



Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt

Southern Regional  
Assembly

# Corporate Plan 2025-2029



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Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach

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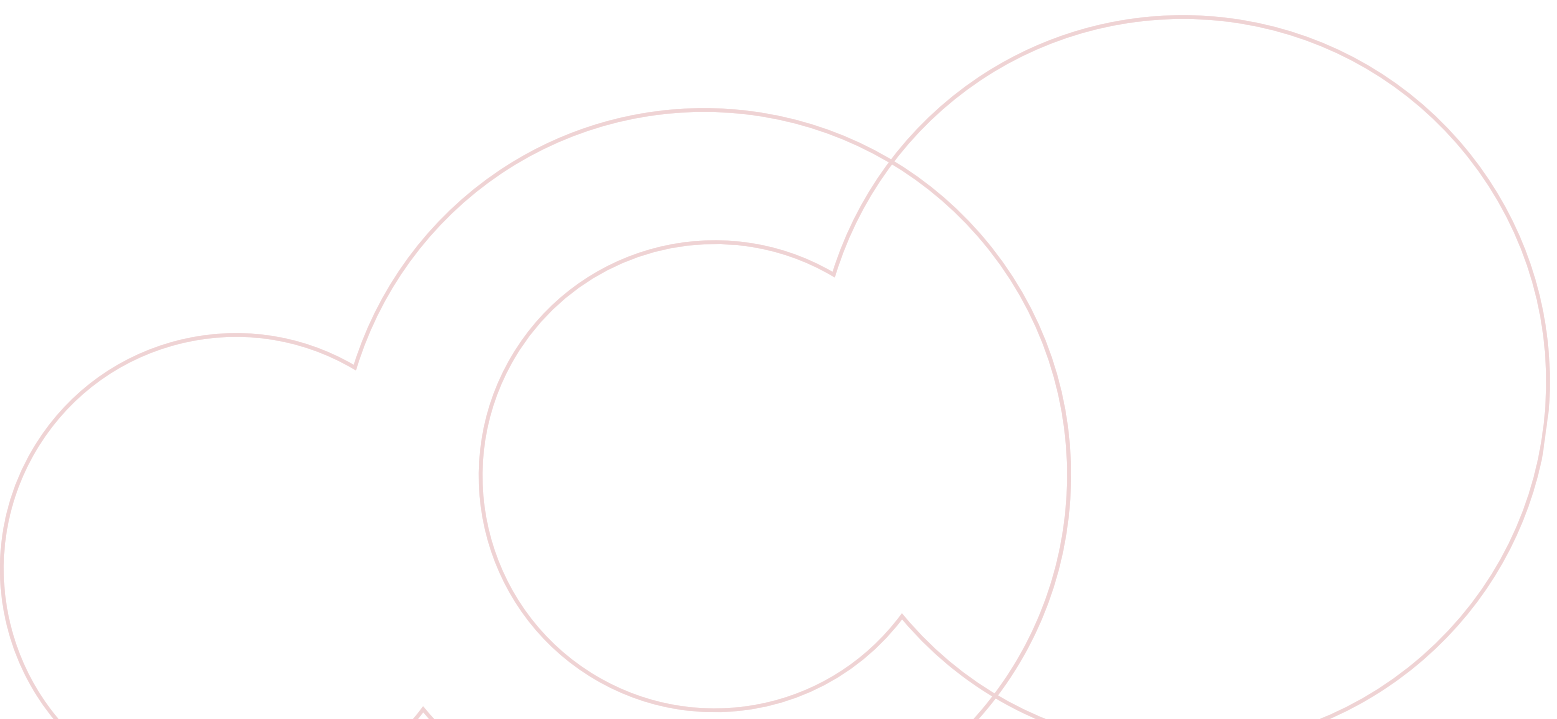


Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt  
Southern Regional  
Assembly

The Southern Regional Assembly is Managing Authority for the ERDF Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme which is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union.

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# Foreword

As we embark on a new term, marking over ten years of the Southern Regional Assembly, we are delighted to present the publication our Corporate Plan for the period 2025 – 2029.

This plan will serve as our roadmap for the next five years and sets an ambitious path for the southern region. The process of drafting the plan has been a collaborative one, engaging with our members, staff, and the public has been integral in how this framework has developed.

The Southern Regional Assembly has proven to be proactive and responsive in our ability to deliver in an ever-changing environment. Since the publication of our previous Corporate Plan, we have had to face the challenges of Brexit, and the Covid 19 pandemic. The current backdrop is defined by a climate emergency, a housing crisis and geopolitical uncertainty.

These challenges also bring opportunities, and we are acutely aware that the Assembly must be capable of responding for the people of our Region and must ensure that responsiveness and resilience are key to overcoming challenges.

We have set new ambitious Goals and Objectives for how we can be regional leaders to create a more liveable, sustainable, and inclusive place for our citizens to be a part of. Our strategic objectives are underpinned by the Sustainable Development Goals, and our values are a core element in how we will achieve our goals.

Our Corporate Plan has also given us the opportunity to showcase our roles and functions in more detail, allowing the public to better understand our role and responsibilities. Some of our key priorities include implementing the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the management of EU Regional Operational Programmes, EU project participation, and delivering on our climate action mandate.

The Assembly Members and Staff are fully committed to the continued partnership that has allowed us to deliver in regional development and strong collaboration over the past five years, and we look forward to implementing this new roadmap over the next five years.



**David Kelly**  
Director



**Cllr. Ken Murnane**  
Cathaoirleach



## Mission & Vision







## Our Mission

**Our Mission** is to lead regional development through effective, sustainable spatial and economic planning and the delivery of EU programmes, through collaboration with our partners and stakeholders.



## Our Vision

**Our Vision** is for a region that is economically strong, inclusive, connected, climate-resilient and sustainable.

# Our Values

The Southern Regional Assembly has embedded core values in our day-to-day work that allow us to be leaders in regional development. These values help us to adapt and overcome challenges we face and drive our vision to better our region and its people.



**Leadership** – We will grow a supportive and creative leadership role for the region, making bold strategic decisions that will benefit our people and promote balanced development.

**Good Governance** – We will adhere to the highest standards of conduct, governance, integrity, transparency and accountability in the performance of our duties, and our work will be open to scrutiny and review.

**Sustainability** – We will enshrine responsible best practice in sustainability and climate change in all of our policies and activities, offering support to our regional stakeholders in achieving a transition to a low carbon society.

**Innovation** – We will adopt an innovative approach in how we meet current and future challenges in the region, enhancing our skills to improve how we deliver our work.

**Ambition** – Our ideas will be ambitious and strive to break boundaries, we will be a disruptor in our region, laying foundations for enhancing our communities and empowering our people.

**Collaboration** – We will operate as a catalyst for regional growth and development through honest engagement with all of our stakeholders and create meaningful partnerships to achieve common goals.

**Equality** – We will commit to eliminating discrimination, promoting equality, and protecting human rights of all of our stakeholders, including our staff, our members and all citizens.

**Inclusivity** – We will take an inclusive approach in our consultations and engagements with stakeholders, making information more accessible. We will also work to achieve a region that celebrates diverse cultures in our communities.



# Purpose of Our Corporate Plan

Section 134(2) of the [Local Government Act, 2001](#) requires every local authority and regional assembly to “prepare a statement of strategy”. This Corporate Plan serves as the strategic framework for the Southern Regional Assembly over the next five years. It states our goals and objectives and sets the context of our work through our mission and vision, underlined by the core values of the organisation.

Our Corporate Plan has been prepared on the basis of an organisational-wide strategic approach encompassing all the roles and functions of the Southern Regional Assembly. The Plan provides the foundation for our Annual Programme of Work and Personal Development Plans.

The Corporate Plan also facilitates public and government understanding of our work thereby increasing awareness and knowledge of our role and functions.

The next five years will present new challenges and opportunities for the Southern Regional Assembly, and our Corporate Plan sets out the framework for how we can adapt and lead in the development of the southern region.



# How the Plan was Prepared

The Southern Regional Assembly adopted a comprehensive process in the preparation of the Corporate Plan, which underlined the importance of reviewing the previous plan and looking forward to the next five years.

A key element was the formation of a staff working group that featured representation from all sections of the Assembly. The group met frequently and developed actions and a roadmap for the drafting of the plan. Informing the process was the National Oversight and Audit Commission's [Review of Corporate Plans 2019-2024](#) which provided an evaluation on the Assembly's previous Corporate Plan and made recommendations to strengthen future plans.

As part of our pre-plan consultation, an online survey was conducted for members of the public in September 2024. The survey was themed around the public's awareness and knowledge of the Assembly and provided the public an opportunity to give feedback on the values of the Assembly and highlight regional development priorities.

A separate online survey was issued to the Members of the Assembly, concerning the engagement of Members, and alignment of local and regional policy.

In addition to the staff working group, a staff workshop was held during November 2024, in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. This was an opportunity to hear views on how the Assembly could progress over the next five-year period and how teams and staff could support each other on that journey. The online surveys were reviewed, and new goals were drafted. Core values were discussed which led to a constructive and positive approach to how the Assembly will continue to conduct its business and consider our obligations through compliance with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

A workshop for our Members took place at Ballykisteen, Co. Tipperary in December 2024, creating an important forum to explore how the Assembly can improve links between local authorities and the Assembly. The Members discussed visibility and awareness of the Assembly, not only for the public but also at central government level.

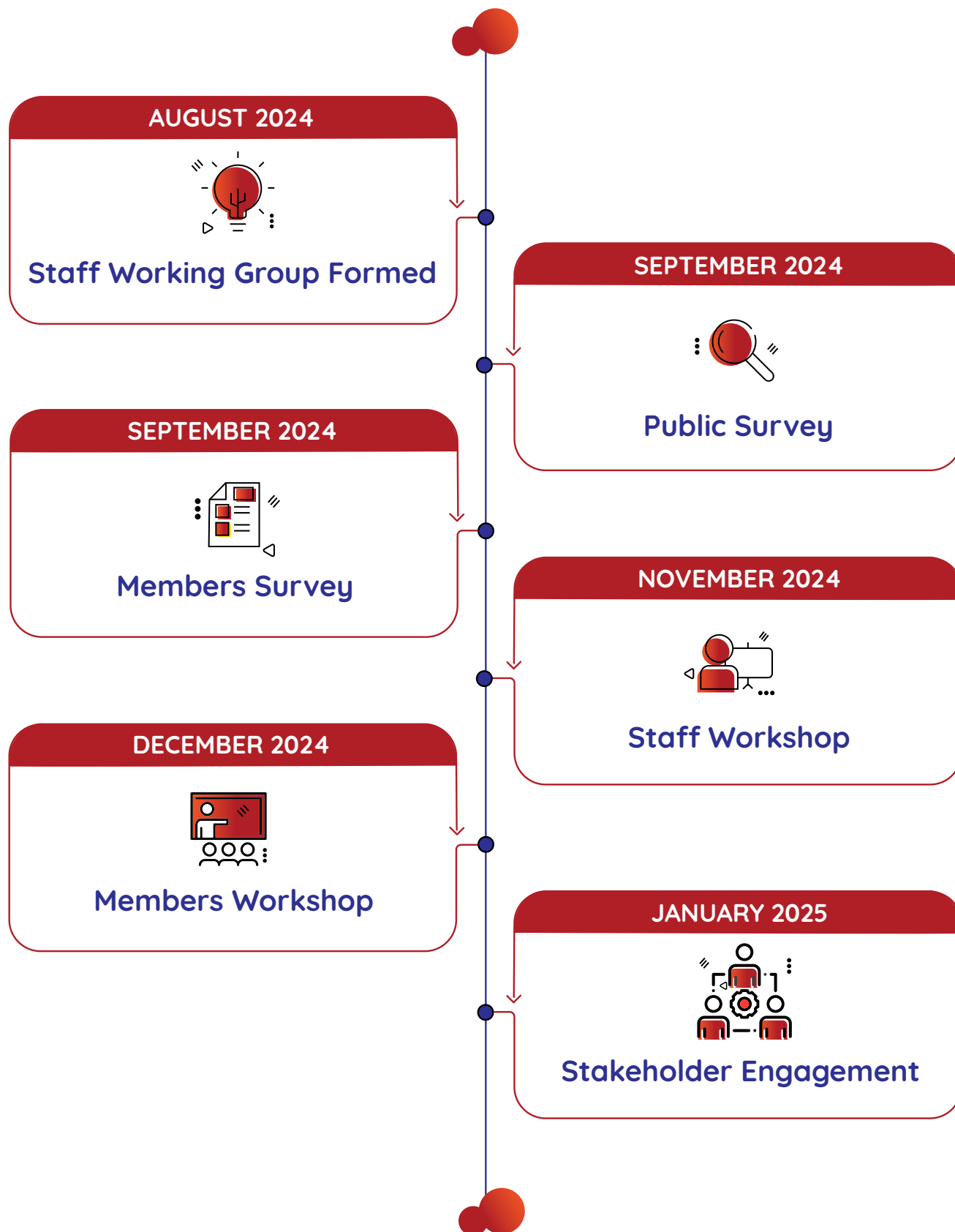
A key item discussed was the enhancement of Members' roles through further training and capacity building.

In January 2025, a stakeholder review commenced, and submissions were considered as part of the final draft of the plan.





# Pre-plan Consultation



# Profile of the Southern Region

## Our Local Authorities

|                       |                                |                                 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Carlow County Council | Kerry County Council           | Waterford City & County Council |
| Clare County Council  | Kilkenny County Council        |                                 |
| Cork City Council     | Limerick City & County Council | Wexford County Council          |
| Cork County Council   | Tipperary County Council       |                                 |

## Our People

1.7 million population (Census 2022)



## Our Area



## Our Connectivity



## Our Environment





## Our Economy

**73k**  
Commercial Properties

**4.9%**  
Unemployment Rate

**469**  
IDA Companies (2022)

**937,100**  
people in labour force  
(33% of the state total)

**€163 billion** GDP 2021  
(38% of the State)  
Highest level of GDP of per capita in  
European Union (source: eurostat)

## Our Education

**3** UNESCO Learning Cities  
Cork, Limerick, and  
Waterford

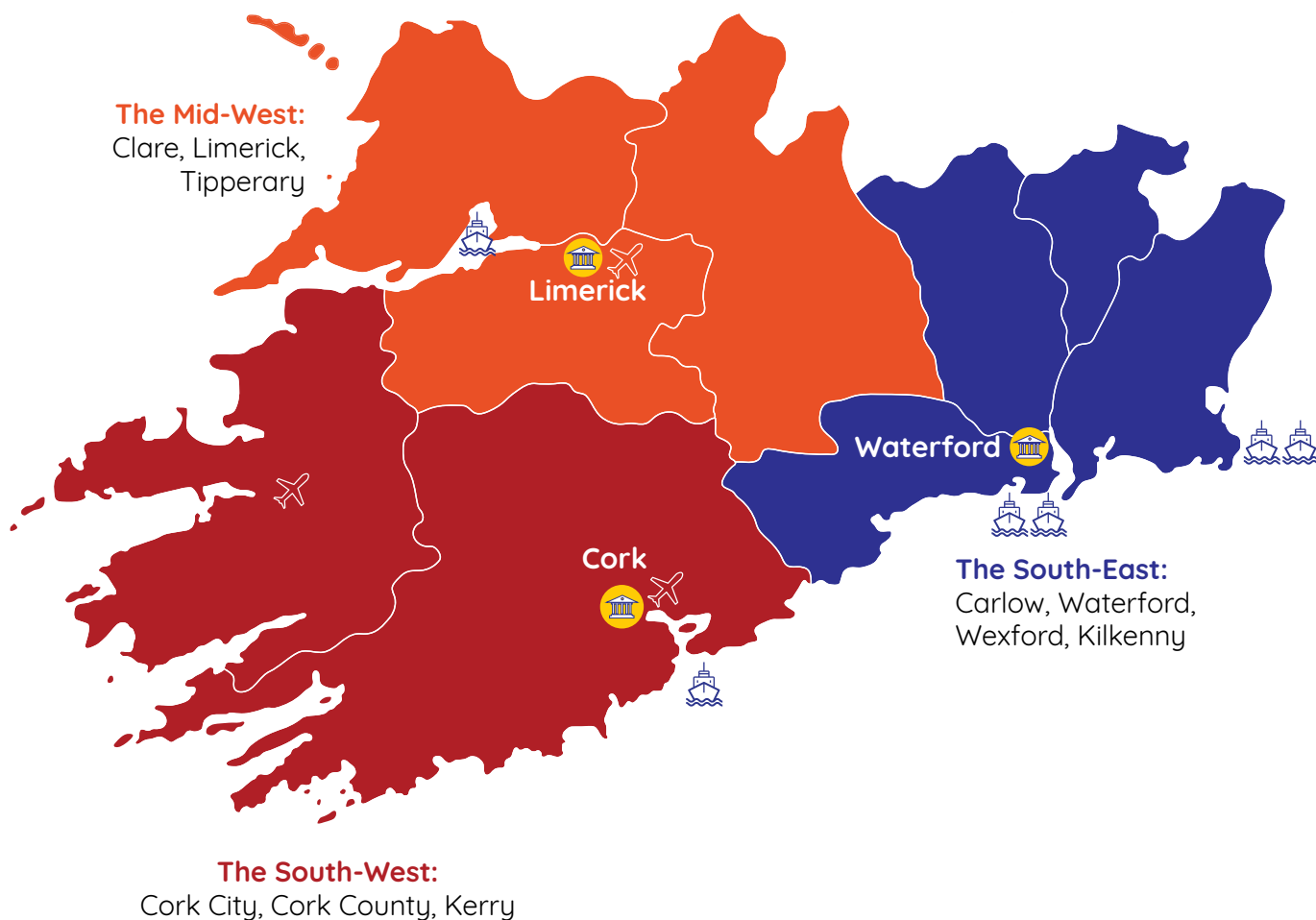
**5** Universities

**28,100**  
third / higher level  
graduates in 2022  
(36% of the state)

**187,000**  
students in primary education (2022)

**134,800**  
students in post primary  
education (2022)

Further regional indicators can be found at [Regional Development Monitor](#)



# About the Southern Regional Assembly

## Background

In 2014 the Government undertook a significant reform of the [Local Government Act](#) and rationalised the regional level by abolishing the eight Regional Authorities (primarily responsible for planning matters) and two existing Regional Assemblies (primarily responsible for EU matters), and replacing them with the following three Regional Assemblies with enhanced responsibilities:

- **Southern Regional Assembly**
- **Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly**
- **Northern & Western Regional Assembly**

**The Southern Region** consists of 10 Local Authorities: Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Kerry, Kilkenny, Limerick City & County, Tipperary, Waterford City & County, and Wexford County Councils.

**The Eastern & Midland Region** consists of 12 Local Authorities: Dublin City Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, Kildare, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Offaly, South Dublin, Westmeath, and Wicklow County Councils.

**The Northern and Western Region** consists of 9 Local Authorities: Cavan, Donegal, Galway City, Galway County, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon, and Sligo County Councils.



## Our Responsibilities

The Southern Regional Assembly must have regard for the general welfare of the region which our Establishment Order specifies as including:

- The physical, economic, social, demographic, infrastructural, and environmental situation of the region, its economic and other development potential, and the protection or improvement of its environmental, heritage, amenity, and cultural resources.
- The programmes, plans, policies, proposals, and objectives of the Government and of any Minister of the Government and of local authorities and other public authorities, as appropriate, and the need to promote coordination of and/ or consistency with them.
- The resources that are available, or are likely to be available, for the performance of their functions.
- The specific need for coordinated action to promote effectiveness in local government and public services, to promote consistency with the programmes, plans, policies, proposals, and objectives of the Government or Minister of the Government, and to ensure coherent spatial planning and sustainable development within and between regions.



## Our Functions

The Southern Regional Assembly is part of the regional tier of government in Ireland and forges links between the EU, and national and local levels through regional spatial and economic planning and European funding (particularly through the Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2012-27) for the benefit of the Southern Region.

The Assembly interacts with national government, state agencies, local authorities, and stakeholders from the private and third sectors at local, regional, national and EU levels in relation to its statutory functions.

The Assembly has responsibilities with a democratic mandate set down under the terms of [Statutory Instrument Number 573 of 2014, the Local Government Act, 1991 \(Regional Assemblies\) \(Establishment\) Order, 2014](#).

### The formal functions of the Regional Assemblies include:

- The formulation, adoption, and implementation of statutory Regional, Spatial, and Economic Strategies. These strategies integrate city and county development plans and Local Economic Community Plans.
- Management of EU regional operational programmes, participation in European Territorial Cooperation programmes, supporting the Irish national delegation to the Committee of the Regions, EU project participation, and other EU regional focused actions.
- Facilitation and provision of assistance to local authorities in engaging with EU institutions on matters related to regional, and local development.
- Providing a regional platform through which national, local, and regional public bodies, and other agencies can be coordinated within the context of national policy. Regional Assemblies can also undertake research studies, surveys, and the collection of information, data, or statistics, in relation to any of its functions or on any matter to which the functions of the National Oversight and Audit Commission apply.



## Regional Planning

The [Local Government Act, 1991 \(Regional Assemblies\) \(Establishment\) Order, 2014](#) introduced a strong role for the Southern Regional Assembly in relation to spatial planning and economic development of the Southern Region.

The Assembly's main strategic planning function involves the preparation, adoption, and implementation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. It also has an oversight role for the preparation of Local Economic & Community Plans and the preparation of statutory submissions on City & County Development Plans.

The Assembly assesses whether the plans are consistent with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, and, if necessary, make formal recommendations to ensure alignment.

The [Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy](#) is a 12-year strategic regional development framework for the way our society, environment, economy, and the use of land should evolve. It includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans for [Cork](#), [Limerick-Shannon](#) and [Waterford](#), and strategies for our Key Towns, towns, villages, and rural areas.



The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in [Project Ireland 2040](#), the [National Planning Framework](#), [National Development Plan](#) and the [National Marine Spatial Plan](#).

To realise the vision of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, the Assembly collaborates closely with local authorities and state agencies on strategic initiatives that aim to develop a more connected, resilient, and sustainable region.

As a prescribed body under the [Planning and Development Act 2024](#) the Assembly is also consulted on specific planning matters, playing a pivotal role in guiding sustainable development and influencing regional planning for long term growth and environmental stewardship.

## EU Interreg Programmes

The European Union promotes cooperation between regions and countries to help their economic and social development across borders. The EU's Cohesion Policy, especially through Interreg programmes, has helped to support interregional collaboration through cross-border and transnational cooperation. These foster innovation, development, and better governance. Irish organisations (public, private, academia, civil society) are eligible to apply for funding from several Interreg programmes, each of which cover different geographical areas of Europe, and target specific themes, please see Appendix B.

At Interreg Programme level, the Southern Regional Assembly plays a significant role as a representative for Ireland, as an EU Member State, and on the Monitoring Committee of these



Interreg Programmes. The Monitoring Committees agree on overall funding strategies for 7-year periods, prioritising topics, allocating funding, and deciding which projects should be funded.

The Assembly is the National Contact Point for the Interreg North West Europe and Interreg Europe programmes; the role of the Contact Point is to promote the programme to Irish applicants and provide bespoke support and guidance during the proposal development phase.

The Assembly facilitates an information and advice network for stakeholders of the Southern Region who wish to understand EU Interreg funding options available for their organisations. The network, known as the “ETC network” serves as a collaborative platform for members to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and learn from one another’s initiatives, creating a strong and supportive community.

Finally, the Assembly is responsible for the Financial Control of Interreg funded projects in Ireland. See section Financial Control.

## EU Projects

In addition to its functions in the management of EU Programmes, the Assembly is also a recipient of EU funding as a project partner. Participation in EU projects provides access to knowledge from across the European Union, supporting policy solutions for regional challenges and advancing sustainable economic, social, and environmental development.

For this reason, the Assembly participates either as a project partner, or as a Lead Partner in EU projects which are working towards the Southern Region’s development objectives. The project officers work collaboratively across the organisation and with external stakeholders, securing EU funding to support the delivery of regional development priorities, including the objectives outlined in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

For further information on EU Projects currently being delivered, please see [Appendix C](#).

## Financial Control

Financial Control involves checks or audits of project expenditure during project implementation before a payment claim is submitted. The Assembly’s First Level Control team verifies and validates expenditure incurred by a project to ensure compliance with the relevant EU, national, regional, institutional and programme rules as well as with the provisions of the subsidy contract and the approved application form. These controls provide a guarantee for the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and, most importantly, for the project itself, that costs are accounted for and eligible.

Financial Control covers 100% of all declared project spend and the system consists of two types of verification checks:

1. Desk based administrative checks on expenditure declared in payment claims,
2. On the spot checks that take place at the project partner’s office and carried out on a sample basis.

## ERDF Regional Programmes

The Southern Regional Assembly is the Managing Authority for the European Union co-funded programmes supported under Cohesion Policy for the Region. The [Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme running from 2021-27](#) is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the [European Regional Development Fund](#). This fund aims to strengthen EU economic, social, and territorial cohesion by correcting imbalances between regions. The Programme is investing €663 million, supported by €265 million European Regional Development Fund and €398 million Government of Ireland funding.

The Programme supports balanced regional growth within and between the Southern Region and the Eastern & Midland Region under three priorities:

### Priority One: Smarter and More Competitive Regions

Our higher education institutions are intrinsic to growing the regional knowledge economy. They educate leaders, foster research, and support entrepreneurship, and this strengthens the fibre of our regions by attracting talented professionals to higher quality jobs in adaptable industries.

Priority One will build research, development, and innovation capacity in the public research institutions of the Programme Area by focusing on developing and enhancing research and innovation capacity and advanced technologies uptake, fostering sustainable growth, competitiveness, and job creation in Small & Medium Enterprises, including by productive investments.

### Priority Two: Low Carbon, and Energy Efficient Regions

The Programme will support owner-occupiers of residential homes who are in, or at risk of, fuel poverty across the Programme Area through deep retrofitting activities.

This will increase the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce the amount spent on fuel. This deep retrofitting activity will be rolled out by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland as a part of the Warmer Homes initiative.

### Priority Three: Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development

The Programme will support projects that protect our heritage buildings, strengthen our communities and revitalise our towns. The projects will support the national 'Town Centres First' policy.

For further information on other Inter and Cross Regional Programme, please see [Appendix B](#).



## Human Resources

The Human Resources Team is responsible for the management of people, which includes recruitment for the organisation, facilitating all training requirements, employee contracts, induction for new employees, management and monitoring of all Human Resources records, management of all leave types and maintaining a time and attendance system. The team is responsible for payroll and superannuation functions and completion of all statutory Human Resources returns.



The team is also responsible for developing, reviewing, implementing and monitoring Policies and Procedures, as appropriate (in accordance with legislation/ best practice) for the Assembly's dynamic work environment, including the ongoing management of the Performance Management & Development System process and development of strategic workforce plans. The Human Resources Unit provides regular updates and reports to the management team

The Human Resources Team strives to develop a positive work culture and promote staff wellbeing.

## Finance

The Finance Team is responsible for the management of all financial records within the Assembly, including the provision of financial support to all Divisions, particularly in relation to the EU claims process and Technical Assistance recoupment. The team is also responsible for the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements in accordance with Article 58 of the [Establishment Order](#) and preparation of an Annual Assembly Budget, in accordance with Article 56 of [Establishment Order](#). The Assembly is tasked with keeping financial records in good order and presenting same to the Local Government Auditor in accordance with the provisions of [Section 115\(2\)\(a\) of the Act of 2001](#). It is also responsible for the timely/prompt payments of accounts and completing statutory financial returns.



The Finance Team is also responsible for the processing and payment of all Travel and Subsistence claims for both employees and members of the Assembly, in line with the relevant legislation. This also includes the maintenance of reporting records for Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland statutory returns.

## Information Technology (IT)

The IT Team is responsible for ensuring that the IT needs and requirements of the Assembly's employees are met and that all employees are equipped with the necessary devices to ensure that they can operate effectively and efficiently on a daily basis. This includes the provision of IT hardware such as laptops, mobile phones, printers, docking stations, and screens. The IT Team ensures that the software is up to date for the organisation, including licencing arrangements.

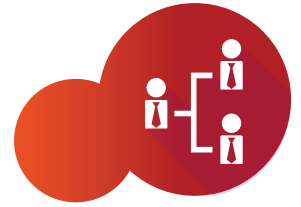


The team also covers the management of the cloud management system, email accounts, and management of the IT maintenance contract which is presently outsourced to an external IT provider.

The IT Team actively pursues systems development for the organisation.

## Corporate Affairs

Our Corporate Affairs Team is responsible for the management and administration of all aspects relating to Statutory Regional Assembly meetings, Assembly membership, training of members and payment of allowances to members.



The unit is also tasked with ensuring the efficient running of the Assembly as a whole, including management of all corporate activities and corporate contracts, the maintenance of Assembly Headquarters in Waterford City, reception duties, post/phones, office supplies, Disability access, General Data Protection Regulation, Freedom of Information, Health and Safety, staff welfare facilities, record management and filing systems, storage/archival facilities, visiting delegations, Energy Monitoring and Reporting, maintenance and review of corporate insurance cover and file, and corporate procurement.

The unit also provides corporate communications functions relating to website, social media, and press releases.

The Statutory functions relating to Corporate are as follows:

- Preparation of Corporate Plan
- Preparation of Corporate Plan Annual Progress Report (to be included in Annual Report)
- Review and report on progress in achieving strategic objectives of Corporate Plan
- Preparation of Annual Work Programme
- Preparation of Annual Report - to be prepared and adopted by the Assembly annually
- Preparation of various reports as may be required by the National Oversight & Audit Commission
- Assistance in preparation of Assembly Budget, particularly Corporate/Communications budget

## Irish Regions European Office

The Irish Regions European Office is a shared service for the three Regional Assemblies and 31 local authorities of Ireland.



Operationally the office is part of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and with the support of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, is focused on bringing the EU closer to the wider local government sector and vice versa.

The three Regional Assemblies play a vital role in the management and delivery of EU Regional Policy funding programmes. All three Regional Assemblies also act as National Contact Points for European Territorial Cooperation Programmes and participate on the monitoring committees of those programmes.





# Key Stakeholders









# Our Members

The Southern Regional Assembly's work is overseen currently by 34 local authority elected members, 27 nominated from the constituent local authorities and currently 7 councillors from the Committee of The Regions, nominated by the Government. In addition, the directly elected Mayor of Limerick is an ex-officio member of the Assembly.

## Members' Roles and Responsibilities

S.I. No. 573/2014 of the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment Order 2014) sets out the roles and responsibilities for nominated members of the Southern Regional Assembly. Members' duties include:

- Approval of annual accounts and budget
- Adoption of an annual programme of work
- Adoption of a Corporate Plan
- Adoption of an Annual Report
- Attendance at Assembly Meetings, and Committee Meetings (as set up by the Assembly)

**The key statutory functions that Assembly Members are involved with include:**

- Preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.
- Observations of draft Development Plans and variations to Development Plans.
- Adoption of a Statement of Alignment with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for all Local Economic Community Plans.





## Our Current Members

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Cllr. Ken Murnane</b>         | Carlow County Council (Cathaoirleach)                  |
| <b>Cllr. John Sheahan</b>        | Limerick City & County Council<br>(Leas Cathaoirleach) |
| <b>Cllr. Anthony Barry</b>       | Cork County Council                                    |
| <b>Cllr. Pip Breen</b>           | Wexford County Council                                 |
| <b>Cllr. John Brennan</b>        | Kilkenny County Council                                |
| <b>Cllr. Alan Coleman</b>        | Cork County Council                                    |
| <b>Cllr. Michael Collins</b>     | Limerick City & County Council                         |
| <b>Cllr. Frankie Daly</b>        | Limerick City & County Council                         |
| <b>Cllr. Jim D'Arcy</b>          | Waterford City & County Council                        |
| <b>Cllr. Kay Dawson</b>          | Cork County Council                                    |
| <b>Cllr. Joe Kavanagh</b>        | Cork City Council                                      |
| <b>Cllr. Deirdre Kelly</b>       | Cork County Council                                    |
| <b>Cllr. Máirín McGrath</b>      | Tipperary County Council                               |
| <b>Cllr. Andrew McGuinness</b>   | Kilkenny County Council                                |
| <b>Cllr. Norma Moriarty</b>      | Kerry County Council                                   |
| <b>Cllr. Barbara-Anne Murphy</b> | Wexford County Council                                 |
| <b>Cllr. Tony O'Brien</b>        | Clare County Council                                   |
| <b>Cllr. Niall O'Callaghan</b>   | Kerry County Council                                   |
| <b>Cllr. Sheila O'Callaghan</b>  | Cork County Council                                    |
| <b>Cllr. Bobby O'Connell</b>     | Kerry County Council                                   |
| <b>Cllr. Thomas Phelan</b>       | Waterford City & County Council                        |
| <b>Cllr. Peggy Ryan</b>          | Tipperary County Council                               |
| <b>Cllr. Terry Shannon</b>       | Cork City Council                                      |
| <b>Cllr. Bill Slattery</b>       | Clare County Council                                   |
| <b>Cllr. Michael Smith</b>       | Tipperary County Council                               |
| <b>Cllr. Oliver Walsh</b>        | Wexford County Council                                 |
| <b>Cllr. Ben Ward</b>            | Carlow County Council                                  |
| <b>John Moran</b>                | Mayor of Limerick                                      |

## Committee of the Regions Southern Members

|                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Cllr. Clare Colleran Molloy</b> | Clare County Council     |
| <b>Cllr. Gillian Coughlan</b>      | Cork County Council      |
| <b>Cllr. Fergal Dennehy</b>        | Cork City Council        |
| <b>Cllr. Dan Boyle</b>             | Cork City Council        |
| <b>Cllr. Kieran McCarthy</b>       | Cork City Council        |
| <b>Cllr. Joe Hannigan</b>          | Tipperary County Council |
| <b>Vacant</b>                      |                          |





## European Committee of the Regions

### European Committee of the Regions

Established in 1994, the [European Committee of the Regions](#) is an EU advisory body and political assembly of 329 local and regional elected representatives from all EU countries. It advises on new laws that have an impact on regions and meets six times per year, to debate proposed legislation, and agree on resolutions for further action by the EU.

The Committee works to bring EU citizens closer to the EU. By involving regional and local representatives who are in daily contact with their electorate's concerns, but also by inviting citizens to participate in various events and debates, the CoR contributes to reducing the gap between the EU institutions' work and EU citizens.

Currently, there are six Committee of the Regions representatives serving as members of the Southern Regional Assembly.

### Monitoring Committees

#### **ERDF Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme Monitoring Committee**

This Committee comprises representatives of relevant Programme Partner organisations from public, private and third sector organisations. It meets yearly to review all issues affecting the progress of the Regional Programme towards achieving its objectives.

The Committee's overall role is underpinned by Articles 38-40 of the [Common Provisions Regulation 2021/1060](#). It has agreed rules of procedure, including provision to prevent conflict of interest and the application of the principle of transparency.

#### **Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan Monitoring Committee**

The Monitoring Committee meets at least once a year to review any issues that affect the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan achieving its targets. It will make observations and share opinion on elements of the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan.

The Committee must ensure a balanced representation of relevant public authorities, intermediate bodies, and representatives of the partners set out in the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan regulation.

#### **Employment, Inclusion, Skills, and Training Programme Monitoring Committee**

Policy decisions regarding the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training Programme 2021-2027 are made by this Committee, which includes representatives from the European Social Fund Managing Authority, the implementing Departments and Agencies, the European Social Fund Certifying Authority, other relevant Departments and Agencies, the European Commission, the Social Partners, and Regional Representatives.

The Association of Irish Regions acts as a cohesive representative body for the three Regional Assemblies in Ireland, particularly on matters concerning their role and responsibilities as regional government in Ireland. It offers collective advice, guidance and makes submissions to the Government, its agencies and EU bodies on behalf of the three Regional Assemblies on matters of regional governance, cooperation, and balance.

Its membership comprises of the Directors, Cathaoirligh, Leas Cathaoirligh, outgoing Cathaoirligh of the Regional Assemblies, and two other Members nominated at the Annual meeting.



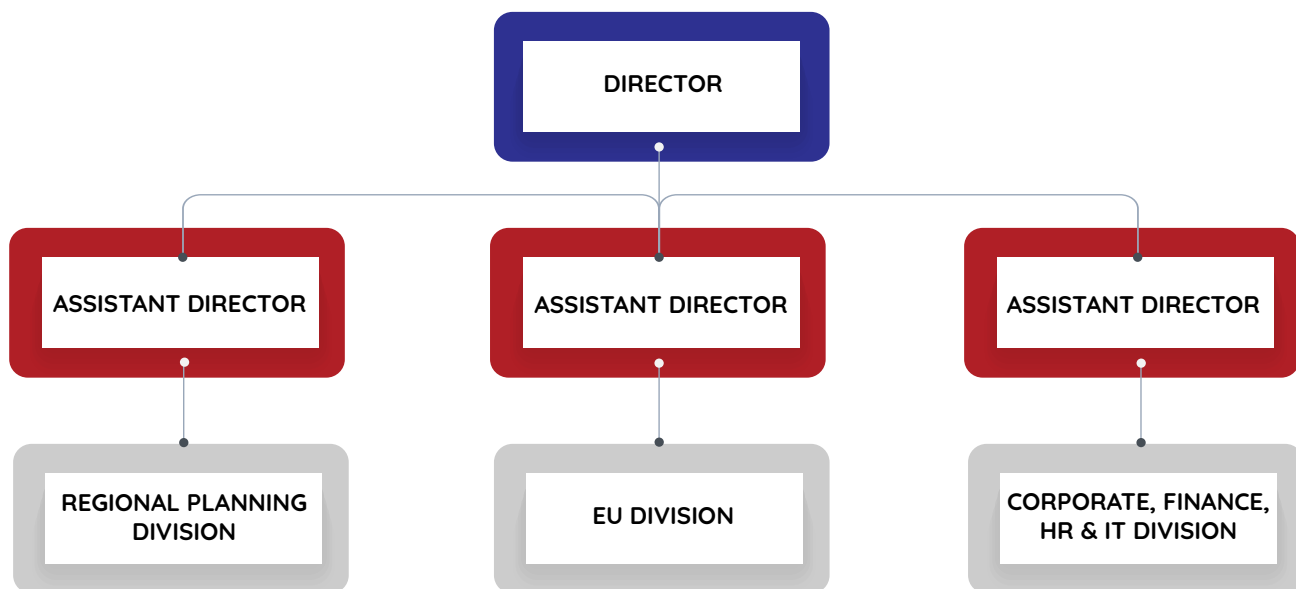
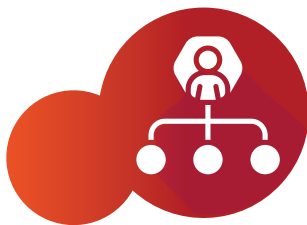






# Our Team

## Organisational Structure



|                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>David Kelly</b>           | Director                      |
| <b>Kevin Lynch</b>           | Assistant Director            |
| <b>Enda Hogan</b>            | Assistant Director            |
| <b>Sharon Murray</b>         | Acting Assistant Director     |
| <b>Dominic Walsh</b>         | Regional Planning Officer     |
| <b>Brigh Ryan</b>            | Regional Planning Officer     |
| <b>Padraig O'Shea</b>        | Regional Planning Officer     |
| <b>Michael Buckley</b>       | Auditor                       |
| <b>Vincent Dunphy</b>        | Administrative Officer        |
| <b>Karen Coughlan</b>        | Administrative Officer        |
| <b>Rose Power</b>            | Administrative Officer        |
| <b>Marie Harnett</b>         | Administrative Officer        |
| <b>Ronan O'Brien</b>         | Administrative Officer        |
| <b>Eoin O'Connor</b>         | Executive Planner             |
| <b>Mary Molloy</b>           | Executive Planner             |
| <b>Kevin Twomey</b>          | Executive Planner             |
| <b>Sarah Davoren</b>         | EU Executive                  |
| <b>Ian Ludlow</b>            | Senior Staff Officer          |
| <b>Breda Curran</b>          | Development Officer           |
| <b>Samantha Richardson</b>   | Development Officer           |
| <b>Lisa Slater</b>           | Communications Officer        |
| <b>Catherine Connaughton</b> | Projects Officer              |
| <b>Rhiannon Carey Bates</b>  | Projects Officer              |
| <b>Áine Whelan</b>           | Projects Officer              |
| <b>Oonagh Messette</b>       | Acting EU Projects Officer    |
| <b>Colm Walsh</b>            | Acting EU Projects Officer    |
| <b>Eve Hayden</b>            | Senior First Level Controller |
| <b>Edel Hunt</b>             | Senior First Level Controller |
| <b>Elayne McDonnell</b>      | Senior First Level Controller |
| <b>Yvonne Cooney</b>         | Assistant Staff Officer       |
| <b>Pauline Toomey</b>        | Assistant Staff Officer       |
| <b>Denis Cotter</b>          | Assistant Staff Officer       |
| <b>Róisín Slattery</b>       | Clerical Officer              |
| <b>Anna Higgins</b>          | Clerical Officer              |
| <b>Elaine Gallagher</b>      | Clerical Officer              |
| <b>Adam Hearne</b>           | Clerical Officer              |
| <b>Maria Murphy</b>          | Clerical Officer              |
| <b>Omer Sunguroglu</b>       | Clerical Officer              |
| <b>Claire Breen</b>          | Clerical Officer              |
| <b>Lorraine Barron</b>       | Clerical Officer              |





## Goal 1



**Empower Our People**

## Goal 2



**Enrich Our Environment**

## Goal 3



**Harness Regional Opportunities**

## Goal 4



**Strengthen Regional Governance**



## Sustainable Development Goals

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) are a set of goals which have been created by the [United Nations](#). These goals aim to end poverty, while protecting the planet and allowing people to experience peace and well-being.

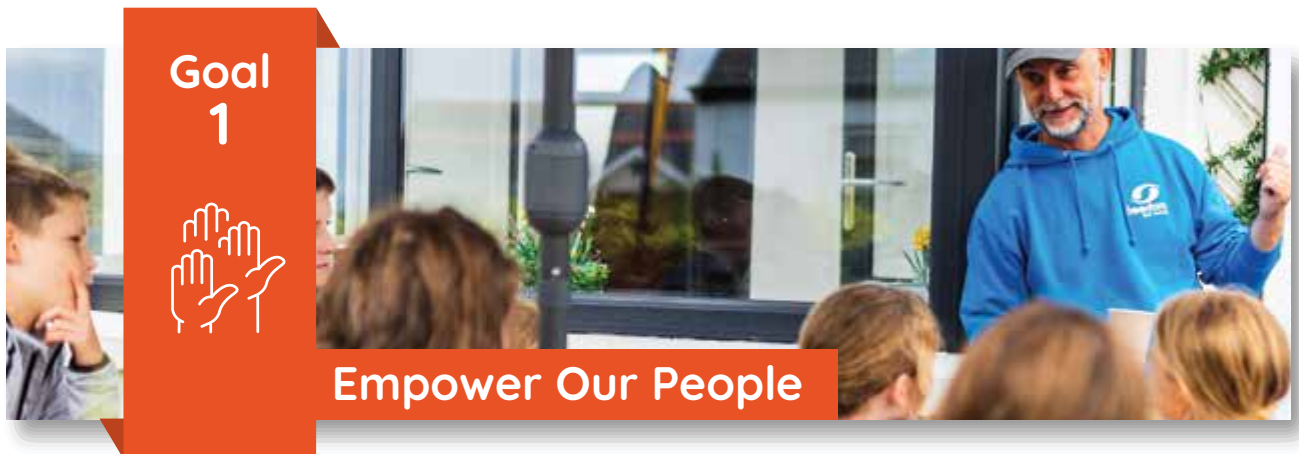
The Goals were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 and share a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Southern Regional Assembly's work to better our region from an environmental, social, and economic point of view embodies the values and ideals contained within the Goals.

Our strategic objectives are mapped against the Sustainable Development Goals in our Corporate Plan and provide the framework in how we implement these Goals.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





We will foster a culture of continuous learning and development, evolving skills through Capacity Building for our Staff and Members.

1.1

Ensure we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the people of our region and our staff, in an inclusive, open, and responsible manner, based on the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights of staff.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

5 GENDER EQUALITY

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

1.2

Supporting our staff through continuous development and learning, providing training opportunities and creating innovative ways of working.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

1.3

Develop and sustain a dynamic, healthy and safe workplace centred around staff welfare and wellbeing that consistently attracts and retains top-quality people and enables them to perform at their best.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

13 CLIMATE ACTION

1.4

Create a Strategic Workforce Plan that reviews and identifies the resources required to deliver our functions and builds a resilient organisation that can adapt to new challenges.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE





We will adopt a focused approach to the protection and enhancement of the environment, integrating climate and sustainable actions into all aspects of our work.

## 2.1

Foster a greener low carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable society built around planned, infrastructure-led development and sustainable mobility for our Region.



## 2.2

Continue to work towards our obligations for a 51% reduction in energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, and 50% improvement in energy efficiency in our workplace by 2030.



## 2.3

Promote and support environmental awareness and resource efficiency practices to ensure a healthy workplace environment.



## 2.4

Coordinate Regional Planning & Sustainable Development across our terrestrial and maritime areas to support positive action in the area of climate change and biodiversity loss.



## Goal 3



### Harness Regional Opportunities

We will encourage and nurture sustainable economic growth in our region with equitable and innovative policies.

#### 3.1

Create a Liveable Region that supports sustainable transport, renewable energies, inclusive communities and places, and improves our quality of life and regional attractiveness.



#### 3.2

Promote social cohesion, diversity, inclusion and regional development, while improving health and wellbeing for all.



#### 3.3

Support the move towards a sustainable circular economy, encouraging innovation and strong collaboration in our Region.



#### 3.4

Manage, promote and support participation in EU programmes and projects for the delivery of sustainable regional development for the benefit of the Region.







We will strengthen our position in a multilevel democracy to be leaders in regional development through strategic planning and programmes. We will coordinate collaboration and dialogue with our stakeholders, enhancing transparency and accountability through regional policy making.

- 4.1

Support the Members of the Southern Regional Assembly in their leadership and representative roles, to ensure democratic accountability and effective regional governance.
- 4.2

Continue to strengthen our governance and corporate planning processes, including the development and monitoring of our Corporate Plan.
- 4.3

Improve our communications and engagement with our stakeholders to raise awareness of the role and functions of the Assembly.
- 4.4

Foster and cultivate strong collaborations and partnerships to support the delivery of better regional development.
- 4.5

Drive the regional agenda by ensuring ongoing and meaningful engagement with stakeholders to ensure coherence of regional development and shape policy-making.
- 4.6

Conduct business in a way that is professional, trustworthy, ambitious, collaborative, responsible and accountable.

# Operating Environment and Risk Factors

The national landscape in which the Southern Regional Assembly currently operates is reasonably favourable, shaped by economic stability, a highly skilled workforce, EU membership (access to the single market), ambitious climate action plans, and the weathering of many recent shocks to our economy.

The initial challenges of Brexit have been overcome, and businesses have adapted to the post Brexit environment, while the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic are slowly starting to dissipate. More recent challenges have included runaway inflation, high costs of living, and a climate crisis that is showing little sign of stabilising.

Our Corporate Plan aims to give flexibility to overcome any future challenges.

Since our last Corporate Plan, the number of staff employed by the Southern Regional Assembly has doubled. While this has positively impacted the delivery of our work programme, funding remains a risk to further expansion.

Currently the Assembly is funded through three streams - local authority contributions, technical assistance from EU programmes, and funding from Interreg roles and participation in EU-funded projects. However, global uncertainties or shocks could have a negative influence on funding through all three streams.







# Public Sector Duty

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services, and staff when carrying out their daily tasks.

Section 42(1) of [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014](#) requires public bodies to have regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Protect the human rights of staff and service users

The Southern Regional Assembly is conscious of Human Rights and Equality across all of our work, and as an organisation. An internal Working Group has been established, made up of representatives from all of the Assembly's departments. The objective of the Working Group is to facilitate our fulfilment of statutory obligations in relation to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Public Sector Duty through the following actions:

**ASSESS:** Assess the human rights and equality issues we believe to be relevant to our functions and purpose.

**ADDRESS:** Set out the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues.

**REPORT:** Report on developments and achievements in our Annual Reports.

A series of internal staff workshops has already taken place, hosted by the Working Group. Feedback from these sessions is being used to develop a Public Sector Duty Action Plan for the Assembly, which will include a full review of any accessibility issues identified at our current headquarters in Waterford City.

In parallel, the EU programme staff considered how Equality and Human Rights might be relevant for roll out of work with particular emphasis on partners under the Regional Programme, including the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, and the Higher Education Authority.





# Implementation of Our Corporate Plan



## Implementation

The implementation of our goals and strategic objectives will be outlined in our Annual Work Programme which set out the detailed actions and performance measures to carry out our operational work for that year, supported by Team and Personal Development Plans.

## Monitoring

Objective measuring and indicators will be used to monitor progress, and our Corporate Plan will be reviewed annually with any amendments being notified to our stakeholders. Ongoing review will also take place through our Performance Management and Development System, identifying resource issues, progress, and obstacles which may arise in the delivery of our work.

The National Oversight & Audit Commission also monitors the adequacy of the corporate plan and evaluate its implementation.

## Measuring

Our Annual Programme of Work will contain key baseline data and indicators to measure our progress in achieving strategic objectives within our Corporate Plan. We will also carry out regular staff engagement surveys and gather Members' feedback through monthly Assembly meetings and Monitoring Committee meetings.

## Reporting

The primary reporting avenue for progress of our Corporate Plan objectives will be through published [Annual Reports](#) which include our Annual Financial Statements. Our Annual Reports will summarise our completed Work Programme objectives and actions. Published minutes from Assembly meetings and implementation reports on the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy will also serve as reporting mechanisms.

# Appendix A

## Key Policies & Strategies

[All Island Strategic Rail Review](#)

[Better Public Services](#)

[Climate Action Plan 2024](#)

[Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan](#)

[Energy Efficiency Directive](#)

[Green Public Procurement Strategy](#)

[Housing For All](#)

[Implementing the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty](#)

[Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan](#)

[National Development Plan 2021 - 2030](#)

[National Marine Planning Framework](#)

[National Planning Framework](#)

[Public Sector Climate Action Mandate](#)

[Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy](#)

[Renewable Energy Directive](#)

[Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[Town Centre First](#)



# Appendix B

## Current EU Funded Programmes



[Interreg North-West Europe Programme](#)



[Interreg Europe](#)



[Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme](#)



[Interreg Atlantic Area](#)



[URBACT Programme](#)



[ESPON 2030 Programme](#)



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the  
European Union



Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt  
Southern Regional  
Assembly

## ERDF Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-27

[Technology Gateways](#)

[KT Boost](#)

[Innovators Initiative](#)

[Smart Regions](#)

[TU RISE](#)

[SFI ARC Hubs](#)

[THRIVE Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme](#)

# Appendix C

## Current EU Projects



DEPLOYING CIRCULAR BIOECONOMIES AT  
REGIONAL LEVEL WITH A TERRITORIAL APPROACH

[ROBIN](#)



Achieving Net-Zero through Innovation in  
Small and Medium sized cities

SMCNetZero



[Developing Irish Sea Cooperation \(DISC\)](#)

Interreg  
Europe



Co-funded by  
the European Union

S3ADAPT

S3ADAPT

Interreg  
Europe



Co-funded by  
the European Union

PROXIMITIES

[PROXIMITIES](#)

Interreg  
Europe



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the European Union

TALENT4S3

[TALENT4S3](#)

Interreg  
Europe



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FutureECOS

[FutureECOS](#)

Interreg  
Europe



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SMOOTY

SMOOTY