taking place to deliver the RSES across the Region, since its finalisation in January 2020. Each of the ten local authorities in the Region has undertaken very significant work over the last two years through renewed City and County Development Plans to achieve policy alignment between the National Planning Framework, the RSES and now local policy. This is a significant achievement and a key milestone in RSES implementation. At national level there is evidence of major investment in the Region through Government Departments and State Agencies in support of the key objectives, allied to major initiatives by the Regional Assembly for example work on the Learning Region, Smart Specialisation, Sustainable Mobility, Blue Green Infrastructure and MASP Implementation. At the same time it has to be recognised that there are still very significant challenges to achieve the transformation required under Project Ireland 2040 and these are highlighted in the report.

I would like to thank my colleagues from the local authorities represented on the Assembly, who, over the past two years, have embraced the RSES and made significant strides to ensure its delivery. I would also like to thank the Local Authorities, Government Departments, and agencies, for their support to the Regional Assembly and for their assistance in the preparation of this report. I am also grateful to the staff of the Regional Assembly for their hard work, dedication and support provided during this time.

The report provides reassurance as to the substantial progress made but also highlights the tasks ahead which must be faced at national, regional, and local level. Highlighting and addressing these challenges is a key priority for the Regional Assembly for next two years of implementation and I look forward to working with NOAC, Government, Local Authorities, and all relevant stakeholders as we face these challenges together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oliver Walsh".

Oliver Walsh
Cathaoirleach



Director's Message

This first Monitoring Report presents the progress made in securing the overall objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region since it came into effect on 31st January 2020.

The report sets out progress on the practical implementation of RSES Objectives across three themes - "Creative and Innovative," "Green" and "Liveable" and progress made in delivering transformative change in our role as part of Project Ireland 2040 and the National Planning Framework (NPF) to provide for sustainable growth of the Region.

The core NPF and RSES objective is the sustainable growth of our Region, both rural and urban as part of a structural realignment for the overall betterment of our society and environment of population, homes, and jobs away from the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) with a 50:50 distribution of growth between the Eastern and Midlands region and the Southern and Northern and Western Regions. This includes the growth of our three cities of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford by up to 60% to 2040 as part of a structural change across the Region.

This Report prepared in accordance with Section 25A of the Planning and Development Act highlights the key initiatives taken by the Regional Assembly to advance this work across the Region and the critical role of Government Departments, Local Authorities and public agencies and bodies in the collective objective for balanced regional development and for the sustainable development the Southern Region. I would like to thank the Chief Executives of the Local Authorities, their staff and all the public bodies and agencies that have contributed to the production of this report.

In addition to setting out the progress made the report also provided an opportunity to take stock on implementation to date and put forward recommendations to support more effective implementation, where action and investment can enhance delivery of RSES objectives or help overcome barriers to progress. This Report will be submitted to the National Oversight and Audit Committee (NOAC) with our recommendations.

Finally, I would like to thank the elected members for their ongoing commitment and support for the work of the Assembly and the implementation of the RSES, and the staff of the Assembly for their dedicated work to date and ongoing dedication to deliver the RSES over the coming years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "K".

David Kelly
Director

Foreword

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (the 'RSES') for the Southern Region came into effect on 31st January 2020.

This report sets out progress on the practical implementation of RSES Objectives across three themes:

- **Liveable Region**
- **Creative and Innovative Region**
- **Green Region**

and progress made in delivering transformative change to provide for sustainable growth of the Region.

The report is set out in four parts:

01 Introduction and Legislative Context

Outlines key elements of the RSES and the implementation programme.

02 The Implementation Programme

Identifies progress in implementing the RSES by the Regional Assembly through the RSES Implementation Programme.

03 Progress and Actions

Identifies progress made on key themes of the RSES and includes progress made by local authorities and public bodies towards Becoming One Of Europe’s Most “Creative and Innovative,” “Greenest” and “Liveable” Regions.

04 Conclusions and Recommendations

Identifies the key lessons to date in implementation of the RSES and recommendations for improvement.

This Report prepared in accordance with Section 25 of the Planning and Development Act highlights the key initiatives taken by the Regional Assembly to advance this work across the Region and the critical role of Government Departments, Local Authorities and public agencies and bodies in the collective objective for balanced regional development and for the sustainable development of the Southern Region.

The Report will be submitted to the National Oversight and Audit Committee (NOAC) with our recommendations on where action and investment can enhance delivery of RSES objectives or help overcome barriers to progress.

01

Introduction and Legislative Context

This report outlines progress made in implementing the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region which came in to effect on 31st January 2020.

Introduction

This report is prepared in accordance with Section 25(A)(2) of the Planning Act which requires the Regional Assembly every two years to prepare a report monitoring progress made in implementing the RSES.

The report will be submitted to the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) who, following consideration of the report, may make recommendations to the Minister in relation to relevant measures to further support the implementation of the RSES. The report takes account of submissions from Government Departments (Appendix 1) and Local Authorities (Appendix 2) submitted under Section 25 (A)(1) of the Act which requires these bodies every two years, 'to prepare and submit a report to the assembly setting out progress made in supporting objectives, relevant to that body, of the strategy'. The report specifies progress made in securing the overall objectives of the regional spatial and economic strategy, including any specific actions and outcomes, including actions specific to the public bodies to which section 22A relates.

This is the first monitoring report since the commencement of the RSES and it provides an overview of the practical implementation of the RSES between 31st January 2020 to 31st January 2022 by reference to measures such as investment, policy alignment and delivery; the identification of barriers and recommendations to improve implementation. The report also provides an opportunity to take stock on the role of the RSES and the Regional Assembly in the Project Ireland 2040 process.

The Role of The Regional Assembly and The RSES

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) is one of three Regional Assemblies established in 2015 under the Local Government Reform Act (2014). The Establishment Order (Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014 (S.I. No. 573 of 2014) provides for the Assembly to play a leading role in regional administration and regional development with an overarching role to provide for the general welfare, strategic planning and sustainable development requirements of the region. Political oversight is provided by 33 local councillors appointed as Members of the Assembly for a five-year term - 27 by their constituent local authorities, and six as Committee of the Regions representatives.

Key functions of the Assembly include:

- The formulation, adoption, and implementation of the RSES and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs); and
- Management of EU co-funded Programmes, EU project participation, supporting and promoting public sector participation in EU Programmes.

The unique EU related functions of the Regional Assembly enable the integration of European Regional Development priorities with RSES implementation. An effective funding stimulus to accelerate RSES implementation is managed by the SRA as the managing authority for the development and implementation of the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional ERDF Programme 2021-2027.

Section 23(1) of the Planning and Development Act states that the objective of the RSES is to:

'support the implementation of the National Planning Framework and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region'

Section 23(2) identifies the topics which the RSES should address including:

- The location of future population growth;
- Provision of housing;
- Improving the qualities of cities, towns and rural areas;
- Education and lifelong learning;
- Creating and sustaining quality jobs;
- Supporting rural development;
- Identifying priorities for infrastructure investment, including educational, healthcare, social, community, sporting and cultural facilities;
- Preserving and protecting the environment, its amenities and landscape qualities;
- Transportation, water services, energy and communications networks, and waste management facilities;
- Addressing climate change;
- Promoting sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The RSES was adopted by the Members of the Regional Assembly and became effective from January 2020 following an extensive and open process of engagement and collaboration involving citizens, communities, key stakeholders, government departments and public bodies. Local authorities in particular had a key and direct role in the development of the RSES strategy.

The primary objective of the RSES is to implement the programme for transformative change as set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Development Plan and National Planning Framework in a regional context and for the Southern Region to become one of Europe's most **"Creative and Innovative," "Greenest" and "Liveable" Regions.**

Critical overarching objectives of the RSES are:

- A structural realignment for the overall betterment of our society and environment in population, homes, and jobs away from the Greater Dublin Area with a 50:50 distribution of growth between the Eastern and Midlands region and the Southern and Northern and Western Regions.
- The achievement of an additional population in the Southern Region of 380,000 by 2040 bringing the population to almost two million with an additional 225,000 people in employment (880,000 in total).
- Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society.

A dual track strategy is pursued which recognises the strategic role played by all areas, both urban and rural, in achieving the national and regional targets and objectives.

The RSES has nine chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Strategy
3. People and Places (Settlement Strategy)
4. A Strong Economy – Innovative and Smart
5. Environment
6. Connectivity
7. Quality of Life
8. Water and Energy Utilities
9. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

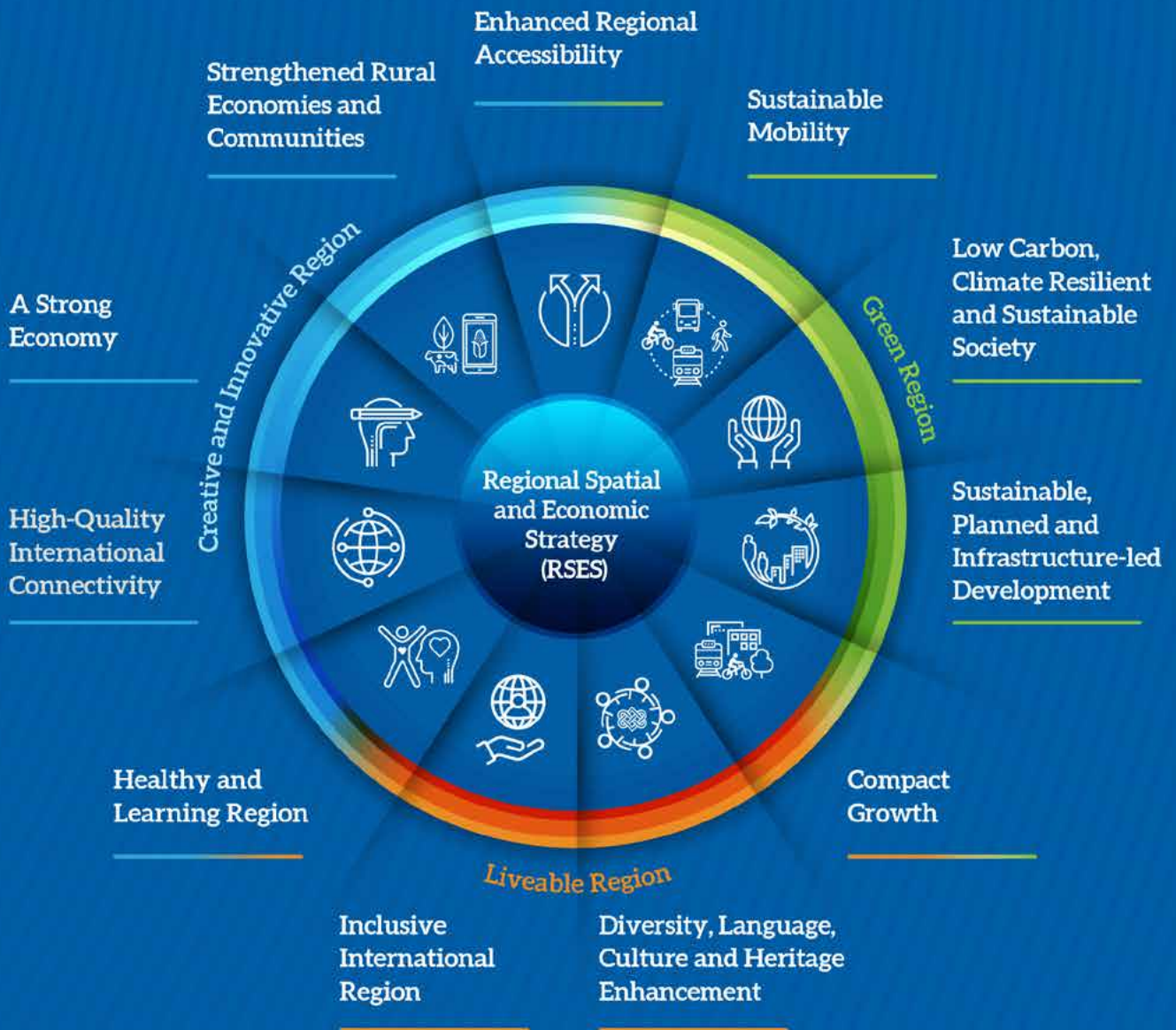
It also contains statutory Metropolitan Area Plans for:

- Cork Metropolitan Area Plan involving Cork City Council and Cork County Council.
- Limerick – Shannon Metropolitan Area Plan involving Limerick City and County Council and Clare Country Council, and
- Waterford Metropolitan Area Plan involving Waterford County Council and Kilkenny County Council.

It is accompanied by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

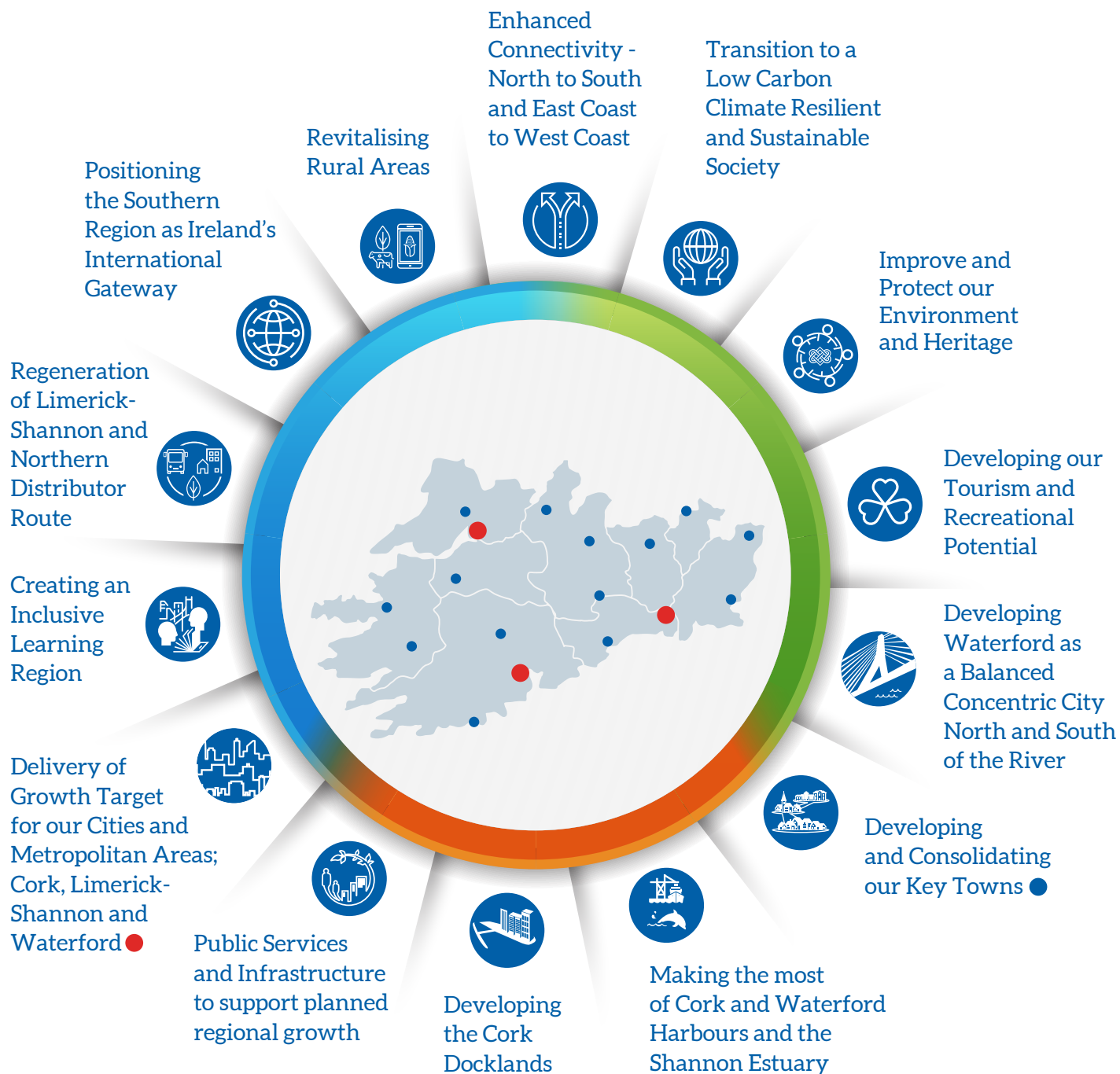
Strategy Statements

The strategy contains 11 strategy statements based on the Regional Policy Objectives and MASP Objectives.



Key Enablers

The following Key Enablers are identified in the RSES. These are actions whose achievement would show tangible progress towards the Implementation of RSES:



Implementation Programme

The Planning Acts place obligations on the Regional Assembly, Local Authorities, public bodies and other stakeholders for implementation and monitoring of the RSES. There are 301 RSES objectives contained in the strategy including 229 Regional Policy Objectives (Appendix 4), 22 Cork MASP Objectives, 23 Limerick-Shannon MASP Objectives and 27 Waterford MASP Objectives. These objectives are broad ranging involving a wide mix of actions and stakeholders to ensure delivery and implementation. A process was undertaken to manage implementation including prioritisation and categorisation of these objectives based on three categories of action:

- **Active** – direct action by Regional Assembly in a co-ordination capacity.
- **Instructive** – statutory obligation for stakeholders to comply in formulating their own policies, plans and strategies (for example Development Plan alignment by Local Authorities).
- **Supportive** – supporting/tracking work of other agencies and a signal of regional support for key initiatives, strategic projects and bids for funding pursued by stakeholders.

In addition, each Objective was assessed to determine:

- Identification of lead agency,
- Identification of agencies involved,
- Identification of the action required,
- Identification of common actions

Principles and Assumptions Underlying Implementation

The following considerations, principles and assumptions were applied to frame the parameters of the implementation and are important considerations in understanding this first S25 report:

- Successful delivery of a broad-based strategy is inherently challenging with no clear model of success. The Assembly will seek to be innovative and will engage specialist advice to advise on implementation, project management and action delivery.
- The scale of the challenge presented by Project Ireland 2040 is significant and requires a coordinated approach from national, regional and local level, as well as relevant public agencies and the private sector.
- The process should be action focussed and project management focused.
- Each level of government has a role to play. It is important to achieve cross departmental/agency buy-in and awareness of the strategic Regional/sub regional priorities to be delivered under Project Ireland 2040.
- To avoid repeating the mistakes of the NSS through dilution of the principles of the NPF there is a need to ensure that the regional and local level buy-in is replicated at national level.

- The SRA have an important cross regional remit, oversight and co-ordinating role and are an important and effective resource to assist our stakeholders in securing shared priorities. The successful mechanisms for collaboration established through the preparation of the RSES should be continued to assist effective implementation structures.
- It is not the role of the Regional Assembly to address all the objectives contained in the RSES nor does the Assembly have the resources to do so. Therefore, Regional Assembly input should be effective, focussed and should not impede on areas outside of its area of responsibility or where others can achieve implementation more effectively.
- The Assembly should harness the resource available through its role and expertise in European matters to support implementation of the RSES.
- Political representation is important and should be incorporated to the process to achieve implementation, ensuring that the policies of the RSES transfer to the policies and practice of the Local Authorities, as well as communication on progress.
- Effective communication and coordination with the Project Ireland 2040 Board is required. Delivery at the regional and local level requires commensurate support and input from the national level.
- The MASPs face particular challenges given the scale of change required, the cross- boundary nature and required focussed implementation and the need for effective collaboration between cities.
- Agreeing and establishing indicators for monitoring and tracking of delivery for example tracking investment, compact urban growth, urban centre regeneration, housing delivery, sustainable mobility, local employment, infrastructure capacity, connectivity, service and amenity provision are important.
- Need for resilience, flexibility and ability to react to change, for example the climate action plan was published late in the development of the RSES and the COVID-19 crisis has been a significant shock to society and the economy. While a long-term strategic approach is necessary, implementation should allow for adaptability in response to significant events.

Based on this process the Implementation Programme was agreed with the Members of the Assembly at the January Meeting 2021 (Appendix 3). This has formed the key component of implementation by the Regional Assembly during the period of this monitoring reports and is discussed in Section 2.

Section 3 will focus on progress made by local authorities and government bodies in achieving the RSES aims.

02

The Implementation Programme

This section outlines the progress made by the Southern Regional Assembly in implementing the RSES during the two-year period since the making of the RSES in January 2020. It reflects the 32 key tasks of the RSES Implementation Programme agreed by the members of the Assembly and identifies progress made, issues faced and key messages.

Task No. 1:	Agree with Assembly proposed Implementation Structures and Establish RSES Delivery Board:
Relevant RPO 226:	Implementation Mechanism for the Strategy and MASPs.
Progress	<p>Sub Task A: Agree with Assembly proposed Implementation Structures:</p> <p>A detailed proposal setting out the RSES Implementation Structures was agreed by the Members of the Assembly at their meeting in January 2021. The proposal included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Structure, including Regional Assembly Members & Delivery Board; • MASP Structures; and • Prioritised Action Implementation Plan. <p>A progress report has been presented to the Assembly every six months since the adoption of the Implementation Programme.</p> <p>Sub Task B: Establish RSES Delivery Board:</p> <p>The establishment of the Board has been delayed in the context of consultations with DHLGH and other stakeholders to establish City Development Boards. In the interim the focus of the Regional Assembly has been on delivering the tasks as set out below. The establishment of the Board will be part of the review undertaken for phase 2 of the Implementation process.</p>
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly Monitoring/Reporting measures are operating successfully. • There is a need to review the establishment of the RSES Delivery Board and to ensure greater coordination and communication with DHLGH.

Task No. 2:	Establish MASP Implementation Structures
Relevant RPO 226:	Implementation Mechanism for the Strategy and MASPs
	Transformative SRA Initiative
Progress	<p>The RSES (and NPF) is built on the pillars of the Cork, Limerick Shannon and Waterford statutory MASPs, to realise their combined potential, to support their development as a viable alternative to Dublin and to anchor wider development across the Region. This reflects the fundamental priority given to the development of the regional cities (including Galway) as part of Project Ireland 2040. The MASPs include ambitious and unprecedented targets of over 50% accelerated growth and makes significant proposals to address strategic issues facing our cities. The MASPs have statutory status and were developed in collaboration with the relevant local authorities and have widespread stakeholder buy in. Associated Metropolitan Transport Strategies (based on the MASP boundaries) have been developed in Cork, Limerick – Shannon and are in preparation in Waterford. Given their cross-boundary nature and the unprecedented targets applied, they require a tailored implementation mechanism including executive oversight, technical co-ordination, and political representation. Whilst there is a long-established process of cross boundary collaboration in Cork through CASP, formal structures are less well developed in the other two MASP areas.</p> <p>The establishment of effective implementation mechanism for the MASPs is a key priority for the Assembly but has not progressed as originally envisaged. Significant preparatory work has been undertaken including investigation of options, the development of a discussion paper, the development of formal proposals and consultation with relevant local authorities, DHLGH and other stakeholders. For the Waterford MASP additional steps have been taken through the preparation of ‘Building a Unified Voice,’ a joint proposal by the Regional Assembly, Waterford City and County Council and Kilkenny County Council and presented to DHLGH. The proposal has had strong support from the local authorities with direct input from the two chief executives and sets out proposals for implementation mechanisms for the Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) including the establishment of a full-time office.</p>

	<p>Subsequent to this initiative by the Assembly and Local Authorities the NDP Review referenced structural issues facing the regional cities and advanced a similar proposal for the establishment of Project Ireland 2040 City Delivery Boards to drive investment in these locations in line with the NPF targets and which serves a similar role to that envisaged under RPO 226. The proposals contained in 'Building a Unified Voice' could form the basis for establishing the first of the City Delivery Boards for Waterford MASP.</p>
<p>Conclusion/Key Message</p>	<p>The accelerated development of Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford MASPs is a key priority of Project Ireland 2040, the NPF and the RSES. There are concerning indicators regarding the prospect of success in achieving this key national object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDP findings that the four regional cities including Cork, Limerick and Waterford have experienced significant structural underfunding by comparison to other areas. • Recent Preliminary CSO figures which while indicating growth of the regional cities point to far higher growth in Dublin and surrounding counties. <p>The establishment of effective delivery mechanisms for the MASPs is a significant issue for the Assembly and there are concerns regarding the lack of progress in establishment of such mechanisms.</p> <p>There is a clear need to implement a mechanism to ensure the delivery of targets in our three regional cities and a commensurate need to focus on removing the pressure of growth from the Dublin area in line with NPF/RSES objectives.</p> <p>It is considered that there should be greater coordination and cooperation between the Regional Assembly and other stakeholders including DHLGH in progressing such initiatives to harness shared initiative and to reduce duplication of effort.</p>

Task No. 3:	Establish and Agree Regional Indicators & Monitoring
Relevant RPO 226:	Monitoring the Strategy also 68 & 71.
	This is a Transformative RSES Initiative
Progress	<p>This is a joint initiative between the three Assemblies and involves establishing agreed indicators, a monitoring system and an online mapping viewer to host a wide variety of indicators.</p> <p>The Regional Development Monitor (RDM) will collate and present a range of relevant socio-economic indicators to assist with monitoring the performance of each Region in terms of achieving the objectives outlined in their respective RSES.</p> <p>The RDM focus on indicators related to the sixteen Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) along with their appropriate socio-economic variables and will be categorised into three groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healthy Placemaking 2. Climate Action and 3. Economic Opportunity <p>The RDM is on track for launch in Q3/Q4 2022.</p>
Conclusion/Key Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of the RDM is a significant new planning innovation in Ireland and will support the future implementation of the RSES, the NPF and Project Ireland 2040 as well as practical use to local authorities, agencies and the public.



Task No. 4:	Scope Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas – Cork, Limerick – Shannon, Waterford, and Galway
Relevant PRO 6:	Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas
Progress	<p>A key component of the RSES is about building partnerships and a collaborative approach between the cities and metropolitan areas to realise combined strengths and potential and to support their development as a viable alternative to Dublin. The Regional Assembly is undertaking a range of activities to encourage, support and build a collaborative approach including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of Sustainable Mobility and 10 Minute City and Town Implementation Q 1 2022 with a series of sub regional seminars to follow during 2023. • Dissemination of Learning Region Action Plan • Dissemination of Smart Cities driving a Smart Region Framework • Funded research, with the SRA as an Enterprise Mentor to UCD School of Geography, through the Irish Research Council on Achieving Regional Equality – Urban Rural Dynamics in Ireland’s Southern Region and scoping participation of the Region at academic seminars including Global Economic Geography Conference Q2 2022. • Build on the consultation with Prof John Tomaney on the experience of the UK Northern Powerhouse and other successful EU and international good practices of city and metropolitan area collaboration to develop a Southern Powerhouse concept. • Potential Climate mitigation and adaptation measure e.g., Nature Based Solutions and Blue Green Infrastructure.
Key Message	There is a need to progress this initiative to an active engagement and an agreed approach with the four cities.

<p>Task No. 5:</p>	<p>Ensure the RSES Programme for Change is Incorporated in Development Plan Process Engagement with Local Authorities Development Plan Process S27 Submissions and track Development Plan Content</p>
<p>Related RPO 3:</p>	<p>RPO 3 Local Authority Core Strategies. & 1, 4, 5, 27, 29, 30, 31, 34, 35, 37, 38, 54, 55, 56, 62, 76, 77, 88, 89, 110, 114, 115, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 143, 151, 152, 154, 157, 163, 165, 169, 175, 176, 181, 182, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215.</p>
<p>Progress</p>	<p>Alignment of the Development Plans and the RSES is a significant task and has been a major focus of the Regional Planning Team involving extensive engagement with Local Authorities Development Plan Processes, making S27 Submissions and tracking Development Plan content.</p> <p>Statutory submissions are made in accordance with Section 27 B of the Planning and Development Act which states that the regional assembly ‘shall prepare submissions and observations’... on ‘whether, in the opinion of that assembly, the draft development plan and, in particular, its core strategy, are consistent with the regional spatial and economic strategy in force in the area of the development plan’.</p> <p>Through engagement with each Local Authority executive from the early (pre-draft) stages of the Development Plan process, the SRA Regional Planning Team have provided guidance on the key areas where RSES policy should be reflected in Plan policy. SRA statutory submissions therefore are key to assist and support successful alignment with the RSES and National Policy Objectives. The Regional Planning Team has also met and worked through issues raised in the submissions with Assembly members and relevant local authority Assembly members.</p> <p>The submissions to the Local Authorities addressed consistency of the Core Strategy to the RSES, alignment with other RSES and national policy objectives, and highlighting areas where Development Plan policies could be strengthened to reflect the significance of the Metropolitan Areas and Key Town designations in the RSES, to reflect the principles of RSES economic strategy and other observations made on areas such as urban regeneration, place-making and transportation.</p>

Update on Section 27 (S27) Process

No.	Local Authority (LA) Action	Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) Update
6.	Wexford	S27 Process Completed
	Draft Plan Issued on 28th September 2020	Draft Plan Submitted on 9th December 2020
	Material Amendment Issued on 7th April 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 5th May 2022
	The Wexford Development Plan 2021 - 2027 came into effect on 25th of July 2022	The SRA Submission Process is complete
7.	Kilkenny	S27 process completed
	Draft Plan Issued on 22nd December 2020	Draft Plan Submitted on 12th March 2021
	Material Amendment Issued on 30th June 2021	Material Amendments Submitted on 27th July 2021
	The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 came into effect on 15th of October 2021	
	Draft Ministerial Direction Consultation 29th October 2021	Consultation on Ministerial Direction 12th November 2021
	The SRA Submission Process is complete	
8.	Cork County	S27 process completed
	Draft Plan Issued on 12th March 2020	Draft Plan Submitted on 1st July 2021
	Material Amendment Issued on 18th January 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 15th February 2022
	The Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on 6th June 2022	
	Draft Ministerial Direction Consultation 17th June 2022	Consultation on Ministerial Direction 1st July 2022
	The SRA Submission Process is complete	
9.	Carlow	S27 process completed
	Draft Plan Issued on 21st July 2021	Draft Plan Submitted on 1st October 2021
	Material Amendment Issued on 22nd February 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 22nd March 2022
	The Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on 4th July 2022	
	The SRA Submission Process is complete	

No.	Local Authority (LA) Action	Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) Update
10.	Kerry	S27 Process Not Completed
	Draft Kerry Plan Issued on 6th Dec 2021	Draft Plan Submitted on 1st October 2021
	Material Amendments Issued on 18th May 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 15th June 2022
	The Kerry Development Plan 2022 - 2028 came into effect on 15th August 2022	
	Draft Ministerial Consultation 24th August 2022	Consultation on Ministerial Direction 7th September 2022
		The SRA Submission Process is complete
11.	Limerick	S27 Process Completed
	Draft Kerry Plan Issued on 26th June 2021	Draft Plan Submitted on 6th September 2021
	Material Amendments Issued on 12th March 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 11th April 2022
	The Limerick City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on 29th July 2022	
	Draft Ministerial Direction Consultation 6th August 2022	
		The SRA Submission Process is complete
12.	Cork City	S27 Process Completed
	Draft Plan Issued on 26th July 2021	Draft Plan Submitted on 2nd October 2021
	Material Amendments Issued on 1st April 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 28th April 2022
	The Cork City Development Plan 2022 - 2028 came into effect on 8th August 2022	
	Draft Ministerial Direction Consultation 19th August 2022	Consultation on Ministerial Direction 2nd September 2022
		The SRA Submission Process is complete
12.	Waterford	S27 Process Completed
	Draft Plan Issued on 18th June 2021	Draft Plan Submitted on 30th August 2021
	Material Amendments issued on 3rd March 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 1st April 2022
	The Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 came into effect on 19th July 2022	
		The SRA Submission Process is complete

No.	Local Authority (LA) Action	Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) Update
14.	Tipperary	S27 Process Completed
	Draft Plan Issued on 30th July 2021	Draft Plan Submitted on 15th October 2021
	Material Amendments Submitted on Issued 1st April 2022	Material Amendments Submitted on 3rd May 2022
	The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 comes into effect on 22nd of August 2022	
		The SRA Submission Process is complete
15.	Clare	SRA Submission Made
	Draft Clare County Development Plan issued on 10th December 2021	
		The SRA Process is not complete

Key Message

This report provides evidence that this statutory tool (together with the OPR) is successful. Policy alignment with the RSES has provided a rationalisation of land use planning in the Region. It ensures that land that is zoned is serviced or can be serviceable within the Development Plan period. This provides assurances to infrastructure providers, such as Irish Water, as to the areas they must target investment. It provides a better degree of certainty to developers of what to expect in the development management process. This is the first time we have had this level of rationalisation and certainty. This has positive implications for the public purse and instills greater confidence into our planning system.



<p>Task No. 16 & 17:</p>	<p>Prepare Learning Region Action Plan. Establish Waterford as a UNESCO Learning City.</p>
<p>Related RPO :</p>	<p>RPO 186: Lifelong Learning & 39, 63, 186, 187, 190, Waterford MASP PO 23</p>
<p>Note this is a Transformative SRA Initiative</p>	
<p>Progress</p>	<p>This is a very innovative piece of work as a Learning Region, in a formal sense, has never been created before.</p> <p>The RSES sets out the intention to establish the Region as a Learning Region in RPO 186 The Objective seeks to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens and to establish a Learning Region in the Southern Region as well as expanding the existing Learning City initiatives in Cork and Limerick to Waterford. This means improving and developing the availability of Lifelong Learning to provide a strong culture of learning in our communities and enhancing human capital through improved access to education, upskilling and Lifelong Learning.</p> <p>In 2020 and 2021 SRA conducted extensive consultation and engagement with Stakeholders involved in the education and training sectors including representatives of Universities and Institutes of Technology, Education and Training Boards (ETBs), the three Regional Skills Managers, Social Justice Ireland, Learning City coordinators in Cork and Limerick, the Irish Learning City Network, Aontas and Skillsnet Ireland. Drawing upon this valuable stakeholder input and with the added benefit of multiple datasets gathered in research work during this time, a 'Towards a Learning Region' proposal has been prepared which explores the challenges and opportunities for Lifelong Learning and skills development and sets out a series of Actions to develop the Southern Region as a Learning Region including establishing Waterford as a UNESCO Learning City. The proposal has received Departmental support and will be launched in Q3 2022.</p>
<p>Key Message</p>	<p>This is a Key Transformative SRA initiative of national significance and it is important to move to the next stage of implementing its proposals.</p>



Task No. 18:	Promotion of RSES/Region
Related RPO 73:	International Branding of the Region and reputation.
Progress	<p>This action is undertaken through the implementation of the SRA Communications Strategy which has been formally adopted by the Members. An implementation group meets monthly, and its role is centred around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness and understanding of the roles and remit of the Regional Assembly in relation to the Southern Region and the overall benefits of Ireland’s EU membership as well as EU funding; • Promoting the role and awareness of regional governance in Ireland; • Boosting our Region’s profile as economically strong, inclusive, connected, climate-resilient and sustainable • Fostering closer media relations across the various communications channels – print, broadcast and online and build on our well-established local networks and relationships; <p>The SRA continues to build on well established relationships with government bodies. Notably, the SRA was invited by the Department of Transport to host a virtual stand at the 2021 International Transport Forum, the world’s largest gathering of transport ministers and the leading global platform for dialogue on transport policy.</p> <p>A suite of video content for webinars & virtual events has been created, outlining the work of the SRA and its members. In addition, new user-friendly touch bases have been created on our website to map the progress of RSES implementation. Standalone versions of the MASP’s were published.</p> <p>A new sub section has been added to the SRA Website containing Government Submissions from the Assembly and social media channels are used to generate awareness and create traction back to the SRA website.</p>
Key Message	This action is successful and needs to develop further.



Task No. 19, 20 & 21:	Development of a framework/toolkit to support a regional approach for Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) in the Southern Region.
	Smart Region definition and framework to facilitate Smart Cities Driving a Smart Region.
Related RPO 134:	Smart Cities and Smart Region:
	Note this is a Transformative SRA Initiative
	Develop Smart Region Action Plan (following completion of task 19 & 20).
Progress	<p>A key RSES objective is to advance the Region as a Smart Region centred on place, liveability and associated high quality of life. Key elements of a smart region include strong social cohesion , active participation and collaboration, connected communities, with a focus on mobility, environment, creativity and wellbeing allied to the use of technology and digitalisation as a tool in the solution of regional/local challenges, and strong governance based on the quadruple helix.</p> <p>The main components of a Smart Region Framework for the Southern Region are identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place-Making & Sustainability • Engagement and Subsidiarity • Collaboration • Connected • Technology and Data enabler for the Smart Region. Through data collection, collation, analysis and visualisation, it is the basis for evidence-based problem solving and innovation. • Smart Region Governance <p>The SRA, with support and collaboration through the EU Interreg Europe Cohes3ion project appointed External Experts to advance Tasks 19 & 20.</p>

Regional Approach to Smart Specialisation (S3)

The SRA worked with Bable Consultancy on the Development of a framework/toolkit to support a regional approach for Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) in the Southern Region. The report is completed and published on the SRA website. Work on disseminating the findings and implementation with regional stakeholders will continue throughout 2022. Findings from the report informed the submission to the Dept. of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) consultation for the Research & Innovation Strategy and to the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment for the S3 consultation. The SRA are in discussion with DETE on setting up a regional governance and reporting system in alignment with the RSES.

The SRA are represented on the Oversight Group for the National S3 Strategy and are working with DETE to develop a Governance Structure to ensure a regional approach to S3 is implemented.

Towards a Southern Smart Region

SRA are working with Maynooth University (MU) in finalising a definition for a Smart Southern Region developing maturity framework and recommended actions to facilitate Smart Cities Driving a Smart Region. There was extensive consultation on this work with a wide range of stakeholders including dedicated interviews with Local Authority representatives inclusive of elected Members. This work is due to be finalised in Q3-Q4 2022 with the publication of a suite of reports (Smart Region Consultation, International Approaches and Good Practices in the Development of Smart Regions and Smart Region Maturity Framework for the Southern Region). The SRA are also working with MU on developing a mapping tool to capture on going smart city, town and rural area assets, projects and initiatives across the region. The findings of the reports and next steps including developing a Southern Smart Region Charter, stakeholder forum, action plan and mapping tool, once adopted by the Assembly Members, will be shared widely including at a dedicated dissemination event in Q4 2022 to support advancement of the Southern Smart Region.

	<p>The effectiveness of on-going engagement with stakeholders to advance RSES implementation under this theme is reflected in Action 1.6 of the South West Regional Enterprise Plan (REP) , where the SRA are the designated project lead to develop the Southern Smart Region through partnership with regional stakeholders. Progress under this action will benefit actions under the SW, MW and SE REPs. The SRA will disseminate progress through our network with the REP Programme Managers. Key actions to progress the Southern Smart Region including raising awareness and training of key stakeholders in 'Smart' principles. The SRA collaborated with external experts to design a specific training programme which was delivered to nominated staff from the Local Authorities in Q4 2021, there was strong attendance with nine out of ten LA's attending.</p>
<p>Key Message</p>	<p>Both the Regional Approach to S3 and Southern Smart Region actions are pioneering initiatives by the SRA and will be of significant long-term benefit to the Region (and nationally) and it will be a long-term focus of the Region. The SRA are also exploring funding options to advance the co-ordination and implementation of the Southern Smart Region principles.</p>



Tasks No. 22, 23 & 24	Establish Scope and Remit of Regional Freight Strategy
Related RPO 141:	Regional Freight Strategy
	Establish scope and remit of Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region
Related RPO 145:	Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region
	Establish Scope and remit of Regional Airport Strategy strategies
Related RPO 149:	Airport Strategy for the Southern Region
	Note this is an Emerging Transformative Initiative
Progress	<p>These strategies, while separate reports, are interlinked under RSES Strategy Statements for Enhanced Regional Accessibility, High Quality International Connectivity, Sustainable Mobility and a Strong Economy and NPF National Strategic Outcomes.</p> <p>Project Charters for each of these strategies, have led a series of consultations with the Department of Transport for guidance on the aims and objectives and to strengthen national policy support and funding for the Region’s port, airport and freight infrastructure and capacity for growth.</p> <p>The aim is to co-ordinate with Government to ensure these strategies contribute an effective regional input into the development of new national policy for these sectors. Through consultations undertaken during Q2-Q3 2022, the Department of Transport have confirmed their support for the advancement of these strategies. It has identified the importance of integrating EU good practice learning, challenges and opportunities in lower carbon transition, prioritises for enhanced multi modal and sustainable transportation to and from ports and airports, analysis of the economic footprint and activities generated by port and airport assets to the Region and State, identifying shared challenges and opportunities (niche roles and the combined strengths) to deliver balanced regional development under the NPF and RSES. The important role of port assets individually and collectively to facilitate offshore renewable energy infrastructure to meet Climate Action Plan targets, the opportunities of the Region to lead in this sector especially, will be a focus.</p>

	<p>Next steps over the remainder of 2022-2023 will be the commissioning of economic research and analysis, stakeholder identification and consultation. The timing of these strategies will be managed to provide Central Government with researched, evidence-based and stakeholder endorsed recommendations from the Region when the formal review process to shape new national policy are sought from key stakeholders (expected during 2023).</p> <p>Work on the Ports and Harbours is also being coordinated with work on the Sustainable and Holistic Management of Ports (SHIP) project, an initiative of Queens University Belfast, the EPA and Marine Institute.</p>
<p>Key Message</p>	<p>These tasks are on track.</p>



Task No. 25:	Developing Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) for Placemaking
Related RPO:	211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 123 & 124
	This task incorporates the current INTERREG EUROPE Blue Green City project.
	Note this is a Transformative SRA Initiative
	<p>The Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Framework has been created as part of the Interreg Europe Blue Green Cities Project. This Framework provides a resource for Local Authorities, decision makers and developers working in the Region to guide the implementation of BGI and NbS. It will enable the implementation of a network of nature-based interventions to solve local challenges in our settlements and the landscapes that they link to.</p> <p>The Framework is the first of its kind at a regional level in Ireland and its uptake is being strongly encouraged through the creation of a BGI and NbS Network. The Network brings together practitioners of these concepts across the Region to discuss and address implementation and application issues.</p>
Key Message	This is a transformative SRA Initiative which is nearing completion. The next phase should focus on mainstreaming it within Local Authority processes.



Task No. 26	Scope remit of Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (inclusive of the bioeconomy).
Related RPO 98:	Regional Renewable Energy Strategy
	Scope the role, remit, and lead to develop a Regional Decarbonisation Plan
Related RPO 90:	Regional Decarbonisation
Progress	<p>While Draft Project Charters have been prepared, these tasks are under review in the context of the recently published Climate Action Plan which gives responsibility to the Regional Assemblies for the preparation of a roadmap for Regional Renewable Electricity Strategy</p> <p>The SRA are developing this action in conjunction with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, SEAI and the other Assemblies This is likely to be a significant new area of work.</p> <p>In addition the SRA have secured support from ESPON (EU Programme carrying out EU territorial analysis) to conduct a case study on decarbonisation in the Southern Region. This analysis will inform and support the development of a Regional Decarbonisation Plan. The SRA have been successful in a Horizon Europe application which will focus on ‘Regional governance models in the bioeconomy.’ SRA will work with MTU (Kerry) as partner on this project which is due to commence work in September 2022.</p>
Key Message	The focus of this action has changed to the Regional Renewable Energy Strategy Roadmap and Strategy under the Climate Acton Plan.



Task No. 27 & 28:	Co-ordination of Climate Action with Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO)
Related RPO:	87, 88, 89 & 90
Progress	This is ongoing. The SRA has established a positive and productive working relationship with the CAROs. In Q2 and Q3 2021, the SRA organised working group to assist the CAROs to roll out training courses on Climate Change to Planners in Local Authorities. There is an existing formal structure under the Regional Steering Groups of the CAROs and the SRA will work with CAROs under that structure. Working Groups will only be formed when required.
Key Message	Continue and develop cooperation and coordination with CAROs.



Task No. 29:	Identify the scope and role of the Regional Landscape Strategy for the Region
Related RPO 129:	Landscape
Progress	This task is currently under review given resource constraints, the changed emphasis in terms of the Climate Action Plan and the need for clarity on the Landscape Strategy at national level.
Key Message	This initiative has been put on hold pending clarification of national strategy.



Task No. 30:	Regional Sustainable Mobility and 10 Minute Cities & Towns
Related RPO:	RPO 151 Integration of Land Use and Transport, RPO’s 160-163 for Smart and Sustainable Mobility, RPO 157 Local Transport Plans, RPO 164 Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies, RPO 170-174 Public Transport , Walking and Cycling and RPO: 176 10-minute” city and town concepts.
Note this is a Transformative SRA Initiative	
Progress	<p>With support through the EU Funded Match-Up project, the SRA in association with ARUP published the 10 Minute Town Framework and Accessibility Report to put in place a good practice methodology and case study examples for mapping services, walking and cycling catchments and identifying constraints and opportunities for improved permeability in towns to achieve improved performance as a 10 Minute City/Town. This toolkit is a resource for all Local Authorities.</p> <p>Further to this initiative, the SRA prepared an implementation plan for Sustainable Mobility in the Southern Region to progress low carbon transport and modal change to sustainable transport through RSES objectives. A working group over Q2- Q3 2021 comprised of the Department of Transport (DoT), National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Office of Planning Regulator (OPR) agreed this implementation plan. Promoting uptake of the 10 Minute City and Towns Framework and support for the preparation and implementation of Metropolitan Transport Strategies and Local Transport Plans is a key focus.</p> <p>A key initiative was for the SRA to host a Regional Sustainable Mobility Webinar for Local Authorities and Transport Stakeholders in the Southern Region.</p> <p>Following the publication of the National Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP), the Regional Assemblies were identified as a partner to assist action delivery under the goals of the SMP for Safe and Green Mobility, People Focused Mobility and Better Integrated Mobility. These actions advance RSES implementation, especially under Compact Growth, Sustainable, Planned and Infrastructure led Development, Sustainable Mobility and Low Carbon Society.</p>

	<p>The SRA are a stakeholder partner on the SMP Leadership Forum and Delivery Task Force to advance SMP Actions. In coordination with the DoT, NTA, TII, DHLGH, CCMA and other stakeholders, the Regional Assemblies have an active role in developing a series of pathfinder projects to be delivered within three years to accelerate modal change to sustainable transport, achieve lower carbon emissions from transport and optimise Active Travel funding across each Local Authority in our Region.</p> <p>The SRA have a lead co-ordination role in the development of a pathfinder for smart and sustainable mobility capacity building and training workshops for Local Authorities, Councillors and Public Participation Networks (PPNs) in each Region.</p> <p>This initiative will assist infrastructure projects nominated by the transport and Local Authorities through communicating the urgency and benefits of low carbon mobility, upskilling and knowledge sharing, developing a network of mentors to assist projects, applying lessons learned from good practices to live projects and generating buy in for project planning, construction and operation stages.</p> <p>A parallel pathfinder co-ordinated with the Regional Assemblies will be to develop 15/10 Minute Cities and Towns in action with pilot projects and demonstration city neighbourhoods and towns supported to communicate successful impacts, encourage scale up and replication of similar projects region wide.</p> <p>The pathfinders are being developed over Q3-Q4 2022 and implementation over the next three years will accelerate RSES implementation.</p>
<p>Key Message</p>	<p>The development of the 10 Minute Town Framework is a Transformative SRA initiative which developed through participation in the DoT Pathfinder initiative.</p>



Task No. 31:	Support the development of the Eastern Corridor.
Related RPO 42:	Eastern Corridor
Progress	Recommendation for inclusion of Eastern Corridor included in submission on Draft Wexford County Development Plan. There is ongoing liaison with Wexford County Council in relation to this proposal however this has not progressed as a formal proposal to date.
Conclusion/Key Message	This initiative has not progressed as intended.



Task No. 32:	Improve Capacity Building through developing bidding capacity.
Related RPO 70:	Bidding Capacity
Progress	This initiative is ongoing through submissions to Development Plan, development of workshops, engagement with Local Authorities and, ETC Network however it has not progressed as initially intended as a formal programme.
Conclusion/Key Message	This initiative has not progressed as intended. Given the competitive structure for funding it merits implementation and should be reviewed in the context of available resources.

03

Progress and Actions

The RSES Vision is for the Region to become one of Europe's most "Creative and Innovative," "Greenest" and "Liveable" Regions. Government bodies and the ten Local Authorities in the Region are key partners to implementation of this RSES Vision and the 11 strategic themes. This section of the Report will focus on progress made by these bodies and the Regional Assembly in implementing the RSES by reference to these three vision statements and key themes. It is based on the submissions made by Public Bodies and Local Authorities as part of the S25 process.

Liveable Region

The RSES Liveable Region supports sustainable and inclusive communities and places, which improves our Quality of Life and regional attractiveness.



Compact Growth

Strategy Statement 1

Core Strategies

RSES RPO 3 addresses the Core Strategy at the heart of each Development Plan and states that 'local authorities shall determine a hierarchy of settlement and appropriate growth rates in accordance with the guiding principles (including environmental protection) and typology of settlement in the RSES'.

All Local Authorities have embedded the RSES policy and population targets into their Core Strategies. Policy Alignment has been achieved across the Region and the RSES guiding principles (including environmental protection) and typology of settlement are now embedded in ALL Local Authority Development Plans and applied in a way that is appropriate to each Local Authority.

A key focus has been to seek a clear demonstration of how the different elements of the Core Strategy relate to each other, to the overall vision, to the RSES and also to UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Core Strategies reviewed by the SRA have all included the following main elements:

- A Core Strategy Vision
- Underlying Principles or Core Strategy Strategic Aims
- Strategic Objectives

The DHLGH have supported progress in policy alignment in Development Plan Core Strategies through published guidance on Regional Demographics¹ and Housing Supply Targets².

Planning Policy Alignment with RSES Spatial Strategy

The SRA engaged closely with Forward Planning Teams in each Local Authority throughout the Development Plan process. This has built on the strong and collaborative relationships with each of Local Authorities necessary for RSES development and implementation.

1. ESRI Report Regional Demographics and Structural Housing Demand at a County Level (2020)
2. DHLGH Planning Guidelines on Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning - December 2020

The new Development Plans demonstrate strong policy alignment with the RSES Settlement Typology including reference to:

- The NPF/RSES focus on Cities and Metropolitan Areas as strong development pillars for the Region
- RSES designated Key Towns as large and/or strategically located settlements
- RSES support for a strong network of towns, villages and rural areas that each Local Authority has characterised in a way that is appropriate for that particular county.

At national level DPER highlight the importance of an all of Government approach and outline key measures to ensure greater alignment with NPF and support of RSES:

- Departments are to review new and updated strategies to reflect and reference the specific NPF targets for regions, cities and compact growth in line with the targets set out in the NPF.
- Departments and Agencies are to ensure alignment of strategies with the regional, city and compact growth targets as a criteria in the selection of investments.
- Departments which have larger demand-led investment programmes are to monitor the share of investment for each of the three regional assemblies and five cities e.g. in enterprise supports, retrofitting, sports clubs etc.
- Public Bodies must ensure that Strategic Assessment Reports for public investment proposals are aligned with the NPF, with particular regard to regional, city and compact growth targets as appropriate.

Cities & Metropolitan Areas

The MASPs for Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford provide a strategic blueprint for the long-term growth and development of our three cities, in accordance with their key priority in the NPF.

The relevant Development Plans in the Metropolitan Areas have incorporated the RSES and MASP objectives and targets. Examples include:

- In Waterford where there is a renewed recognition of the need to rebalance the city – north and south of the river as identified in the Waterford MASP and Short-Term Steps such as early enablers - development of a new bridge to link the City Centre to the North Quays, relocation of the railway station to a new Integrated Transport Hub on the North Quays and the Abbey Link Road to open up lands and link up existing residential areas in Ferrybank (north of the river).
- In Cork, the Cork City Development Plan sets out a Strategic Vision for Cork City as a world class city, driving local and regional growth,

embracing diversity and social inclusiveness and growing as a resilient, healthy, age-friendly and sustainable compact city with placemaking, communities and quality of life at its heart, supported and guided by key strategic principles.

- The Cork County Development Plan has integrated Cork MASP principles of regeneration, consolidation and investment in amenities. The Cork MASP has supported activation of Cork County Council's Urban Expansion Areas the MASP recognition of Cork Harbour as a unique and Strategic Asset for the Metropolitan Area and region is reflected in the County Development Plan.
- In Limerick, the City and County Council recognise that the MASP supports the consolidation, revitalisation and continued investment in Limerick City through Limerick 2030 and Limerick Regeneration, to drive its role as a vibrant living, retailing and working City, as the economic, social and cultural heart of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and Region.

Supporting Growth/Development of Key Towns

All Local Authorities have demonstrated policy support for their Key Towns through innovative policy measures and actions to improve infrastructure, public realm and overall attractiveness. Examples include:

- Publication of 'Project Carlow 2040 – A Vision for Regeneration and Development' in 2020
- The Ennis 2040 Strategy has a focus on regeneration and opportunities to develop the Key Town with Nine strategic sites to 'transform Ennis enabling the town to prosper as a successful, diverse and vibrant social, civic, commercial, cultural and residential centre. 'In addition a Designated Activity Company was established to implement the strategies objectives.
- The Core Strategy for the Kilkenny City Plan includes the following principles for its development as Key Town:
 - Kilkenny City as a self-sustaining regional economic driver.
 - The concept of developing a 10-minute City
 - The four neighbourhoods concept
 - Redevelopment including the Abbey Quarter
- Wexford County Council have developed a Core Strategy Development Approach for Wexford and Gorey Key Towns to support their designation as Key Towns in line with RPO 11 and RPO 12 Wexford /25 Gorey, the Council authority.
- Cork County Council have emphasised the position of the town as a key economic driver in the region which includes promotion of the town as a key technology-based employment location.
- Cork County Council are supporting the development of Mallow as a key town with a suite of public realm projects. A Town Framework has been

prepared which also provides a basis for ambitious regeneration and development of amenities in the town park and Mallow Castle.

- Tipperary County Council have set out a strategy for growth in the County Development for each of the 3 Key Towns of Clonmel, Nenagh and Thurles with a focus on strategic regeneration.
- Waterford City and County Council policies support Dungarvan's development as a Key Town on the Waterford-Cork N25 transport corridor, as an attractive coastal and harbour town which functions as a tourist centre and as a Gaeltacht Service Town.

Smaller Towns and Villages

The RSES identifies rural towns and villages as local drivers (Section 3.6) where a sustainable infrastructure-led growth approach is encouraged and supported. RPO 26 states the objective to 'strongly support strengthening the viability of our towns and rural settlements, as a key objective of the RSES, including the protection of essential rural services such as post offices, shops, and medical facilities.....'

All Development Plans have included objectives and initiatives to support this objective.

Local Authorities have implemented projects to strengthen the viability of smaller towns and villages with the support of the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) managed by the Department of Rural and Community Development. (DRCD).

The Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme (STVGP) has supported delivery of Water and Wastewater Treatment infrastructure in smaller settlements not included in the Irish Water Investment Plan 2020 to 2024. For example in 2020, funding was secured for this programme for the upgrade of the Kilsheelan and Lisvarrinane WWTPs in Co. Tipperary

DTCAGSM have also demonstrated support for rural development and implementation of RPO 26 Villages and Towns through the €5m urban capital investment scheme, a €19m fund to enhance outdoor dining and funding under the Destination Town Initiative.

Destination Town funding has been provided to improve attractiveness of Towns and Villages in the Region including, Ennistymon, Bantry, Cashel, and New Ross.

Commitment to Achieve Compact Growth

Local Authorities across the Region have demonstrated their commitment to achieve compact growth targets in the Draft Development Plans. A key strength of the Core Strategies is the evidence-based distribution of growth to achieve housing in alignment to the NPF and RSES including delivery within the existing built-up footprint of the city or town.

DHLGH, together with the LDA have committed to unlocking urban development potential and brownfield development through initiatives such as Croí Conaithe Cities Fund, targeting the unlocking of extant planning permissions.

Identifying Best Practice

Examples of good practice to achieve compact growth include:

- The Cork City Capacity Study informed the Core Strategy and assessed capacity for future development within existing underutilised zoned lands, including greenfield, brownfield and infill sites within the built-up footprint.
- The study provided an evidence base for the identification of Tier 1 land that is serviced and Tier 2 land that is serviceable within the life of the Plan
- The 'Urban Greening' approach which supports compact growth and quality placemaking, in the Tipperary County Council Development plan (Section 7.2.3)



Diversity, Language, Culture and Heritage Enhancement

Strategy Statement 7

Culture, Heritage & The Arts

The RSES strongly supports the Cultural and Creative Sectors and RPO 191 states that 'It is an objective to develop a vibrant cultural and creative sector in the Region as a key enabler for enterprise growth, innovation, regeneration, place-making and community development, health and well-being'.

The importance of culture, arts and heritage is evident in the many initiatives and supported by Local Authorities areas, including appointment of dedicated arts and conservation officers, initiatives to support the film industry, creating shared cultural spaces and support for festivals. Examples include the Carlow Arts Festival, the Cork Jazz Festival, Spraoi Street Festival in Waterford, the Cats Laugh Comedy Festival in Kilkenny, The Wexford Opera Festival, the Clonmel Junction Festival in Clonmel, the Doolin Folk Festival, Listowel Writers' Week in Kerry and Riverfest in Limerick.

The Dept. Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media – (DTCAGSM) support for Tourism related RPOs 53 and 54 and measures to improve Regional Attractiveness, include the Destination Towns Initiative aimed at boosting attractiveness of Towns and tourism appeal, Destination Experience Development Plans and the establishment of a Sustainable Tourism Working Group. The Department also identified early progress in support of RPO 17 Clonmel – 'Tourist Town' designation & RPO 23 Clonakilty – 'Refreshed Vison' - part of the West Cork Destination Experience Development Plans.

The Department support for Arts and Culture and RPOs 191,192 and 194 is also evident in the Creative Ireland Programme – Cultural Capital Scheme, Screen International & Regional Crew Development Hub – Limerick and Outdoor public space scheme.

Gaeltachtaí, Gaeltacht Service Towns (GSTS) and Irish Language Networks

Local Authorities have demonstrated strong support for RSES policy on Gaeilge and gaeltachtaí, including new policies for GSTs (Gaeltacht Service Towns) such as Dungarvan and Cork City, which seeks to be recognised as a Gaeltacht Service City. In Kerry Daingean Uí Chúis, Trá Lí and Cathair Saidhbhín are Gaeltacht Service towns and Kerry Development Plan policy KCDP 8-6 will 'Facilitate and support Tobar Dhuibhne (2017), Plean Teanga Dhaingean Uí Chúis and Plean Teanga Chiarraí Theas (2019) language plans'. Cork County Council encourage development within the Gaeltacht and in the Gaeltacht Service Town of Macroom.



Departmental support for implementation of RSES objectives for the Gaeltacht is evident in Údarás na Gaeltachta involvement in Developing GSTs in Gaeltacht & Language Plans, Foras na Gaeilge developing GSTs outside of Gaeltacht and Irish Language Networks and Funding approved for Language Planning Officers

The Department highlighted the success of Údarás na Gaeltachta in Employment Creation in Gaeltacht. A significant action is the development of a national network of digital hubs in all Gaeltacht areas known as 'Gteic Gréasán Digiteach na Gaeltachta including gteic @ Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh in Co. Cork

Counties outside of Gaeltacht areas have also demonstrated strong support for Oidreacht Theanga/Linguistic Heritage. In Co. Clare, the Local Authority supports normalising of the use of Irish and to work in a positive and encouraging way to create and maintain a bilingual environment in the County. It is the first location in the Region to avail of the provision in the Gaeltacht Act 2012 to establish an Irish Language Network in Ennis with implementation of the Language Plan.



Inclusive International Region

Strategy Statement 11

Progress made in building an inclusive outward looking international region on the global stage can be identified in 4 key areas of SRA work and RSES Implementation.

- Building Regional Identity and Branding
- Adherence to UN Sustainable Development Goals
- International partnership and collaboration
- Developing the Region using successful international initiatives and expanding these within our Region.

Building Regional Identity and Branding

(Drawn from **Task 18** Implement SRA Communications Strategy)

The RSES sets out our approach to International Branding of the Region and Reputation at RPO 73 and states our ‘objective to promote the Region through a comprehensive communication and promotion strategy, including the development of a regional brand with international focus building on heritage, culture and attractive qualities’.

Action to promote and establish the national and international profile of the Southern Region as an Inclusive International Region through implementation of the SRA Communications Strategy adopted by the elected members in 2020. An implementation group has been established to monitor progress with a focus on:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the roles and remit of the Regional Assembly in relation to the Southern Region and the overall benefits of Ireland’s EU membership as well as EU funding;
- Promoting the role and awareness of regional governance in Ireland;
- Boosting our Region’s profile as economically strong, inclusive, connected, climate-resilient and sustainable.
- Fostering closer media relations across the various communications channels – print, broadcast and online and build on our well-established local networks and relationships;
- The SRA has created a suite of video content for webinars & virtual events, outlining the work of the SRA and its members.

SRA participation in the OECD's Rethinking Regional Attractiveness Project has facilitated engagement with regional and international partners from the OECD to explore new ways of enhancing the Region's international profile and attractiveness through a range of indicators associated with well-being, inclusiveness, and environmental sustainability, necessary to make regions attractive and, in particular:

- Connectivity – Infrastructure / Knowledge / Human/Business connections
Economic attractiveness: e.g. Innovation & entrepreneurship, SMEs, and the Labour market
- Connectedness: e.g. Transportation, Logistics and Digitalisation
- Visitor appeal: e.g. Tourism and Cultural capital
- Natural environment: e.g. Environment and Natural capital
- Resident well-being: e.g. Health, Education, and Social cohesion Land and housing

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental and are fully integrated into RSES and RSES implementation. RSES initiatives implementing Goals for the Climate and Environment include the Blue Green City project and Goals for Social Justice and Education through development of UNESCO Learning Region

International partnership and collaboration

International collaboration and partnerships are integral to SRA work on EU Projects and through integrated working between Regional Planning and EU Divisions, EU project work has become part of RSES Implementation. For example, the SRA has embraced Knowledge Transfer and Learning from the City of Ingolstadt (Germany) and Växjö Kommun (Sweden) to develop a regional approach (a Framework) to develop BGI and NBS in the Region. This work also promotes actions to achieve SDGs on Climate (SDGs 13,14, 15) and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)

Developing the Region using successful international initiatives and expanding these within our Region

RSES actions to develop a Learning Region has involved collaboration with partners in education, skills and community development to present a blueprint for development of a Learning Region based on the principles of UNESCO Learning Cities.

Key Messages on Developing a Liveable Region

Policy Alignment – Development Plans

Policy Alignment has been achieved across the Region in relation to compact growth and the RSES guiding principles (including environmental protection) and typology of settlement are now embedded in ALL Local Authority Development Plans.

Policy Alignment – Long Term Horizons

RSES policy alignment supported by Government Departments and Agencies have moved the Region towards being a stronger, more resilient and sustainable Region, where land use zoning is focussed on serviceable land to provide certainty for infrastructure providers and developers and more focussed investment at the right locations. Longer Terms Horizons in Development Plans could provide even greater benefits, enhance the effectiveness of public investment and allow greater emphasis on implementation rather than plan making.

Supporting the Regional Ambition for our Cities

Relevant policy measures are now in place to ensure that Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford MASPs can achieve the ambition set for them in the NPF, RSES and each development plan. There is concern at delays in Government and that the implementation mechanisms are not in place to ensure successful implementation.

The positive role and potential of the three Cities as Regional Economic Drivers and the newly formed Metropolitan Areas will only be realised with the establishment of fully resourced City Delivery Boards as envisaged by DPER in the NDP to allow for focussed investment and targeted growth in Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford.

Regeneration Interventions Working Well

All Local Authorities have demonstrated policy support for Key Towns and other settlements through innovative policy measures and actions to improve infrastructure, public realm and overall attractiveness. The RSES policies for Placemaking and Urban Regeneration have worked well in urban settlements and through URDF and RRDF funding have supported integrated approaches to regeneration. However, the scale of vacancy and dereliction in many towns and villages remains a persistent and widespread problem and more impactful/decisive mechanisms and funding will be required to bring back underutilised lands/buildings into active use.

Policy Alignment – Public Services

Investment in Digital Connectivity supports sustainable attractive places, drives economic development and improves our Quality of Life. Investment to deliver a Smart region provides the basis for overall regional progress in many areas - governance, public service delivery, placemaking, innovation and technology-led development.

Creative and Innovative Region

The RSES supports a Creative and Innovative Region where our economy and communities grow together through the innovation and skills of our people and high quality connectivity.



A Healthy & Learning Region

Strategy Statement 10

Inclusive Communities and Places - Improving Wellbeing and Quality of Life

The quality of services and amenities for a diverse and multi-cultural society is a key determinant to achieve this growth ambition. Demographic change has helped make Irish cities and towns more diverse and vibrant, with immigration from many different countries contributing to cultural, economic and social diversity. The RSES recognises the positive contribution of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and supports the Government's Migrant Integration Strategy.

Local Authorities have advanced support for minority groups and inclusive communities locally, for example in the County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020-2024.. This has included the role of education and educational facilities, including the streamlining of educational facilities for people with special needs.

Development Plan policies also provide strong support for building Inclusive Communities and Places and enables Local authorities to target spending in their budgets to deliver action on lifelong housing, accommodation for people with disabilities and Town centre accessibility and accessible tourism and age positive policies such as the "Smart Aging and National Positive Aging Action Plan, housing adaptation grants and provision of Playgrounds.

In Wexford, the HSE Understand Together and National Dementia Office provide training for Wexford County Council technical staff. Kerry work to support SICAP – Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme while Limerick support inclusive communities through many projects such as Universal Design that ensures all transport schemes and public realm design is accessible for all users and high quality and thorough support for better community facilities.

Education and Lifelong Learning

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) highlight the role of the new Technical Universities (TUs), acting as catalysts for innovation and regional development, including increased FDI and capital investment, research funding, international recognition and enable students, staff, enterprise, business and the wider community to avail of increased opportunities in their own areas which, in turn, advance further social-economic progress.

They highlight the following key projects

'Realising the potential of recognition Prior Learning and Lifelong Learning in Irish Higher Education,' where the Lead Institution is IT Carlow (now TUSE) with multiple other HEIs involved in the project. Project Funding is €6,904,176

DFHERIS highlight other key interventions in support of education and skills including:-

- Springboard +2021 – 3284 places provided in SR in 2021 in courses
- HCI (Human Capital Initiative)
- ETBs in the Southern Region with focus on the following areas:
 - Apprenticeship Provision
 - Nearly Zero Building incl. retro fitting
 - Film industry supporting enterprise in regional town and rural areas
 - Educational supports – Mitigating against Education Disadvantage Fund
 - Enabling a digital and innovative economy

Learning Region

The Regional Assembly have published Towards A Learning Region proposal. This Transformative Initiative (see Part B Task X) seeks to develop and promote Life Long Learning drawing on the principles of UNESCO Learning Cities.

Recreation and Sporting Facilities Including Blueways and Greenways

There has been strong progress across the Region in policies that support recreation & sporting facilities including blueways and greenways and delivery of new recreational infrastructure. Progress is evident in many projects and initiatives. In Clare, projects include the West Clare Railway Greenway, Ballyallia Amenity Enhancement Plan & the Errina Canal. Cork County developed the River Ilen Blueway, Haulbowline Public Park and Mallow Castle Adventure Park.

In Co. Kilkenny the Southeast Greenway commenced construction of a 24km greenway to link New Ross and Waterford in 2021. Tipperary is preparing the Greenway and Trail Strategy which includes the Loch Derg Blueway, the Suir Blueway and the proposed link between the Suir Blueway and the Waterford Greenway. In addition to many Blue and Greenway projects, Cork City prepared an active Recreation Infrastructure Study, which informed the final CDP. Carlow, Wexford and Kerry list the blue and greenway projects for their counties while Limerick identifies key opportunities in sport, tourism and water sports.

The Department have supported the delivery of recreation & sporting facilities through the Sports Funding (and Equal access) scheme and recreational development including Sports Ireland Active Cities Fund – for Cork, Limerick, and Waterford to encourage greater participation in sports and physical activity, further development of Greenways in the Region and Community Sports Hubs in disadvantaged areas to increase access to and participation in sports and physical activity.

The Department also support RPO 132 Dark Sky Parks and Reserves and the Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve.



High Quality International Connectivity

Strategy Statement 6

International Connectivity/ Ports/Airports, Freight and Logistics

The importance of International Connectivity through our ports and airports and how we transport freight to and from them is critical to the sustainable functioning of the regional economy.

BREXIT has resulted in new shipping and freight flows directly to continental Europe from the Southern Region Ports, most notably Rosslare Europort. RSES policy recognises the critical importance of International Connectivity through our ports and airports and this is now progressed to development of Regional Strategies relating to Freight, Ports and Harbours and Airports. Project Charters for each of these strategies and subsequent engagement with the Department of Transport has advanced this work. As it has become clear that the Regions' ports are not only of regional importance but are of strategic importance for the island and the All-Island Economy, the work of the SRA with Government to enhance connectivity to continental Europe becomes ever more critical.

Department of Transport

The Department of Transport continues to provide Aviation Funding to support Regional Airports in the Southern Region. The Department of Transport has supported the Region's main ports with an investment programme to improve international connectivity through:

- The development at Ringaskiddy in the Port of Cork is estimated to cost over €86m)
- Shannon Foynes Port - Infrastructure Development Programme (overall programme costed at c. €50m over seven years) underway.
- Rosslare Europort - €42m funding to increase capacity, through enhanced port infrastructure, freight facilities, proposed new port access road and a digitalisation project for the port.
- Port of Waterford: The company has invested €350,000 in 2020 and €1.84m in 2021 in infrastructure improvements. The focus of recent reopening of the rail freight connection to the Northwest is a positive step.



A Strong Economy

Strategy Statement 5

RSES Economic Strategy

The main emphasis of the RSES Economic Strategy is to create the conditions that will support and encourage enterprise development and employment creation.

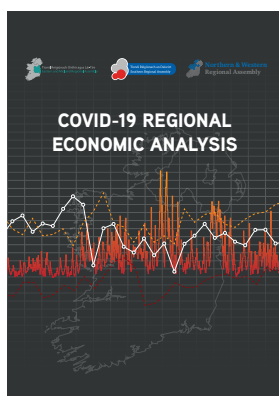
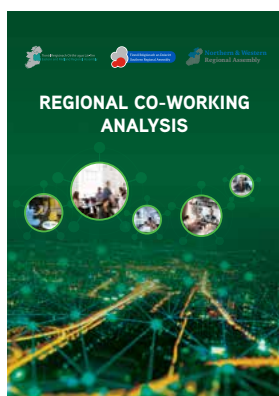
Each Local Authority has integrated the economic principles of RSES Economic Strategy into their Development Plan. Strong alignment with RSES Economic Principles and the Regional Economic Drivers is evident in policy changes with a shift from Passive Economic Policy to Active and Dynamic Economic Policy.

Regional Economic Drivers

The RSES Implementation programme is a key mechanism for the co-ordination of work to develop the Regional Economic Drivers as effective economic engines for the Region. In developing all of the assets of the Region – the Cities, Towns and Villages and connecting them with the Networks and Economic Corridors, the Regional Economic Drivers are focus of our implementation. The settlement strategy and the focus of our compact growth resulting in convergence between improved quality of life and where people live and work underpins the economic strategy.

Response to COVID 19

The Regional assembly took proactive action to (a) understand how COVID 19 was impacting regional and local economies and (b) maintained a focus on a future beyond covid and initiatives that would assist in economic recovery. This has included the publication of: COVID 19 Regional Economic Analysis Regional CO-Working Analysis



Smart Specialisation

Developing our regional strengths is one of the 5 pillars of Regional Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and is a critical element of EU Cohesion Policy. The Regional Assembly is committed to developing our strengths as a Region and the publication of 'Regional Approach for development of a Smart Specialisation Strategy in the Southern Region' in

2022 which is based on the latest research and sectoral data and provides key areas of focus for the Region - Priority areas and the Capacity and Opportunity in each of these areas.

Economic Corridors

The RSES identifies the role and potential of Economic Corridors as economic drivers and enablers for regional growth.

The Atlantic Economic Corridor(AEC) has potential to enhance regional connectivity and strengthen economic interactions along the AEC and is supported by RPO 41. The RSES also identified the strategic importance of the Eastern Corridor and along with EMRA, RPO 42 supports development of an Eastern Corridor through the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and strengthening economic links with the South-East, extending to Rosslare Europort.

Eastern Corridor

The post-Brexit scenario has seen exponential growth in trade through Rosslare Europort. Rosslare Europort has secured substantial investment through the Brexit Adjustment Reserve to support development of the port as a strategic port for Ireland and builds on €42m planned invested by Iarnród Éireann in Rosslare Europort over the period 2021-2026 .

While the Regional Assembly has commenced stakeholder engagement to develop the Eastern Corridor governance, issues will have to be addressed to ensure a coherent economic proposition if developed.

Atlantic Economic Corridor

The SRA along with the NWRA and Local Authorities are strengthening collaboration on AEC development with the Western Development Commission. Clare County Council CDP Policy 6.3 Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) supports the development of the AEC initiative as a driver of enterprise, growth, investment and the attraction of entrepreneurial skills and talent along the Western Seaboard, and to work with key stakeholders including adjoining local authorities to optimise the combined advantages and opportunities of the AEC including delivering a high-value and low- carbon economy. Limerick City and County Council consider the Atlantic Economic Corridor ‘presents tremendous potential for growth and investment across the county and is acknowledged in Chapter 1 and Section 2.6.1 - Employment Strategy’.

Public Body Support

The Department of Trade Enterprise and Employment (DETE) have a key role in RSES implementation through funding and key initiatives including:

- EI Regional Enterprise Development Fund
- IDA Property programme – attracting investment to regional locations
- Green Transition Fund
- Digital Transition Fund

DETE set up Future Manufacturing Ireland (FMI) as a new unit within the innovation and investment division in 2021 to support coherent national research support structure for advanced manufacturing

Green Transition:

DETE highlight their Action on accelerating Decarbonisation in the Enterprise sector through initiatives including:

- Carbon Redevelopment Fund
- Climate Enterprise Action Fund
- Climate Toolkit for Business – assisting businesses to reduce environmental footprint and tackle climate action – for SMEs and micro enterprises
- Green4Micro – preparing SMEs for transition to a Low Carbon Economy
- Through the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund, there are 34 Innovation Projects supported in the Region.

The Department has established an Expert Group on Future Skills needs established 2021 study on nature and quantity of skills required

As part of IDA Ireland's Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth 2021-2024 Strategy, targets have been set for each region, based on key attractiveness factors including:

- Critical mass of population and urban centres, in line with national policy,
- Skill and talent availability,
- Attractiveness, quality of life and placemaking,
- Industry specific clusters and ecosystems,
- Local infrastructure provision & connectivity,
- Availability of property solutions (public and private sector), and
- Alignment with IDA's sector and territory targets.

This initiative aims to win investment for Main Regional Cities.

Regional Initiatives

IDA has been targeting 50% of all investment 2021-2024 to Regional Locations and this is recognised as significant support for 50/50 NPF Spatial Distribution Strategy 7 RSES.

IDA client companies' employment growth in Region in 2021-2021 by % was:

- SW +3%
- MW +5%
- SE +8%

Under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund, DETE funding supported Enterprise Development projects developed in the Region including the Ludgate Hub, Clare Maritime Development Zone and Kilorglin RDI Hub

In 2020 DETE supported 25 Enterprise centres in the SR through covid recovery funds through the Regional Technology Cluster Fund, 8 of 16 Technology Gateways supported are in the SR.

Regional Economic Resilience /Supporting Innovation

RPO 40 is a key statement of RSES policy on Regional Economic Resilience and states that 'It is an objective to sustainably develop, deepen and enhance our regional economic resilience by widening our economic sectors, boosting innovation, export diversification, productivity enhancement and access to new markets.'

The primary mechanism to address economic resilience/innovation is through the Regional Enterprise Plans.

The Regional Enterprise Plans – overseen by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) - are developed by regional stakeholders and focus on undertaking collaborative initiatives to support enterprise growth and job creation. There are 3 Regional Enterprise Plans in the Region, for the Mid-West, South-East and South West.

The Regional Enterprise Plans are a significant intervention in regional development by DETE to 'strengthen the regional enterprise ecosystem and enable job creation' and are described as 'bottom-up' Regional Enterprise Plans, which complement and build on core strategies of the Enterprise Agencies, the Local Enterprise Offices and the wider range of State Bodies directly involved in supporting enterprise development in the regions.

The Regional Enterprise Plans to 2024 build on the first iteration of the REPs and each seek to:

- complement and translate national enterprise policy in a regional context
- facilitate collaboration regionally to address prioritised ecosystem gaps and opportunities, and help achieve Agency and LEO investment and jobs targets in each region
- use collective insight and resources in each region, and available regional funding, to progress initiatives to enable enterprise growth and job creation in each region. Each of the Regional Enterprise Plans include important actions that support RSES Implementation.

DETE has developed Smart Regional Enterprise Funding to be launched to complement REPs and new S3 Strategy. In tandem with DETE, DRCD support community-led economic development and resilience through the National Social Enterprise Strategy (SOCENT) to build awareness and strengthen Social Enterprise capacity through training and grants

Regional Skill Fora

The Regional Skills Fora play a key role in the Region and work in tandem with the education and training providers and business to meet the emerging skills needs. They also provide robust labour market information and analysis of employer needs to inform programme development, supporting greater collaboration and utilisation of resources across the education and training system and enhancement of progression routes for learners.

In the Regional Skills Fora Statement of Activity 2020, the work of the Fora included:

- Apprenticeship Action
- Skills Planning
- Business Support

The Regional Skills Fora in conjunction with forum members have created EXPLORE and DigiECO

Examples of actions in the Region include:

- The development of Ireland's first Cyber Security Practitioner apprenticeship at Level 8 in conjunction with the University of Limerick and Limerick for IT.
- The pilot programme Women in Coding
- Explore and DigiEco digital and green skills training
- Development of Industry networks in IT, Logistics, Hospitality, Manufacturing and Aviation, to support future skills needs

Strategic Employment Locations

The RSES has put in place Guiding Principles to identify locations for strategic employment development & through RPO 62 set out a requirement for Local Authorities to identify future locations for strategic employment development having regard to accessibility by sustainable transport modes and environmental constraints.

The Regional Assembly has also worked in partnership with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment & IDA/VEI to advance strategic opportunities and progress in identifying these strategic locations made by all local authorities, which includes IDA Business & Technology Parks in the Region.

In keeping with RSES policy, the Cork County Development Plan supports a concentration of economic and employment development primarily within the main towns to bring balance across the County and improve the level of employment choice. A hierarchy of employment centres has been identified across the County that will ensure a sustainable pattern of economic development. This also includes the employment land supply for each settlement by zoning category - Business and General Employment, Industrial, High Technology Campus Development and Special Policy Areas. The hierarchy include the 'Strategic Employment Locations' of Carrigtwohill, Little Island, Ringaskiddy and Whitegate / Aghada and the 'Specialise Employment Centre' at Marino Point, and the Key towns of the Clonakilty and Mallow.

Tourism

Engagement in initiatives to promote sustainable tourism have included progress in supporting Regional Tourism Brands - Ireland's Ancient East, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and the Wild Atlantic Way. Actions which support RPO 54 - Tourism and RPO 54 - Tourism and the Environment cover implementation in the area of rural connectivity and SRA involvement in projects to develop economic potential such as The Celtic Routes Project provides tourism businesses with the opportunity to co-design and develop new products and experiences aligned an authentic insight into the landscape, heritage and special qualities of West Wales and Ireland's Ancient East.

Events to support RSES implementation include events to examine the themes of Celtic Adventure overarching theme of Achievement, Walking / Cycling and Golfing & Celtic Land & Sea overarching theme of Blueway and Nature. The Regional Tourism initiatives are supported in all of the Development Plans and are integrated with policies which support tourism,

economic development and urban and rural regeneration, including policies and actions for Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Opportunities, Marine Leisure Centre, Cultural Tourism, Long Distance Walks and Walking/ Cycling and Greenways.

The importance of tourism to the economy of Limerick is identified as a key element of the overall vision for Limerick and states that the Draft Plan will “support growth in the tourism sector in Limerick, specifically focusing on sustainable tourism, and capture key opportunities to develop the sector based around five key drivers – Greenways, Waterways, Activities, Heritage, Arts and Culture and rural environment.”

The Marine Economy

The Marine economy is of growing importance for the Region and the extensive coastline and marine waters are a key resource for significant economic development and vibrancy in coastal and island communities. The Regional Assembly has been proactive in stakeholder engagement with the Marine Policy Division of DHLGH and will be a key stakeholder to assist the role of the new Maritime Area Regulatory Authority on potential sub-regional Designated Marine Area Plans , which may emerge as part of National Marine Planning Framework implementation and enactment of the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021. The Regional Assembly is ideally placed to integrate RSES policies on our marine and coastal environment into the new maritime planning regime.

The Department consider that the National Marine Planning Framework and the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 constitutes the biggest reform of marine governance since the foundation of the State, providing a legal and administrative framework for the marine environment in Ireland. The Regional Assembly will work with the Department to harness the social, environmental economic benefits, including the potential for the new planning regime to be a key enabler for decarbonisation of our energy sources and the development of offshore energy.

Local Authority Examples

- Cork County Council was also involved in European Projects relating to 'Integrated Coastal Zone Management,' namely the COREPOINT and IMCORE EU INTERREG Projects which used Cork Harbour as a case study area and building on this experience the plan includes objectives regarding best practice Integrated Coastal Zone Management MCI 7-3
- Clare County Council includes a policy which combines the new marine spatial planning legislation with support for the Marine Economy in development plan policy CDP13.3 Maritime Spatial Planning 'To ensure consistency and alignment between land based spatial planning and marine planning which supports the protection of the marine environment and the growth of the marine economy'

Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs)

The Review of LECPs is the key instrument through which the Local Authorities will reflect RSES Economic policies however their preparation does not fall within the Reporting period of this report . Updated Guidelines have been prepared for the LECPs with Regional Assembly input. The Regional Assembly will play a key role in the development of the LECP's through our statutory role , but also in providing practical assistance through for example the Regional Development Monitor.



Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities

Strategy Statement 3

Rural Areas/Rural Development

All development plans include objectives to support the development of rural areas in alignment with the RSES. The RSES supports sustained investment in our rural communities to support employment, education, training and community development to foster the potential of small towns and villages and rural communities to be innovative and connected to the wider Region and to be part of a Smart Region. Government funding continues to support Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities through a wide range of funding programmes including the National Broadband Plan & Connecting Ireland Rural Transport Programme.

RSES policies for rural areas and the rural economy are supported by and implemented in local communities by Development Plans and other Local Authority plans and programmes, where, for example,

- The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan sets out a strategic aim 'to manage rural change and guide development to strengthen the rural economy and community through the network of towns and villages ensuring vibrant, sustainable and resilient rural areas whilst conserving and sustainably managing our environment and heritage.'
- In Wexford, Wexford County Council have set out Development Plan Policy (Guiding Principle J of the Core Strategy) to ensure a strong focus on supporting sustainable and vibrant rural communities, supporting and regenerating villages that are struggling or in decline including villages that have lost services in recent years. Positive policies are clear - supporting enterprise and employment an improving rural infrastructure and connectivity as a means of sustaining rural populations and improving quality of life. The Guiding Principle underpins the strategies and objectives throughout the Plan, for example, strategic rural development economic objective include ED81 (rural diversification and innovation), ED82 (development of sustainable rural based economic sectors), ED83 (leverage funding from sources such as the RRDF to develop the rural economy), ED84 (develop innovation hubs and centres of excellence), ED85 (support innovation, enterprise and start-ups), ED96 (develop a

diverse base of smart economic specialisms in the rural economy).

- In County Tipperary, new development plan policy (Policy 4 – 0) will ‘Support opportunities for co-operative clustering/networks of economic and social specialties in rural settlements for example, sustainable energy communities, activity-based and cultural tourism, nature-based solutions, local food production etc., thereby supporting a sustainable rural economy in Tipperary.’

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) highlight the contribution of their Programmes to implement RSES objectives:

- CLÁR targeted investment programme for small infrastructural projects in rural areas that experience disadvantage
- LEADER - rural development is based through community-led local development.
- Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme
- Seniors Alert Scheme
- Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
- Community Services Programme - supports community organisations to provide local services through a social enterprise model
- Broadband Connection Points and Remote Working Hubs
- The Town Centre First Approach. - The Town Centre Living Initiative (TCLI) was a pilot scheme which aimed to develop innovative proposals to respond to challenges relating to vacant properties in rural towns and villages and encouraging people to live in town centres.

DRCD implement RSES policy for community development in key policy areas including:

- Community Enhancement Programme (CEP) - provides funding to community groups and organisations across Ireland, with a focus on areas of disadvantage.
- Healthy Ireland - Framework for improved Health & Wellbeing 2013-2025, is the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing. Emphasis is on the Health & Wellbeing of the most disadvantaged groups and areas and those experiencing significant health inequalities.
- Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities - A five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024 to “promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland” - to use a mix of policy initiatives and funding supports for communities, non-profit organisations and the community and voluntary sector.

Networks & Cross Boundary Initiatives

The RSES recognises Networks as groupings of towns and villages where their proximity or relationship can supply opportunities for collaborative projects and shared benefits from existing or additional shared resources and improved local or inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital communications). The identification of Networks in RSES as Key Enablers for the Region RSES and in RPOs 29 (Rural Settlement Networks) and RPO 30 (Inter-Urban Networks as Regional Drivers of Collaboration and Growth) to support the Network concept has supplied a strong policy base for Networks to be developed by Local Authorities.

There are a number of well-established networks of settlements in the Region that are strategically driving sub-regional growth and opportunities for further potential networks. A notable example is the Kerry Hub & Knowledge Triangle and the new development plan policy sets out a broader ambition for Networks & Cross Boundary Initiatives and seeks to extend the development of networks within the county and networks involving neighbouring counties are supported by: Objective KCDP 9-8 seeks to 'Support the further development of the Kerry Hub & Knowledge Triangle and the North Kerry/Shannon Estuary Networks and their potential to create substantial economic benefit to the County'.

Cork County Council have embraced this approach with a strong economic focus. The Draft Development Plan identifies an overall Employment Network for the County (Table 8.4 in Chapter 8 'Economic Development') and within this four particular networks are identified:

- County Metropolitan and Cork Harbour Network
- Cork Ring Network
- North Cork Agri Food Network
- West Cork Marine Network

The Tipperary County Development Plan includes a section on the Waterford Transport and Economic Network Planning Objective, which relates to national road and rail freight routes linking Waterford and Limerick through County Tipperary and includes Policy 8-G) to 'Work with national and regional partners in delivering a co-ordinated strategy for the 'Limerick – Waterford Transport and Economic Network', including the identification and development of Limerick Junction as a Regional and National Strategic Freight Terminal and Transport Hub'.



Enhanced Regional Accessibility

Strategy Statement 2

Regional connectivity is an important enabler of employment and economic activity strengthening inter- regional connectivity through the improvement of inter-urban road and rail connectivity, particularly between the largest urban centres and access to ports and airports for the movement of people and goods and is considered to be critical to underpin the planned population and economic growth.

The Principles of the Regional Transport Strategy assists national transport agencies and operators identify the needs and opportunities in the Region for enhanced Regional Connectivity. This has included participation in stakeholder engagement and submissions to the following consultations (available on the SRA website):

- SRA Submission to the Department of Transport Strategy Statement 2021 -2023
- All Island Strategic Rail Review
- Rail Freight 2040 Strategy
- SRA Submission to the Draft Marine Planning Framework
- Regional Assemblies Response to the Draft Marine Planning Framework
- SRA Submission to the Review of the National Development Plan
- SRA Submission to the Sustainable Mobility Policy Review
- SRA Submission to the National Economic Recovery Plan
- SRA Submission to the National Resilience and Recovery Plan
- SRA Submission to the Draft National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI)
- SRA Submission to the Draft Ten Year Strategy For the Haulage Sector
- SRA Submission to Bus Connects Cork: Draft New Network Consultation.

Transport Initiatives

The Department of Transport highlight how their policy initiatives and developments support the objectives of the RSES

- Sustainable Mobility Policy
- A new Sustainable Mobility
- All Island Strategic Rail Review
- Connecting Ireland

Department of Transport Actions support RSES objectives in the following key areas:

Rail Improvements:

- Limerick Colbert Station Upgrade ongoing phases
- Rail Freight to Foynes: Funding for undertaking studies, designs and preliminary and final business cases
- Twin Tracking Limerick to Limerick Junction:-Funding for the review increase capacity
- Cork Area Commuter Rail Programme – ongoing phases

Applications for two rail-related projects have been submitted under the 2021 Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Transport call - the 'Reinstatement of the Foynes Port to Limerick Rail Line – REJOYN' and 'Rail Freight System for Ireland – Programme Implementation Plan'.

National Road Network

Expenditure in 2021 funded Improvement & Maintenance & significant major projects on the National Roads Network:

- N25 New Ross Bypass opened in 2020.
- N22 Ballyvourney to Macroom is currently under construction.
- M8/N25/N40 Dunkettle Interchange in construction.

Regional and Local Roads Grant Programme funding of €496 million was provided to the region in the period 2020-2021.

Digital Connectivity/Smart Region/Smart Cities;

Digital Connectivity

The RSES has identified how High Quality, High-Capacity Digital Infrastructure is essential for our economic competitiveness and resilience and the importance of providing new and continual re-investment in the quality of our digital infrastructure networks across cities, towns, villages and rural areas.

Developing Smart Cities and a Smart Region

There has been significant progress in developing the Southern Region as a Smart Region. This has involved collaboration with DETE on the implementation of the recommendations from the report on the regional approach for Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) and the Completion of a toolkit advising a Smart Region definition and framework to support a regional approach for Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) and a Smart Region Action Plan.

Smart Southern Region.

In partnership with Maynooth University (MU) and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) we have identified the main components of a Smart Region Framework that are the drivers for the Southern Region as a Smart Region:

- Place-Making & Sustainability
- Engagement and Subsidiarity
- Collaboration
- Connected
- Technology and Data enabler for the Smart Region. Through data collection, collation, analysis and visualisation, it is the basis for evidence-based problem solving and innovation.
- Smart Region Governance

The research sets out actions that will enable the Region to move towards Maturity as a Smart Region and the actions required to achieve a Smart Southern Region.

Digital Connectivity – Delivering for Urban and Rural Areas

The implementation of actions arising from Local Authority Smart Cities and Smart Town initiatives, actions under Local Authority Digital Strategies and investment and upgrades under the National Broadband Plan, in fibre technologies, wireless networks, Metropolitan Area Networks and other integrated digital infrastructures will provide a significant economic dividend for our Region.

The report by the three Regional Assemblies of “Regional Co-Working Analysis” in 2020 sets out key considerations for policy makers to realise the economic potential and benefits of remote working.

In terms of Rural Development, the implementation of the National Broadband Plan is a key component in transforming the economic and social wellbeing of rural towns and villages based in the Southern Region, and it is imperative that this digital infrastructure is delivered in a timely and efficient manner.

Enhanced Digital Connectivity

DECC are a critical Department to deliver on Digital Connectivity and highlighted progress as of 21 January 2022 (NBI confirmed) that over 54,000 premises are available for order and pre-order across 21 counties including the Southern region and that under the National Broadband Plan, Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) represent an important delivery in the early stages of the NBP in Bringing connectivity to remote rural locations by providing high speed broadband in every county in advance of the roll out of the fibre to the home network. The Department report that 166 BCPs in Region by Jan 2022 (Public and schools).

DERDC have supported Connectedhubs.ie - a single network of over 170 remote working facilities where the aim is for Connectedhubs.ie to link over 400 hubs nationally, giving people the option to work within their own communities.

Key Messages on Developing a More Creative and Innovative Region

Smart Specialisation

Smart Specialisation thinking at the heart of RSES Economic Policy will boost regional innovation, contributing to growth and prosperity by helping and enabling a clear focus on developing our regional strengths.

Regional Interventions Supporting Regional Policy

Direct Regional Interventions by Government / Government Agencies work in tandem with RSES to deliver Balanced Regional Development. The Role of IDA, EI and other Government Departments/Agencies in building regional economic infrastructure are essential to deliver sustainable economic growth.

Enhanced Regional Accessibility

Continued and accelerated investment in our sustainable road, rail and public transport networks are essential to deliver Enhanced Regional Accessibility, support economic development and tackle climate change.

Regional Collaboration to Provide a More Effective Counter-Balance to the GDA

Our Region's Economic Engines led by the three Cities can be stronger together with increased collaboration to transform the Region, realise the combined potential to be a counterbalance to the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and develop opportunities to establish the Eastern Corridor and strengthen the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

Connectivity Supporting a Smart Region

Investment in Digital Connectivity supports sustainable attractive places, drives economic development and improves our Quality of Life. Investment to deliver a Smart Region provides the basis for overall regional progress in many areas - governance, public service delivery, placemaking, innovation and technology-led development.

International Connectivity

The emergence of new shipping routes linking the Southern Region directly to continental Europe is evidence of the strategic location of Southern Region Ports for the All-Island economy and the importance of International Connectivity to regional development. Regional strategies for the ports, airports and for freight the SRA & relevant stakeholders will assist national policy review by Government Departments and will provide strategic direction for the State in how international connectivity can be developed in a post Brexit era where direct connectivity to continental Europe is key and points to the need for enhanced port and airport infrastructure and sustainable freight and passenger linkages to the ports and airports.

Green Region

The RSES Green Region will foster a Low Carbon, Climate Resilient and sustainable society built around planned infrastructure-led development and sustainable mobility.



Sustainable Mobility

Strategy Statement 4

Progress in the area of Sustainable Mobility has been an area of significant activity. Learning from good practices in our Region, greater use of NTA data and analysis tools and accessing potential funding streams for projects were a key feature of Launch events in 2021 and early 2022. The events are a template for the other Regions to follow and have Central Government backing and included:

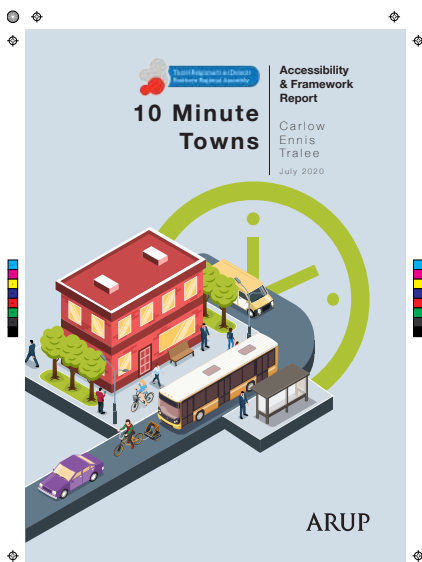
- On-going implementation of the SRAs 10 Minute Cities and Towns Methodology Framework.
- Launch of new DoT National Sustainable Mobility Policy.
- Launch of new Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidelines from the NTA and TII.

10 Minute Cities and Towns

The RSES has taken the lead with the promotion of 10-minute city and town concepts through RPO 176 and through a joint initiative between Regional Planning and EU Projects Division combined to prepare a Sustainable Mobility and 10 Minute Cities and Towns Implementation Plan during Q2-Q3 2021.

This Report encourages actions for 10 Minute Cities and Towns and provides a framework and good practice guidance for mapping the ‘10 Minute Town’ concept (case studies in Tralee, Carlow an Ennis) which can be used by other towns to undertake a 10 Minute Town assessment. The report identified different infrastructural measures which will improve the uptake of sustainable mobility in towns and villages across the Southern Region.

The Ennis 2040 Strategy identifies the development of Ennis as a ‘10 Minute Town’ as one of 4 Strategic Objectives. Following on from the SRA Accessibility and Framework Report in which Ennis was assessed as a Pilot Town, Clare County Council consider that Ennis has the characteristics and potential to lead the way as Ireland’s first ‘10 Minute Town’, whereby a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or accessible by high quality public transport to these services in larger settlements.



Innovative policy development is driving this progress. For example, Cork City has set an ambition to become a 15 Minute City of walkable neighbourhoods under the new City Development Plan. Section 4.25 identifies Walking Network Improvements as a key area for increasing the modal share of walking for commuting within Cork City's suburbs.

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP) identifies the work of the SRA under this theme as good practice. The RA's are actively involved in supporting the delivery of pathfinder projects in each Local Authority across the Regions to demonstrate the benefits of 15/10 Minute cities and Towns in action (to be delivered over the next three years under the SMP).

Department of Transport Initiatives

Department of Transport Actions support RSES objectives in the following key areas:

- Active Travel investment - supporting over 300 individual projects throughout the southern region,
 - Upgrades to Bus Network
 - Improved bus services in each Metro Area
- Regional and Rural service improvements incl.
 - Rural evening and night services
- Official launch of Kilkenny City bus service January 2020
- Public Transport improvements from the Dingle peninsula to Tralee
- Service enhancements on the West Clare Network connecting to rail at Ennis
- Funding Programmes
 - Accessibility Retrofit Programme – Bus and rail
 - Active Travel Programmes

In 2021 local authorities in the southern region drew down approximately €70 million from the NTA under various grants including the Sustainable Transport Management Programme (STMG), Active Travel Programme, Stimulus and COVID programme.

Public Services Obligations and Rural Transport Programmes

In addition The Department of Rural and Community Development have supported programmes to implement RSES objectives including measures to support improvements in rural transport services, including bus, rail and Local Link services.

Sustainable Mobility - Implementation Through Participation

Events promoting sustainable mobility. The MATCH-UP Mobility Café – The Youth Voice –A Conversation on Sustainable Transport in Waterford hosted by the Regional Assembly and presented in conjunction with An Taisce Green Schools and Waterford Institute of Technology.

This event provided the space for dialogue between young people and a panel of experts working in the area of education, policy development and sustainable transport for Waterford.



Low Carbon, Climate Resilience and Sustainable Society

Strategy Statement 8

Climate Action

In order to build a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Region, the RSES identified three priority action areas:

- Decarbonisation
- Resource Efficiency
- Climate Resilience

Our Key Actions across these three strands of RSES policy demonstrate progress in this fundamental challenge for the Region.

Decarbonisation

The RSES commitment on Decarbonisation is clear. The Regional Assembly will prepare a Regional Decarbonisation Plan to seek to address the first of these priority areas and set out a Framework for Action on Decarbonisation in the Region across all sectors and support sustainable economic pathways and a Just Transition to a Low Carbon Society and Economy.

The work on this has progressed with preparation of a Project Charter in 2021 and a joint collaboration with ESPON on their LOCATE Project to provide background research to inform the preparation of the Regional Decarbonisation Plan.

The ESPON LOCATE Project will:

- Examine the patterns of energy consumption
- Identify actionable policies to drive behavioural change & shift social norms
- Outline Just Transition Principles for the Region to inform the framing of the 'Regional Decarbonisation Message'

Progress on Decarbonisation will continue on this Project in ongoing work with Local Authorities and our work with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications on Action in the Climate Action Plan 2021.

Decarbonisation Zones

The establishment of Decarbonisation Zones is a positive development across the Region.

EU Dimension

Participation on EU Projects gives the Southern Region access to the wealth of knowledge across the European Union for better regional information, policy solutions for common regional challenges and regional leadership. This is particularly in relation to climate action and supporting our transition to a Green Region that supports transition to a low carbon economy and society.

Through the EU projects Unit the Southern Regional Assembly has engaged in key projects that progress RSES objectives:

Enclude - Energy Citizen Leadership

In 2021, the Regional Assembly with the ENCLUDE PROJECT held a workshop with representatives from 18 NGOs working with citizens on energy, poverty, and sustainability topics. The purpose of the workshop was to first understand challenges that the NGOs are facing in their work, as well as the needs of the citizens with whom they are working. Through this collective process key steps on citizen leadership were identified and how ENCLUDE Academy can co-design further modules for the Academy.

Empower

The EMPOWER Interreg Europe identified impactful good practice with partners across the EU that would support regional objectives to improve energy management, reduce emissions, reduce energy poverty and provide a pathway for behaviour change initiatives to improve efficient consumption of energy by consumers. SRA have worked with the 3CEA to develop an Energy Poverty Guidebook of good practice case studies to support Regional Decarbonisation and a Just Transition.

Renewable Energy Investment Forum.

A joint initiative between the Regional Planning Team and EU Projects Division has seen the integration of the FIRESPOL INTERREG Europe Project with RSES implementation on Renewable Energy Policy Objectives.

The SRA has worked with energy agencies in the region and other partners to initiate a Renewable Energy Investment Forum with an inaugural event in February 2021 and ongoing collaboration on energy initiatives.

The Climate Action Plan 2021

Regional action to lead and co-ordinate implementation is evident in the Climate Action Plan published in November 2021. The Southern Regional Assembly – through prior engagement with the Department of Environment, Communications is a key stakeholder in 6 Actions and will be directly involved in other actions. The SRA have early involvement with the Department in Action 102 to develop a Spatial Planning Framework for Onshore Renewable Electricity and will also be involved in Actions 258 (Demand Management for Transport) and 363 (Development of Bioeconomy).

A Project Charter has been prepared for the preparation of a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy (RRES) to implement RPO 98. This will set out a Vision for the Region's Renewable Energy and Future will address 7 Priorities:

- Identifying and scaling up Renewable Energy Resources
- Develop our Energy Resilience – Regional & Local (Households and business to become 'prosumers' – providers and consumers)
- Maximise Community Benefit of Renewable Energy Development
- An Upgraded and Flexible Grid
- Develop the Region as a Renewable Energy Exporter
- Understand the Opportunities for Emerging Technologies
- Be proactive about Future Jobs and Training Needs

Our early work on developing the RRES has converged with Action 102 of the Climate Action Plan 2021 and the SRA is now working with the Department to prepare a Regional Renewable Electricity Strategies Roadmap to plan comprehensively for renewable energy deployment across the Region.

The Department has supported 40 commercial scale renewable electricity projects in the Southern Region through Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) and have put in place an enabling framework for Micro Regeneration (Micro Regeneration Support Scheme).

In relation to the potential for offshore renewable energy, DECC commenced work on OREDP II – a New Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan to provide evidence base for identification of suitable areas for Offshore Renewable Energy.

Collaboration Between Regional and National Action

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) report that under the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS), 40 projects in the Region were successful in the RESS ‘auction’ in 2020

Supporting Initiatives For Climate Action

DECC have advanced key initiatives in the Region on Climate Action

- The Air Quality Division introduced 13 new low smoke zones in September 2020 extending the existing Solid Fuel Regulations to all conurbations with a population in excess of 10,000 WITH 5 new zones located in the Southern Region Urban Transport-Related Air Pollution (UTRAP) . The Urban Transport Related Air Pollution Working Group (UTRAP) published Interim Recommendations report in 2020 which included measures to address transport related air pollution in urban areas.
- The work of the group is also complemented by the Five Cities Demand Management Study which included Cork and Waterford. As part of the study, measures were reviewed in light of international best practice and national stakeholder engagement in order to assess their impact in reducing emissions, tackling congestion, improving air quality, and improving the overall urban environment of the five cities.
- Irish Rail – Hybrid Railcars - pilot phase in the Southern Region - trial of a new transmission in operation between Limerick and Limerick Junction)
- Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (Nationwide including the Southern region) Retrofitting 210,000 non LED Local Authority public lights to high efficiency LED Lanterns. The project will run in 3 distinct phases, coinciding with three regions – Southwest led by Cork County Council, East led by Kilkenny County Council
- Zero Emissions Gas (GRAZE Gas) Cork Installation of the first transmission connected Central Grid Injection (CGI) facility for renewable gas -the CGI facility being installed in Mitchelstown.
- The Callan Energy Store: An alternative, non-commercial premises for the exchange of big ideas. Kilkenny
- Field Exchange Tipperary - a project which centres on the idea of agriculture – linking art, food and agriculture and bringing artists, farmers, scientists, experts and the public together in Brookfield Farm, Tipperary
- ACT Waterford - Activating Communities to target Climate Change Waterford with themes of climate change: transport, domestic energy, green spaces and consumption, aligning with WCCC’s aim to make the city a decarbonised zone
- Stories of Change. Kerry and Clare - Celebrate people leading locally such as local food growers, energy projects etc.
- Decarbonising Together is a collaboration between communities

in Limerick and the arts, culture and creative sectors, conceived as a framework to enable community-led innovation in Limerick's decarbonisation mission

- Corca Dhuibhne Inbhuanaithe 2030 - A Creative Imagining Kerry. Under the auspices of Corca Dhuibhne/ Dingle Peninsula 2030, the partners will creatively address solutions to support the transition to environmentally and economically sustainable farming on the Dingle Peninsula and beyond.

National Retrofit Plan

Under the National Retrofit Plan (CAP 2021), total of 17,616 home retrofits were funded in the Region by DECC through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in 2020 and 11,368 home retrofits in 2021

Blue and Green Infrastructure

The Regional Assembly has worked in partnership with Local Authorities to strengthen the policy framework in Development Plans in support of Blue and Green Infrastructure. This is evidenced in the extensive policy coverage in place in all the Draft Development Plans in the Region.

Our work with INTERREG EUROPE on the Blue Green City Project has supported practical action to implement the policies now in place through the development of A Framework for developing Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) & Nature Based Solutions (NBS) in the Southern Region. This Framework responds to the urgency to protect and improve biodiversity and the declaration of a climate emergency, there are three high level goals that capture the multiple benefits of Blue Green Infrastructure including improving biodiversity, adapting to and mitigating climate change & improving placemaking in our cities, towns and villages.

Blue Green City has introduced international good practice such as Animal Aided Design developed and applied in the City of Inglostadt and supported by the University of Kassel in Germany.

Active implementation of the Framework by the Regional Planning team will provide practical guidance and examples to public authorities on how to create greener and more climate resilient settlements through Blue Green Infrastructure & Nature Based Solutions.



Sustainable, Planned And Infrastructure-Led Development

Strategy Statement 9

Placemaking

RSES Policy is supporting a Sustainable Place Framework to ensure the development of quality places through integrated planning and consistently excellent design. Progress is evident throughout the Region where both policy change in the Development Plans and rejuvenation of places through public realm enhancements and examples of good planning and design. These projects are effective in local areas and show how people can enjoy their local spaces.

- Waterford City and County Council has set out Principles of Placemaking in Development Plan policy (Policy Objective Place 070 to 'ensure that all new and existing developments, where possible and necessary, are located within urban and rural settlement and follow the four principles of placemaking by creating places which are:
 - Accessible and well connected to other places in the area.
 - Comfortable, well designed and safe.
 - Green and Sustainable and attract people to participate in multiple activities there.
 - Sociable and inclusive.
- In Clare, there are Significant public realm works funded by the URDF in Ennis Town Centre including O'Connell Square, Parnell Street and the Laneways and Bow-ways with the purpose of regenerating the public realm and significantly improving accessibility for pedestrians, providing an enhanced streetscape, and delivering expanded, high quality civic spaces with the overall aim of making the Town Centre experience more appealing.

RSES policy on Placemaking is supported by DHLGH policy on Architecture and Design and associated actions led by the Department under the Climate Action Plan 2021, Housing for All, Town Centre First to revitalise our built environment and quality of Place.

The Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth have also contributed to Placemaking through their Capital funding for improve access and Facilities & address Disability with projects across the Region including:

- Glounthaune Sensory Garden
- NaviLens on the Kerry Greenway
- Dingle Library – Public Realm and Accessibility Works
- Developing Limerick as an Autism-friendly Location

Regeneration

The RSES seeks a dynamic approach to land use within the footprint of existing settlements where Urban Regeneration and infill development area maximised to achieve the sustainable compact growth of settlements of all scale. RPO 34 requires Development Plan objectives include setting out the achievement of urban infill/brownfield development. Our focus has been to encourage identified priority locations for Regeneration, Brownfield and Infill Development, with progress to support Regeneration across the Region which has been reflected in Development Plans.

Local Authorities actions are driving regeneration:

- Cork City Council continue to deliver major rejuvenation of the Cork North-West Quarter Regeneration project with additional input from the Housing Agency in support of the phased development of the area.
- The Waterford Development Plan identifies 123 regeneration opportunity sites to support regeneration and renewal in settlements of all sizes.
- In Limerick, a number of strategic brownfield consolidation sites have been identified for redevelopment in Limerick City Centre, which will have transformational effects on the revitalisation of the City. Such strategic consolidation sites include, for example, the Opera Square Centre, Cleeves Riverside Quarter, the University of Limerick Riverside Campus and Colbert Station Quarter.
- Cork County Council is actively supporting brownfield and infill development through the repurposing of heritage buildings in Youghal, Mitchelstown, Bandon, and Fermoy and development of pop-up shops to reduce town centre vacancy is proposed or underway in Fermoy, Passage West, Carrigaline, Bandon.

Government Departments have provided strong support through URDF, RRDF funds to support urban regeneration and have sought to address vacancy and dereliction in urban settlements through initiatives such as Croí Conaithe, Town Centre First and initiatives to support heritage-led regeneration.

Water and Energy Utilities

The scale of investment envisaged in the NPF and in the RSES to achieve our growth targets and to transform and drive cities and metropolitan areas and Key Towns and rural areas as economic engines in the Region, needs a step change in holistic infrastructure provision.

Our Regional Investment Priorities in relation to water and energy infrastructure will be critical to achieving the growth targets and the SRA has worked closely with Irish Water, Eirgrid and other agencies to ensure that the Regional Investment Priorities are integrated into their strategic plans. The SRA has also participated in consultation on the Review of the National Development Plan in 2021 and a number of other consultations in order to progress Regional Investment Priorities:

- SRA Submission to the Draft National Water Resources Plan
- SRA Submission to the National Economic Recovery Plan
- SRA Submission to the Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines
- SRA Submission to the National Resilience and Recovery Plan
- SRA Submission to the Eirgrid Consultation - Shaping our Electricity Future

The role of Government Departments in funding the transformational change for the Region is critical in respect of our public utilities. In this regard, the DHLGH – through the remit of its Water Division – have committed to sustained public investment in water services on a multi-annual basis.

In terms of progress on energy infrastructure to drive regional development, DECC supports continuing work to develop the CELTIC INTERCONNECTOR & Greenlink Interconnector from Pembroke, Wales to Great Island, Wexford.

Key Messages on Developing our Green Region

Supporting a Just Transition

A Holistic approach to a Just Transition is essential to become a Low Carbon Economy and Society with direct government intervention required to increase Sustainable Mobility options and access to energy for homes and businesses.

Regional Renewable Energy

Direct Regional Interventions by Government / Government Agencies work in tandem with RSES to deliver Balanced Regional Development. The Role of IDA, EI and other Government Departments/Agencies in building regional economic infrastructure are essential to deliver sustainable economic growth.

Full Integration of Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI) and Nature Based Solutions (NBS) into Planning Urban Environments

Sustainable provision for planned population increase needs to be supported by increased focus on BGI in Placemaking for our urban settlements. Priority Funding for NBS in all of our BGI will support climate action, address biodiversity and improve our access to blue and green spaces at the scale and quality required to support placemaking and the health and well-being of communities.

Infrastructure-Led Development

Sustainable public investment in our water and waste water services on a multi -annual basis and delivery of the National Water Rescues Plan (including the Regional Water Resource Plans) is essential to support compact growth and the sustainable development of the Region.

Sustainable Mobility

Progress on developing sustainable mobility policy requires more sustained focus on planning and design to ensure funding for active travel leads to implementation and delivery of new walking and cycling infrastructure and other measures to achieve the aims of the RSES 10 Minute Cities and Town concepts.

04

Conclusions and Recommendations








This is the first Monitoring Report covering a two-year period of a significant, challenging and long-term process and therefore immediate transformation is not expected. Nonetheless the submissions by Local Authorities and public bodies to this report and the work undertaken by the Regional Assembly indicate there has been notable progress made in securing the overall objectives of the RSES.

Progress is evident in the following key areas:

1. There has been substantial policy alignment between national, regional and local policy based on the NPF and RSES during the period of this monitoring report due to the work undertaken by the 10 Local Authorities within the Southern Region particularly relating to the Development Plan process.
2. There has been significant investment by public bodies in the Southern Region during the period of this Monitoring Report addressing a range of initiatives which support the implementation of the NPF and RSES and address many of the key enablers identified in the RSES.
3. The Southern Regional Assembly Implementation Strategy progresses the implementation of the NPF/RSES. Of particular note are SRA Transformative Initiatives including:
 - The Regional Development Monitor (Joint Assembly Initiatives).
 - Joint Assembly Initiatives on the impact of Covid 19
 - MASP Implementation Structures,
 - Learning Region Initiative,
 - Smart Southern Region/S3
 - Regional Sustainable Mobility & 10 Minute Towns
 - Blue/Green Infrastructure/Nature Based Solutions Initiative,

Table 1 provides a very high-level overview of the outlook, opportunities and challenges faced in achieving the Key Enablers. It is necessarily indicative given the early stage we are in the implementation process however it does point to issues such as where early success can be built on as well as challenges to be addressed.

Table 1

Key Enabler	Outlook/Challenges	Progress
Transition to a Low Carbon Climate resilient and sustainable Society.	Significant steps taken however strong concern given the scale of the climate crises challenge, energy supply issues, the biodiversity crisis and the targets to be reached.	
Delivery of Growth Targets for our Cities and Metropolitan Areas - Cork, Limerick & Waterford.	Strong preparatory work and investment however significant concerns regarding delivery at the scale needed in particular given the trajectory of growth to the Dublin Region which will significantly undermine the NPF & RSES policy. Need for full commitment to implementation of NPF for our Region including accelerated MASP delivery.	
Creating the Greenest and most Liveable Metropolitan Areas for diverse communities, culture and enterprise	Significant steps taken however strong concern given the scale of the challenge to be addressed and the trajectory of growth to the Dublin Region which undermines the NPF & RSES policy.	
Developing and consolidating our Key Towns.	Significant preparatory work - need for strong commitment and investment.	
Developing the Cork Docklands.	Strong progress and potential - need to continue investment.	
Regeneration of Limerick-Shannon & Northern Distributor Route.	Strong preparatory progress and potential, need to continue investment and to fast track delivery of key infrastructure.- concern at the uncertainty at national level to regional and local objectives regarding LNDL required for balanced city.	
Develop Waterford as a Balanced Concentric City north & South of the River	Strong preparatory progress and potential, need to continue investment and to fast track delivery of key infrastructure.	

Key Enabler	Outlook/Challenges	Progress
<p>Creating an Inclusive Learning Region.</p>	<p>Very strong progress at national and regional level – need to follow through with continued investment and transformative initiatives.</p>	
<p>Positioning the Southern Region as Ireland’s International Gateway.</p>	<p>Significant potential given outcome of Brexit, offshore renewable sector etc -need to drive investment to capitalise potential of Ports in the Region and overcome national reliance on Dublin Port</p>	
<p>Making the most of Cork and Waterford Harbours and the Shannon Estuary.</p>	<p>Significant policy context change and potential for the region – need to follow through with investment.</p>	
<p>Improve & Protect our environment & heritage.</p>	<p>Significant steps taken however strong concern given the scale of the challenge to be addressed and negative indicators regarding environmental quality. Significant action required to address deteriorating environmental indicators on biodiversity, water quality and air quality.</p>	
<p>Developing our Tourism and Recreational potential.</p>	<p>Strong progress and potential, need to continue investment.</p>	
<p>Revitalising Rural Areas.</p>	<p>Significant preparatory progress, initiatives and potential, however significant challenges and structural issues remain to be addressed including targeted investment in digital and water infrastructure, protection of public services including rural transport and direct intervention to address vacancy/dereliction and implementation of sustainable rural housing policy to protect the viability of towns and villages.</p>	

Key Enabler	Outlook/Challenges	Progress
<p>Enhanced Connectivity - North to South and East Coast to West Coast.</p>	<p>Significant initiatives and investment however scale of challenge is significant. Concern that Eastern Economic Corridor is not actively recognised and need for improved coordination between regional/national level.</p>	
<p>Public Services & Infrastructure to support planned regional growth.</p>	<p>Strong preparatory work and investment however significant concerns regarding delivery at the scale needed in particular given the trajectory of growth to the Dublin Region which is undermining the NPF & RSES policy.</p>	

The report reflects that there has been a range of new initiatives and funding mechanisms in support of NPF and RSES objectives. The Regional Assembly acknowledges, welcomes and supports the significant investment and initiatives outlined by Government and Public Bodies supporting Project Ireland 2040 and the RSES. It is also clear that there are a range of initiatives being undertaken within each Local Authority to progress Project Ireland 2040. Many of the key enablers identified in the RSES are being addressed. However at this early stage in the Project Ireland process it is unclear if the structural changes required to address the overall 50:50% split fundamental to Project Ireland 2040 and RSES or the population change required in our urban and rural areas are on track and there are concerns regarding the achievement of this fundamental objective.

The finding of the NDP Review ‘Assessing the alignment of the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan’ that the regional cities have a lower share of investment projects over €20 million and €100 million compared to their planned growth is concerning given the Metropolitan Areas key role in the implementation of the NPF, the RSES, the scale of the growth proposed for each and the fact that three of the four cities are in the Southern Region. Preliminary census results are also concerning and indicate that while all local authorities in the Region experienced growth only Carlow, Waterford and Wexford experienced above average growth. Dublin and adjoining counties by contrast have experienced significant growth and there is no indication of a change in the trajectory of population growth to the Dublin area.

Figure 3.6:
Dublin versus Regional Cities

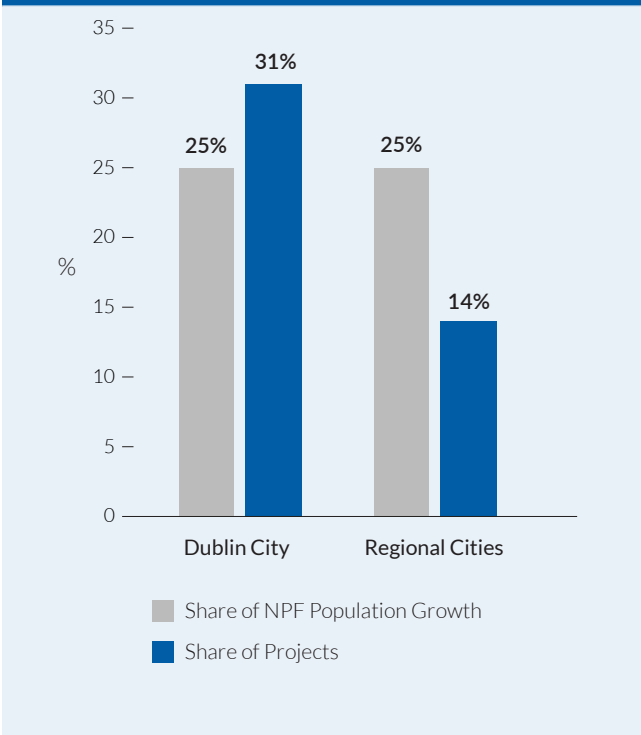
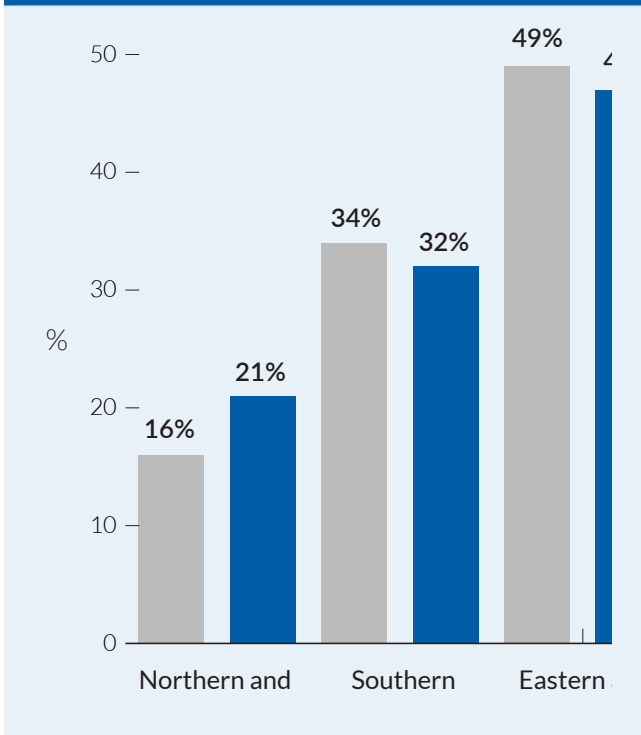


Figure 3.7:
Regional Investment Projects over €100 million



Source: Assessing the Alignment of the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2021.

Challenges to be Faced

Project Ireland 2040 provides a positive sustainable basis to address the spatial and environmental issues facing Ireland. While we are at the early stages of implementation there needs to be continual commitment to its aims and outcomes, adaptation of processes and review to ensure its effective implementation.

The SRA consider that the following challenges need to be faced and addressed to ensure the delivery of the NPF and successful RSES implementation.

- Successful delivery of a broad-based strategy is inherently challenging with no simple model of success.
- The population targets in the NPF and RSES and the challenges faced in relation to climate change are extremely ambitious and have never been accomplished in the State’s history;
- The trajectory of growth to Dublin and the surrounding Region is long

term, deeply embedded and unless this trajectory is changed, the ongoing growth levels will demand resources that should be allocated to achieve the NPF 50:50% model for regional development and will fundamentally undermine Project Ireland 2040. Preliminary results from Census 2022 are concerning and show no change in the trajectory of growth to the Dublin Region. There is a danger of 'mission creep' and that the objectives of Project Ireland 2040 will be undermined in response to current circumstances. This should be resisted.

- A key task and challenge is to ensure the investment strategy in the NDP, and other Government spending is clearly aligned to the NPF and the RSES Strategies to achieve the radical break from past patterns of investment and development. This is likely to require new thinking.
- Delivery of the NPF and the RSES requires more than investment. It is unclear if the structural changes necessary are being put in place to achieve the transformative change required particularly at regional, local, and metropolitan level. At regional level there are a range of regional manifestations involved in NPF/RSES implementation, however by the same token the regional governance structure in Ireland is underdeveloped by European terms. An approach for Integrated Regional Investment was envisaged at the outset of the NPF and NDP but was not progressed. The question arises:
 - Can the regional tier play a more enhanced and effective role in supporting national objectives; and
 - If it should, is there an appetite or willingness to facilitate this role at the national level?
- What are the components that drive population change . What are the factors that will successfully enable the level of growth required in the Region to happen? The current approach relies to a significant degree on establishing population targets and zoning. Is there a better more effective approach to achieving the change required?

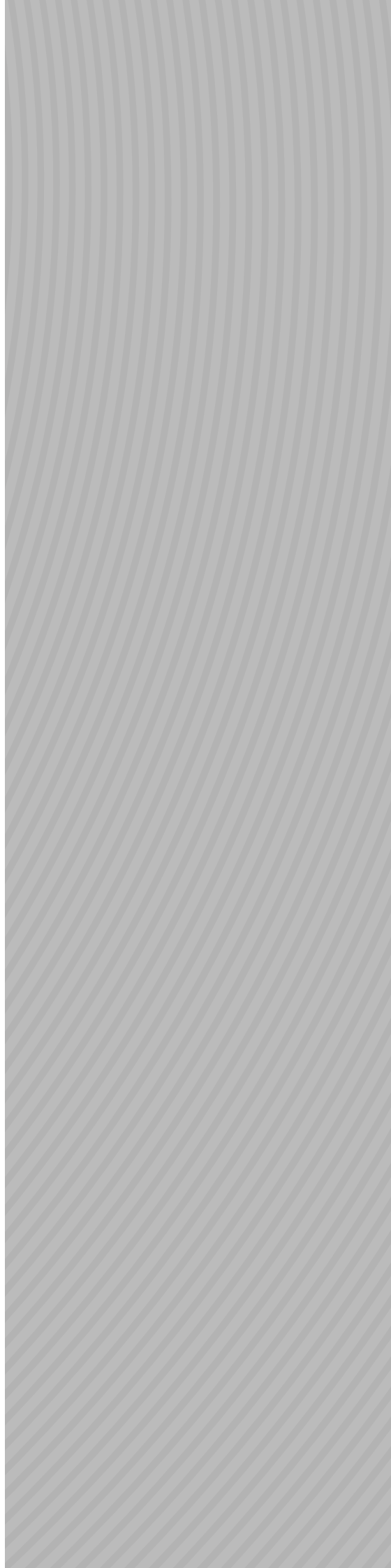
Many of these issues are addressed in the background paper to the NDP Review 'Assessing the alignment of the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan,' however the paper focuses on the national rather than the regional and local level and the report was published prior to the publication of results from the 2022 census. Nonetheless the contents, conclusions and recommendation of the report co align with many of the considerations by the Regional Assembly regarding implementation.

Recommendations to Support RSES Implementation

The following measures are recommended to further support the implementation of the RSES:

- Evidence of continued population growth in the Dublin region should not be used as a basis to undermine the achievement of Project Ireland 2040/RSES objectives.
- A clear mechanism should be applied to ensure sectoral investment is weighted in favour of the achievement of Objective 1a of the NPF and that population and employment growth in SRA and NWRA should at least match that of EMRA (the 50:50 split). This should include the integration and delegation to the regional tier to underpin the achievement of national strategic outcomes at the regional and local level.
- Significant policy instruments are now in place and the emphasis should be on delivery. Policy reform and review should focus on the mechanisms to achieve the high-level challenges faced including ensuring the delivery of the transformation change needed to deliver the NPF/RSES in our urban and rural areas and the significant challenge faced through climate change and environmental challenges rather than plan making.
- The funding mechanisms to achieve NPF and RSES objectives should be reviewed. In particular the question arises whether competitive bids should be a primary source for funding the strategic change sought through the NPF and RSES. In parallel, new funding structures should be considered to achieve the change required. Local Authorities need to be assisted to deliver on City and County Development Plan objectives and Core Strategies, especially the delivery of housing and employment targets aligned with national and regional projections and objectives. While there is merit to the competitive bid process more direct partnership and support to assist Local Authority initiatives is also needed to achieve NPF and RSES objectives.
- An effective delivery mechanism to progress the development of the MASPs in accordance with the NPF/RSES should be advanced.

- The establishment of dedicated long-term budgeting mechanism (10-year strategic fund) to drive the achievement of the accelerated growth of our three Metropolitan Areas ,funding support for Key Towns, towns and rural areas and other strategic objectives should be considered. Strengthening urban and rural areas together is the core message of our RSES. Funding should enable the diverse opportunities in our Region and support the implementation of the overall RSES strategy in seeking services, physical and social infrastructure investment and enterprise growth for all communities.
- The negative impacts of a multiplicity of regional bodies, sometimes with overlapping mandates and differing boundaries should be addressed. The remit of Regional Assemblies to enhance implementation of Project Ireland 2040 should be considered with an increased level of implementation and delivery undertaken directly at regional level, where the Regional Assemblies provide the necessary strategic skillsets and are connected to all regional agencies and stakeholders.
- The effective implementation of many RSES and MASP objectives relies on a strong working relationship between the Regional Assembly and Government Departments. There is a need to strengthen the structural relationship between the Regional Assemblies , DHLGH, Government Departments and the Project Ireland 2040 Board.
- The RSES set out an economic strategy for the region based on 5 economic principles and the spatial strategy of RSES focussed on the Region's Economic Drivers. Effective implementation of RSES requires that all Government Departments and Agencies and Local Authorities ensure alignment with regional policy and support the implementation of RSES. The Regional Enterprise Plans are a significant and positive intervention in regional development and there should be greater co alignment and integration between the RSES and REPS.



Appendices 1**Submissions received from the following Government Departments 2022.**

Government Department	Link
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/DHLGH_Response_August_2022.pdf
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/DPER.pdf
Department of Transport	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/DoT_RSES_Monitoring_Report_21_Feb.pdf
Department of Health	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/Dept_of_Health.pdf
Department of Rural & Community Development	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/Department_of_Rural_and_Community_Development_SRA_RSES_Monitoring_Report_Jan_2022_1.pdf
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/DETE_Report.pdf
Department of Environment, Climate & Communications	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/DECC_Merged.pdf
Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/Dept_Further_Education.pdf
Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/Dept_of_Tourism.pdf
Dept of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth	https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/Dept_of_Children%2C_Equality%2C_Disability%2C_Integration_and_Youth.pdf

Appendices 2**Submission received from Local Authorities 2022**

Local Authority	Link
Waterford City & County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Limerick City & County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Cork City Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Cork County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Tipperary County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Wexford County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Clare County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Kerry County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Carlow County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports
Kilkenny County Council	https://www.southernassembly.ie/regional-planning/implementation-reports

Appendices 3 Implementation Report

Implementation Report to
Elected Members 22nd
January 2021

https://www.southernassembly.ie/uploads/general-files/RSES_Implementation_-_Assembly_Report_January_2021.pdf

Appendices 4 Regional Policy Objectives (RPO)

RPO	Text As Appears in RSES Document
1	Environmental Assessment
2	Planning for Diverse Areas
3	Local Authority Core Strategies
4	Infrastructure Investment
5	Population Growth and Environmental Criteria
6	Collaboration between Metropolitan Areas
7	Delivery and Funding
8	Investment to Deliver on the Vision for Metropolitan Areas
9	Holistic Approach to Delivering Infrastructure
10	Compact Growth in Metropolitan Areas
11	Key Towns
12	Kilkenny City
13	Ennis
14	Carlow
15	Tralee
16	Wexford
17	Clonmel
18	Killarney
19	Mallow
20	Nenagh
21	Thurles
22	Newcastle West
23	Clonakilty
24	Dungarvan
25	Gorey
26	Towns and Villages
27	Rural
28	Collaboration/Partnership
29	Rural Settlement Networks

Regional Policy Objectives (RPO)	
RPO	Text As Appears in RSES Document
30	Inter-Urban Networks as Regional Drivers of Collaboration and Growth
31	Sustainable Place Framework
32	Rebuilding Ireland
33	Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA)
34	Regeneration, Brownfield and Infill Development
35	Support for Compact Growth
36	Land Development Agency
37	Active Land Management
38	Retrofitting Initiative Priorities
39	Economic Opportunities and Choice for all our Citizens
40	Regional Economic Resilience
41	Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)
42	Eastern Corridor
43	Rural Economy and EU Good Practices
44	Common Agriculture Policy
45	Action Plan for Rural Development and Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
46	Digital and Physical Infrastructure in Rural Areas
47	Rural Partnership Models
48	Innovation Hubs and Centres of Excellence
49	Innovation in Rural areas
50	Diversification
51	Economic Clusters and Ecosystems
52	Multinational Corporation (MNC) and Indigenous Industry Connections
53	Tourism
54	Tourism and the Environment
55	Retail
56	Low Carbon Economy
57	National Policy Statement on Bio-economy
58	Bio-economy and Rural Areas
59	National Bio-economy Hub in Lisheen
60	Social Enterprise
61	Health Place Audit (HPA) for Placemaking
62	Locations for Employment Development
63	Skills and Talent

Regional Policy Objectives (RPO)	
RPO	Text As Appears in RSES Document
64	Facilitate new business formation, growth and industrial re-organisation
65	Attracting overseas Entrepreneurs and maintaining Irish Entrepreneurs
66	Monitoring and evaluating our economic eco-system performance
67	Enterprise and Innovation Support
68	Regional Investment
69	International Good Practice
70	Bidding capacity
71	Shared Evidence Base
72	Brexit
73	International branding of the Region and reputation
74	Economic Risk Management System
75	Anticipating Economic Structural Changes
76	Marine Economy
77	Maritime Spatial planning - Consistency and Alignment
78	First Mover under the National Marine Planning Framework
79	Shannon Estuary and Other Harbour Plans
80	Marine Resource and Blue Economy
81	Fishery Harbour Centres and Local Authority Harbours
82	Seafood Sector
83	Island and Coastal Communities
84	Fishing Local Area Group (FLAG) Development Strategies
85	Renewable offshore energy
86	Marine Cluster
87	Low Carbon Energy Future
88	National Mitigation Plan and National Adaptation Framework
89	Building Resilience to Climate Change
90	Regional Decarbonisation
91	Decarbonisation in the Transport Sector
92	Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
93	CNG & EV Infrastructure
94	Decarbonisation in the Agricultural Sector
95	Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation
96	Integrating Renewable Energy Sources
97	Power Stations and Renewable Energy

Regional Policy Objectives (RPO)	
RPO	Text As Appears in RSES Document
98	Regional Renewable Energy Strategy
99	Renewable Wind Energy
100	Indigenous Renewable Energy Production and Grid Injection
101	International Hub for Energy Innovation
102	Energy Research Funding
103	Interconnection Infrastructure
104	Energy Storage and Carbon Capture
105	Clean Electric Heat Technologies & District Heating
106	Future Proofing and Retrofitting
107	Regional Waste Management Plan for the Southern Region 2015-2021
108	EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy
109	Bio-Energy Implementation Plan
110	Ecosystem Services
111	Water Resources
112	Water Quality
113	Floods Directive
114	Flood Risk Management Objectives
115	Flood Risk Management Plans
116	Planning System and Flood Risk Management
117	Flood Risk Management and Biodiversity
118	Flood Risk Management and Capital Works
119	Flood Relief Schemes
120	Flooding and Coastal Erosion
121	Effective Collaboration to Implement River Basin Management Plans and Water Framework Directive
122	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
123	River Basin Management Plan and Spatial Planning
124	Green Infrastructure
125	Green Infrastructure Corridors
126	Biodiversity
127	Invasive Species
128	All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015 – 2020
129	Landscape
130	Air Quality

Regional Policy Objectives (RPO)	
RPO	Text As Appears in RSES Document
131	Noise
132	'Dark Sky' Parks and Reserves
133	Smart Cities
134	Smart Cities and Smart Region
135	High Quality High Capacity International Digital Transmission
136	National Broadband Plan (NBP)
137	Mobile Infrastructure
138	Digital Strategies
139	Low Carbon International Connectivity
140	International Connectivity
141	Regional Freight Strategy
142	Ports
143	Ports and Airports
144	Port Infrastructure
145	Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region
146	High Quality International Connectivity – Ports
147	Economic Opportunities of Ports
148	National Aviation Policy
149	Airport Strategy for the Southern Region
150	High Quality International Connectivity – Airports
151	Integration of Land Use and Transport
152	Local Planning Objectives
153	Capacity of Inter-Urban Road Connections
154	Land Use Plans
155	Managing the Region's Transport Assets
156	Steady State Investment
157	Local Transport Plans (LTP)
158	Intra-regional Rural Connectivity
159	Role of Transport in Enabling Access for All
160	Smart and Sustainable Mobility
161	Smart Mobility
162	Multi-Modal Travel Integration
163	Sustainable Mobility Targets
164	Metropolitan Area Transport Strategies


Regional Policy Objectives (RPO)	
RPO	Text As Appears in RSES Document
165	Higher Densities
166	Investment in Strategic Inter Regional Multi-Modal Connectivity to Metropolitan Areas and Economic Corridors
167	National Road Projects
168	Investment in Regional and Local Roads
169	Strategic Road Network Improvement Priorities
170	Rail
171	Bus
172	Rural Transport
173	Tourism Corridors
174	Walking and Cycling
175	Improving Regional Quality of Life through Infrastructure-led Planning
176	10-minute” city and town concepts
177	Childcare, Education, and Health Services
178	Universal Health Services
179	Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society
180	Volunteering and Active Citizenship
181	Equal Access
182	Ageing Population
183	Digital Strategies
184	TUSE and MTU
185	New School Facilities
186	Lifelong Learning
187	Education and Training
188	Regional Skills Fora
189	Further Education and Training
190	Lifelong Learning and Healthy City initiatives
191	Cultural and Creative Sectors
192	Cultural Policies and Objectives
193	Collaborative Regional Partnerships
194	Arts, Heritage and Culture
195	Language Plans
196	Gaeltacht
197	Irish language Networks


Regional Policy Objectives (RPO)	
RPO	Text As Appears in RSES Document
198	Sport and Community Organisations
199	Larger Sports Projects
200	Green Infrastructure and Recreation
201	National Trails, Walking Routes, Greenway and Blueway Corridors
202	Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Built Heritage assets
203	Revitalisation of Historic Cores
204	Better Public Access
205	Built Heritage
206	Architectural Heritage
207	Archaeological Investigation
208	Irish Water and Water Supply
209	Strategic Water Supply Projects
210	Drinking Water Protection Plans
211	Irish Water and Wastewater
212	Strategic Wastewater Treatment Facilities
213	Rural Wastewater Treatment Programmes
214	Eliminating Untreated Discharges and Long-term Planning
215	Separation of Foul and Surface Water Networks
216	Servicing of Rural Villages
217	Storm Water Infrastructure
218	Sustainable Urban Drainage and Rainwater Harvesting
219	New Energy Infrastructure
220	Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM)
221	Renewable Energy Generation and Transmission Network
222	Electricity Infrastructure
223	International Energy Interconnection Infrastructure
224	Delivery of Energy Networks
225	Gas Network
226	Implementation Mechanism for the Strategy and MASPs
227	Investment and Funding
228	Smart Growth Initiatives
229	Monitoring the Strategy





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