

EASTERN & MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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A message from An Cathaoirleach

It is my pleasure to present the fourth Annual Report for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.

Throughout 2018, the 38 members from our 12 Local Authority areas have ensured that our core functions and the objectives of the Corporate Plan continue to be delivered. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their contribution to the work of the Assembly.

Our monthly Assembly meetings and the Strategic Planning Area meetings have enabled us to focus on a number of topics of interest for the Region. 2018 was a key year for the Assembly as we continued our progress towards the preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). Following on from the consultation on the Assembly Issues Paper published at the end of 2017, the Assembly published its first draft RSES and launched a public consultation in 2018.



This process is taking place in the broader context of Project Ireland 2040 and the National Planning Framework. It gives our Assembly the opportunity to concretely shape the economic and spatial development of our territory and to act as a platform for all the regional stakeholders. This exercise demonstrates the huge potential of regional government to deliver a strategic vision for a regional development that is close to communities and citizens.

Throughout the year, the Assembly maintained its engagement at the European level, following closely the negotiations of BREXIT and the publication of the European Commission's proposals for the next round of funding post-2020. EMRA took the rotating Presidency of the ENCORE network (Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe) for two years and presented its work programme revolving around ecosystem services, circular economy and climate change. We have also worked in close co-operation with the other two regional assemblies, the Northern and Western Regional Assembly and the Southern Regional Assembly, to ensure that EU funding coming into the regions have been maximised and used to the best advantage of our citizens.

I wish to thank my Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Catherine Fitzgerald for her support and work throughout the year and would also like to thank my predecessor Councillor PJ Reilly for his work during his period as Cathaoirleach of the Assembly.

The work carried out this year has laid very strong foundations for the years ahead and has prepared the Assembly to fully take on its role as leader of the development of our Region. The finalisation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy that will follow will be the proof that the Assembly has the capacity to deliver its ambitions.

Finally, I would like to thank the Director and his staff for their work and support throughout the year.

A message from the Director



The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) Corporate plan 2015-2020 sets out the strategic vision of the organisation and is supported by the Annual Programme of Works approved by the members at the start of the year. This Annual Report sets out the actions undertaken throughout the year to deliver the objectives of that Corporate Plan.

2018 was a busy year on many fronts. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) moved from issues to draft, our EU activities and involvement in projects increased and the many corporate responsibilities involved in running of Assembly continued to be managed.

A full complement of 11 Plenary meetings of the Assembly was held including the Annual meeting at which Councillor Eddie Fitzpatrick was elected Cathaoirleach and I would like to thank him and all the members of the Assembly for their support. An increased number of meetings were attended by members to facilitate the production of the draft RSES, including additional Strategic Planning Area (SPA) meetings.

The RSES will be the policy driver for the region for the next 12 years and the importance of the strategy was reflected in the extent of engagement throughout 2018. In addition to full plenary meetings, 15 SPA meetings, 5 technical working group meetings and 3 senior officials advisory group meetings were held along with various stakeholder meetings. 171 submissions were considered in relation to the issues paper. A draft RSES was issued in September and considered by the members in October.

BREXIT continued to be a central consideration for the Irish National Delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR), supports for which are primarily delivered through the Irish Regions European Office (IREO) in Brussels and managed through this Assembly. CoR members received supports in preparation for their attendance at full plenary meetings of the CoR, and supports were also in place for the members who participate on Commissions throughout the year. As in previous years, the support of Ireland's Permanent Representation to the EU in this process is invaluable and co-operation between the IREO and the Perm Rep continued throughout 2018. Attendance by the Cathaoirleach and staff at the European Week of Regions and Cities again ensured an important presence at various events in Brussels. Projects worked on during the year include Resilens, GBHealth, Urb-ADAPT and EnROUTE.

EMRA has continued to play an active role in the monitoring and implementation of the Regional Operational Programmes and various other European Programmes. In January, the Assembly became the Irish contact point for the URBACT programme with the task to promote the programme and provide support to Irish applicants. The Assembly actively engaged in relevant networks such as ENCORE and sat on Regional Enterprise Committees and bodies such as the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategies Steering Group and the Climate Change Regional Offices.

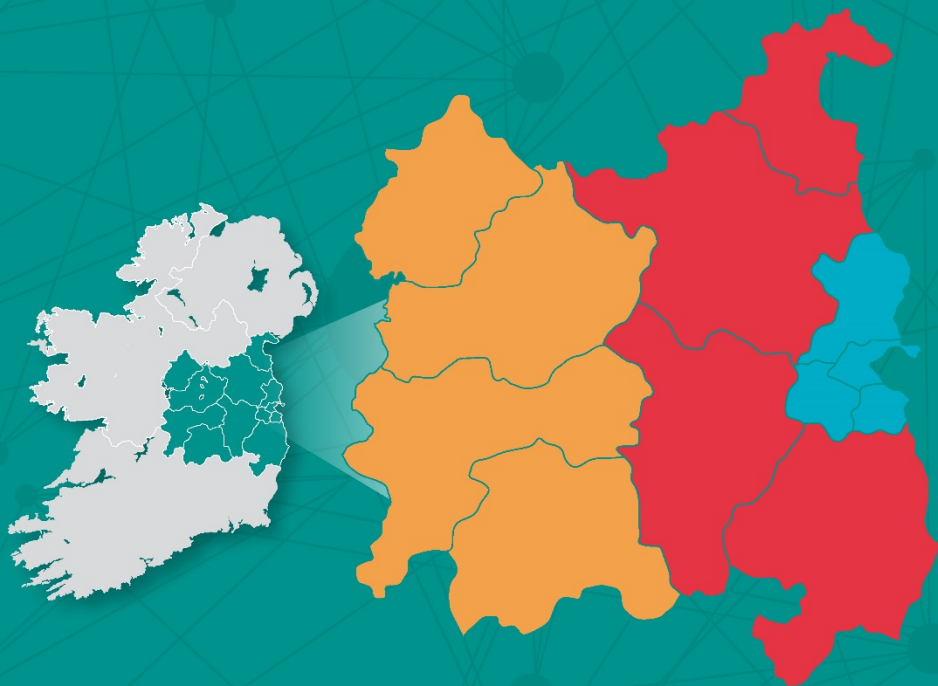
From a Corporate Governance perspective, activities in areas such as GDPR, the implementation of a corporate risk register and the review of the functions and website of the Irish Regions European Office (IREO) were undertaken in 2018.

This year's report contains a set of accounts for 2017 audited by the Local Government Audit Service. Governance and financial controls continued to be managed during the year.

The ongoing linkage to local authorities was provided by the designated chief executive Joan Martin from Louth County Council who I would like to thank for her continued support.

Again the enthusiasm and professionalism of staff was evident throughout 2018 and I would like to personally thank them for ensuring that we achieved all our works plan objectives for the year.

Introduction to our region



**3 Strategic
Planning Areas**



**12 Local
Authorities**



**2.33 million
persons**



**Land Area
14,463km²**

Introduction to our region

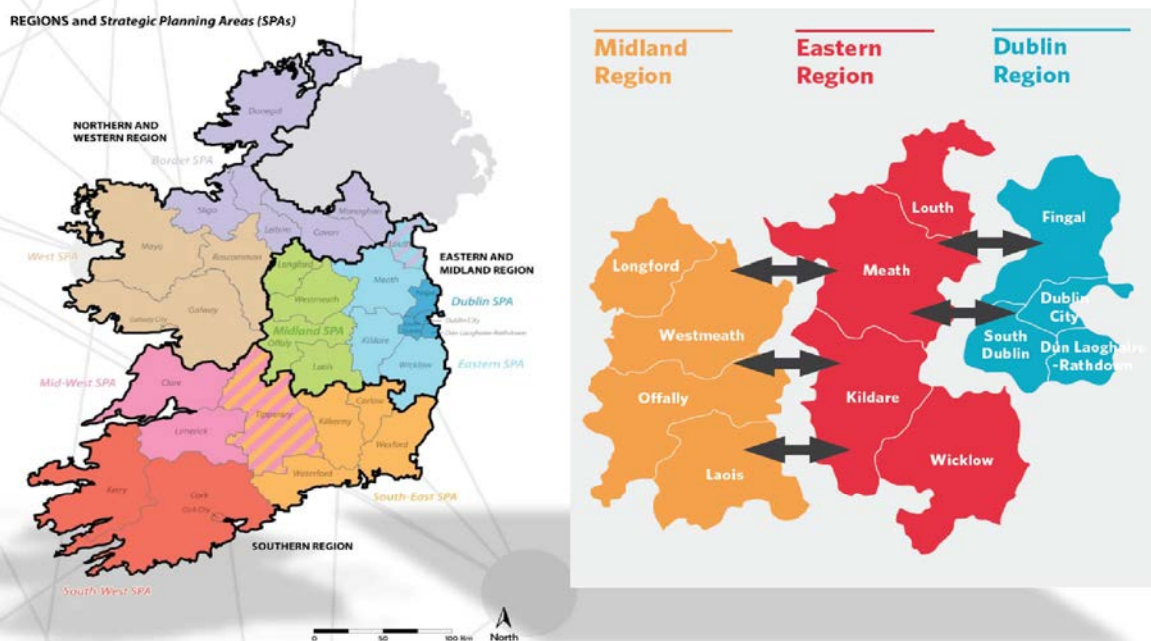
Introducing the Regional Assembly

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) is one of the three Regional Assemblies in Ireland following on from the enactment of the Local Government Reform Act 2014.

Although it is the smallest of the three regions in terms of land area, it has the largest population with more than 2.33 million inhabitants. The region has approximately 270km of coastline from Carlingford Lough in Louth to Kilmichael Point at the Wicklow-Wexford border. The main settlement is the capital city of Dublin which is home to 1.2 million people and is supported by a network of regional and county towns and an extensive rural hinterland.

The Region incorporates 12 city and county councils and is part of the regional tier of governance in Ireland, primarily focused on strategic planning, EU programming and funding and coordination of certain local government activities. It is comprised of 38 elected members (councillors) who are principally elected by their peers in the 12 councils to represent them regionally.

Our Region in Ireland

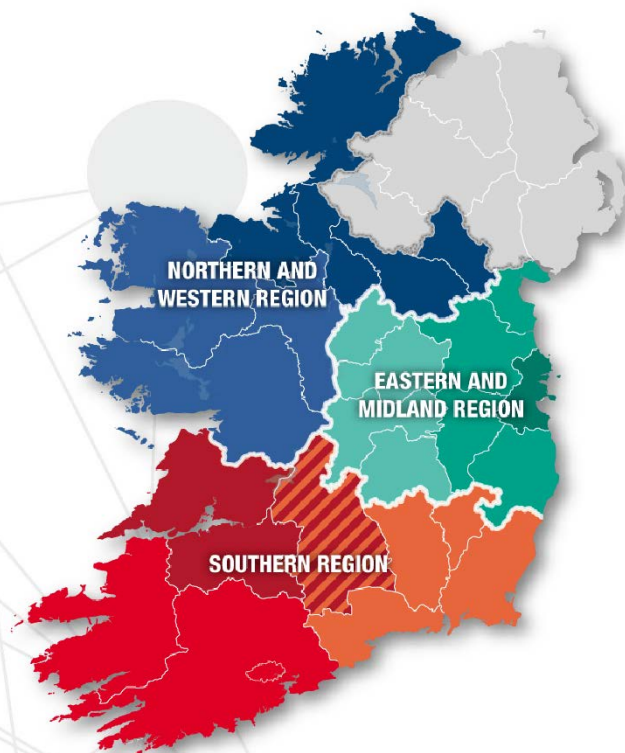


Functions of Regional Assemblies

- To prepare and oversee the implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines, to be replaced by new **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies**, and providing statutory observations on local authority development plans and variations.
- To co-ordinate, promote or support **strategic planning and sustainable development** of the regions.
- To manage **Regional Operational Programmes** monitoring and making proposals in EU programmes relevant for the Region.
- To **promote effectiveness** in local government and public services in the region, in conjunction with the National Oversight & Audit Commission.

European context

Since the entry into force of the NUTS (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) classification in January 2018, the three Assembly areas are all classified as NUTS 2 regions. The NUTS classification is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU. NUTS regions are part of the mechanism of EU cohesion policy, and importantly, the decision to allocate cohesion funding is made on the eligibility of a region at the NUTS 2 level. An example of the funding allocated to eligible NUTS 2 regions is the European Regional Development Funding (ERDF). NUTS regions are also used to collect, develop and harmonise European statistics by Eurostat at European level and the Central Statistics Office in Ireland.



3x NUTS II Regions - Current regional structure

The new classification now mirrors the administrative reality of Ireland following the Local Government Reform Act 2014 that created the three Regional Assemblies; Eastern & Midland Region (EMRA), Southern Region (SRA) and Northern & Western Region (NWRA).

This new set up combined with the alignment of national, regional and local planning and economic development through Ireland 2040, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and County/City Development plans gives the Assembly an opportunity to maximise its pivotal role as regional leader. EMRA's ambition will now be to participate fully and on an equal footing in the future governance and administrative arrangements that will be introduced to manage Ireland's involvement with Structural Funds. This will be key to reinforce and strengthen the region's development nationally and internationally.



Assembly Meetings and Membership

Membership of the Assembly 2018

Councillor	Local Authority	2018 Changes
Paddy Bourke	Dublin City Council	
Paddy Bracken	Laois County Council	
Christy Burke	Dublin City Council	
Tommy Byrne	Louth County Council	
Mick Cahill	Longford County Council	
Ciaran Cuffe	Dublin City Council	
Thomas Cullen	Wicklow County Council	
Kieran Dennison	Fingal County Council	
Eamon Dooley	Offaly County Council	
Francis Duffy	South Dublin County Council	
Andrew Duncan	Westmeath County Council	
Gaye Fagan	Dublin City Council	
Enda Fanning	South Dublin County Council	Resigned June 2018
Kate Feeney	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
Catherine Fitzgerald	Laois County Council	
Brian Fitzgerald	Meath County Council	
Eddie Fitzpatrick	Offaly County Council	
Mary Freehill	Dublin City Council	
Mary Hanafin	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
Pat Hand	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
David Healy	Fingal County Council	
Paddy Hill	Westmeath County Council	
Pamela Kearns	South Dublin County Council	
Ivan Keatley	Kildare County Council	
Dermot Lacey	Dublin City Council	
Colm Markey	Louth County Council	
Lettie McCarthy	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
Brian McDonagh	Fingal County Council	
Padraig McEvoy	Kildare County Council	
Martin Miley	Kildare County Council	
Derek Mitchell	Wicklow County Council	
Maria Murphy	Meath County Council	
Claire O'Connor	Dublin City Council	
PJ Reilly	Longford County Council	
Tommy Reilly	Meath County Council	
Robert Russell	South Dublin County Council	Appointed July 2018
Pat Vance	Wicklow County Council	
Barry Ward	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	
Irene Winters	Wicklow County Council	

Meetings and Membership of the Assembly

Assembly meetings were held on the second Friday of the month, throughout the year, in City Hall, Dame Street, Dublin 2. A total of 11 Assembly meetings were held during 2018, with an average attendance of 61%.

Assembly Membership

Assembly Members were nominated by the constituent Local Authorities in the region in proportion to the size of the Local Authority's population. Also, Councillors nominated to the Committee of the Regions automatically became Members of the Regional Assembly. This resulted in an overall assembly membership of 38 councillors, breakdown by local authority below.

Dublin City Council	7	Louth County Council	2
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	5	Meath County Council	3
Fingal County Council	3	Offaly County Council	2
Kildare County Council	3	South Dublin County Council	3
Laois County Council	2	Westmeath County Council	2
Longford County Council	2	Wicklow County Council	4



The political breakdown of the Assembly during 2018 was as follows:

Party	Number of Members
Fianna Fáil	14
Fine Gael	9
Labour	5
Independent (Non Party)	5
Sinn Féin	2
Green Party	3

Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach 2018

Cllr. PJ Reilly	Cathaoirleach	July 2017 to July 2018
Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2017 to July 2018
Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick	Cathaoirleach	July 2018 to present
Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2018 to present

Election of Cathaoirleach at Annual Meeting 13th July 2018

At the fourth Annual Meeting of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly on Friday, 13th July 2018, Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick was elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.



2018 EMRA Meeting Schedule

Month	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly - meeting dates	Month	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly - meeting dates
January	12th January	July	13th July
February	9th February	August	No Meeting
March	9th March	September	14th September
April	6th April	October	19th October
May	11th May	November	16th November
June	8th June	December	7th December

Meetings and Membership of Sub-Committees

In 2018 the strategic planning area committees for the Dublin and Eastern strategic planning areas (SPAs) met on four occasions each and the Midland strategic planning area met on five occasions.

Dublin SPA	Eastern SPA	Midland SPA
Meetings held on 16th February, 19th April in DLR Co Co, 30th May and 31st August (all others were held in City Hall)	Meetings held on 15 th February, 17 th April, 28 th May and 30 th August (all held in Ballymun)	Meetings held on 14 th February in Laois Co Co, 12 th March in Offaly Co Co, 9 th April, Athlone, 29 th May, Longford and 29 th August in Portlaoise
Members		
Paddy Bourke	Sylvester Bourke	Paddy Bracken
Tom Brabazon	Tommy Byrne	Mick Cahill
Christy Burke	Thomas Cullen	Eamon Dooley
Ciarán Cuffe	Brian Fitzgerald	Andrew Duncan
Jennifer Cuffe	Ivan Keatley	Catherine Fitzgerald
Kieran Dennison	Colm Markey	Eddie Fitzpatrick
Francis Duffy	Padraig McEvoy	Paddy Hill
Gaye Fagan	Martin Miley	PJ Reilly
Enda Fanning	Derek Mitchell	
Kate Feeney	Maria Murphy	
Mary Freehill	Tommy Reilly	
Mary Hanafin	Pat Vance	
Pat Hand	Irene Winters	
David Healy		
Pamela Kearns		
Dermot Lacey		
Lettie McCarthy		
Brian McDonagh		
Seamus McGrattan		
Claire O'Connor		
Rob Russell		
Barry Ward		

Conferences and Training Attended in 2018

Title	Location	Representatives
Entitlement to Health Services	Co. Cork	2
MacGill Summer School	Co. Donegal	11
National Ploughing Championships	Co. Offaly	1
Government 2020 – 2040 Launch	Co. Sligo	1
European Week of Regions and Cities	Brussels	1
Covenant of Mayors 2018	Brussels	1
ENCORE 2018	Denmark	2
Entitlement to Health Services	Co. Cork	2





Regional Planning and Economic Strategy

Regional Planning Guidelines

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly is responsible for the ongoing implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-22; the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midlands Region 2010-2022 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010-22 (EMRA is responsible for the part of these RPGs that pertain to Louth County Council). The RPGs will be replaced by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region, the preparation of the RSES commenced in 2017 and is anticipated to be completed in 2019.

The RPGs provide a framework for, and policy guidance to, local authorities and others in the areas of spatial growth, settlement patterns, population and housing targets, economic development, infrastructure, rural development, flood risk, heritage and the environment, and social infrastructure.

In 2018, the RPGs were implemented by way of engagement with local authorities, state agencies and other stakeholders and by way of 23 submissions. The majority of these submissions were the Assembly performing its statutory functions in accordance with section 27 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to ensure consistency between development plans, their core strategies and the Regional Planning Guidelines.

In formulating these submissions, the Assembly has worked with the local authorities in the preparation of City and County Development Plans both formally through the requirements of section 27 by way of observations on Development Plans and variations of Development Plans, and informally through the executive in preparation of the core strategy of Development Plans.

Breakdown of Submissions



In 2018, the Assembly made observations on development plans and variations of development plans in the local authorities of Offaly, Westmeath, Dublin City, Kildare, South Dublin, Longford and Meath. The Assembly also made observations on variations to the Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Schemes at North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock (Dublin City) and Balgaddy - Clonburris (South Dublin).

In influencing EU and national policy by implementing the Regional Planning Guidelines there have been submissions made to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on the Shape of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Post 2020 and to the Eirgrid Draft Implementation Plan 2017 -2022.

Submissions were also made to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (UK) on the Transboundary environmental public consultation - Hinkley Point C and to the European Commission consultation on the evaluation of the Strategy Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive.

Other Regional Policy

The Regional Assembly continues to work with a range of agencies and organisations to ensure that regional planning informs emerging and existing policy areas, including participation in the following high-level steering and implementation groups;

- Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) Steering Groups
- National Climate Adaptation Steering Group
- Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board
- National SEA Forum
- Eastern and Shannon CFRAMS Advisory Group
- Eirgrid SEA Steering Group for their Implementation Plan
- Cross-Border Development Plan Group
- Regional Action Plan for Jobs Steering Committees
- Smart Dublin Advisory Network

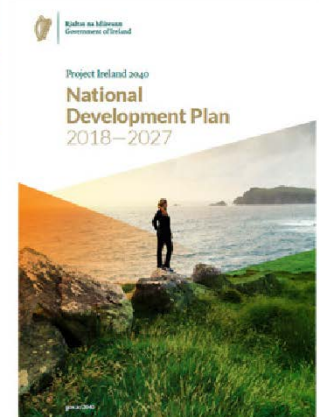
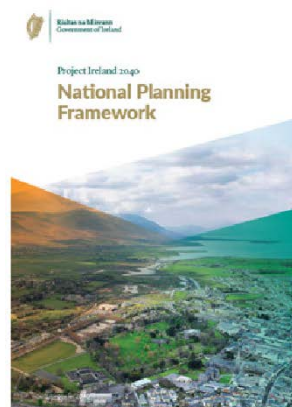
Publication of Project Ireland 2040:

National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2018-2027

February 2018 saw the publication of Project Ireland 2040 (PI 2040), which sets out national spatial policy in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and is underpinned by almost €116 billion capital investment in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027,

The key elements of the NPF, which will set the framework for the development of the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region include;

- Effective regional development that manages more balanced growth between the three Irish Regions;
- Regional concentration toward cities (Dublin) and some regionally important larger settlements (Athlone, Drogheda, Dundalk)
- A focus on contained growth and reduced sprawl by targeting infill and brownfield lands in existing built-up areas
- Sequential provision of infrastructure with some critical infrastructure in place to promote investment
- A Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan to deliver compact regeneration and growth in the Dublin metropolitan area
- A comprehensive approach to rural fabric supporting sustainable growth and reversing decline.



Implementing Project Ireland 2040:

Launch of Rural, Urban, Technology and Climate Action Funds

The main planning policy focus of the Assembly outside of implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and preparation of new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is to support the implementation of national spatial policy in Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework (NPF).

Following the publication of the NPF in February 2018, the focus turned to implementation with the establishment of a high-level PI 2040 Delivery Board and the launch of four National Development Plan (NDP) funds; focussed on Rural, Urban, Technology and Climate Action, to support implementation of the NPF. The Assembly members were briefed by the executive on these new competitive bid funds at the EMRA meeting in July.

Provision is made for €2bn to 2027 for the urban fund (URDF) and €1bn to 2027 for the rural fund (RRDF), with the first call for proposals in July 2018. The Assembly assisted in hosting a regional information event on the 7th September 2018 in Barlow House in Drogheda, to assist and inform bodies that may be considering making a bid for funding to either or both Funds. The briefing was attended by senior officials from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the Department of Finance and Public Expenditure and reform (DFPER).



The first round of successful applications for the Urban and Rural Funds were announced in November 2018. There were 52 successful projects, which included applicants in the Eastern and Midlands Region (EMR), which were awarded over €68 million for projects to commence in 2019.

This included 38 projects that were allocated over €42 million in URDF funding, of which nearly €15 went to urban areas within the Dublin Metropolitan Area and over €27 million to support the compact growth and sustainable development of Regional Growth Centres and large towns in our Region. 14 projects were awarded €26 million under the RRDF Fund to support rural renewal projects and the revitalisation of smaller towns, villages and rural areas in the Region.

EMRAs engagement and input at cross-departmental level will facilitate increased collaboration between national, regional and local bodies to leverage future rounds of funding in the Eastern and Midland Region (EMR). In 2018, the executive held monthly briefing meetings (9 no) with the DHPLG and the Director also attended and presented on a quarterly basis to the Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board in February, September and November 2018. Following its publication in 2019, RSES will provide an investment framework to direct and prioritise future rounds of Funds.

Process of making a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

One of the main functions of the Regional Assembly is the preparation and adoption of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which will be the successor to the Regional Planning Guidelines. 2018 saw significant progression in the process of making the RSES as a statutory document that will set out the strategic vision of the region for the next 20 years.



During 2017 EMRA engaged in a significant research and data evidence gathering exercise, which culminated in the publication of an Issues Paper and Socio-Economic Evidence Baseline Report on 20th November 2017, which marked the formal commencement of the RSES process.

The Issues Paper was made available for public comment on strategic planning and economic development matters until 16th February 2018. 171 submissions were received and a Director's Report was prepared for the consideration of Assembly members on 9th March 2018.

During the second and third quarter of 2018 the Assembly was involved in the preparation of a draft RSES. The members were given monthly progress updates at EMRA Assembly meetings with opportunities for more detailed policy discussions in quarterly Strategic Planning Area Committee meetings. At the executive level there was an intensive period of consultation and engagement with 5 Technical Working Groups and 3 Senior Officials Advisory Group meetings.

Throughout this process, thematic background and working papers were circulated and feedback gathered to inform the preparation of the Director's Draft RSES, which was issued to the members on the 21st September 2018. The members then submitted 17 valid motions for changes and a further Director's report was issued to the members on the 15th October 2019 in response to those motions.

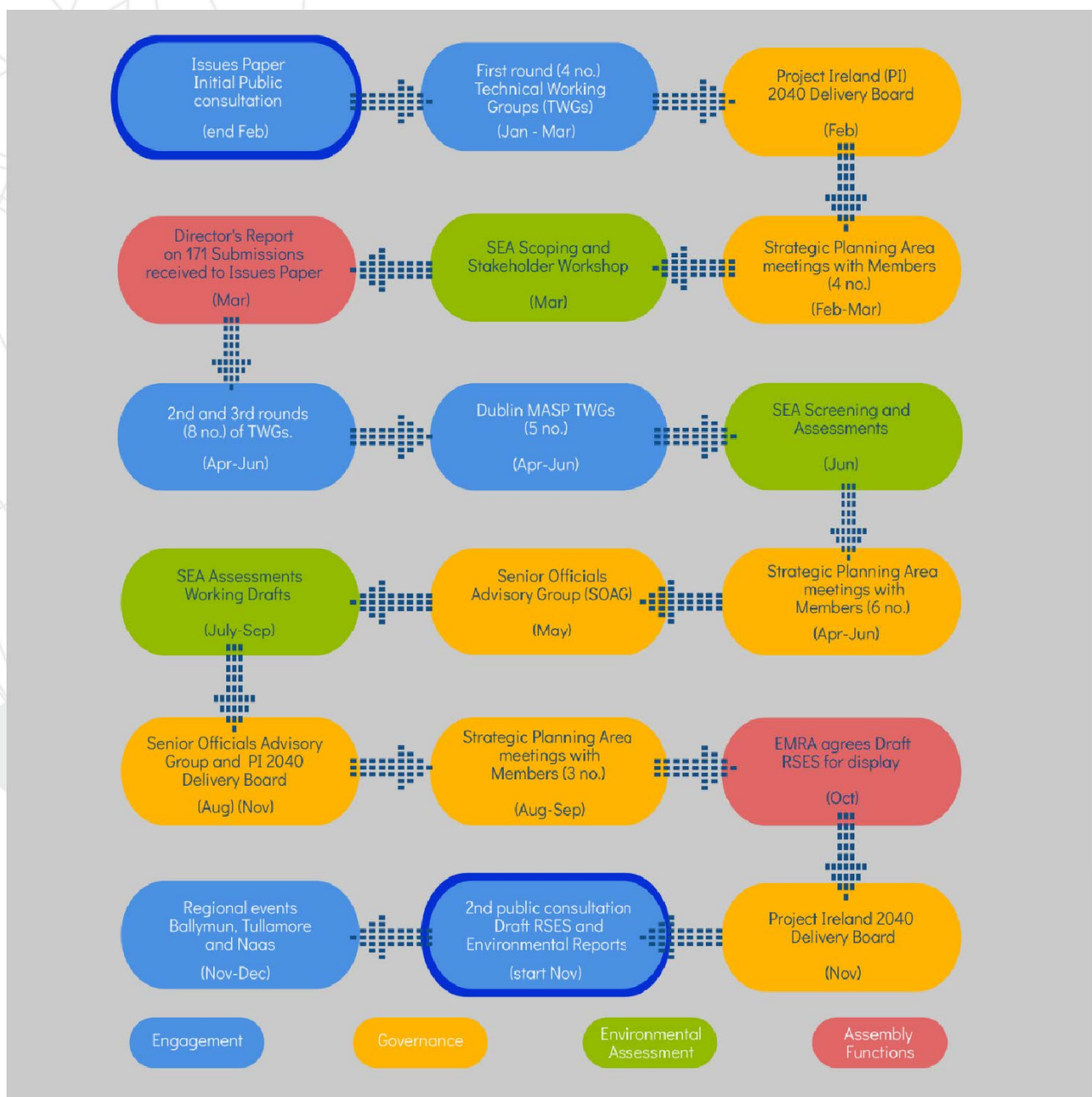
On foot of the above, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) prepared a draft RSES for the period 2019-2031, at the meeting of 19th October 2018. This draft was placed on Public Consultation on 5th November 2018 until 23rd January 2019 inclusive.

RSES Stakeholder Engagement

2018 saw significant progress in making an RSES as part of a collaborative approach with our key stakeholders, under the governance and working structures of the Assembly and with the establishment of a formal RSES engagement process including;

- Five **Technical Working Groups** were set up under the four themes of Place, Infrastructure, Economy and the Environment and in relation to the Dublin Metropolitan Area (MASP), and 23 no. stakeholder workshops were held
- A **Senior Officials Advisory Group**, made up of representatives from local authorities, Government departments and public agencies provided a strategic advisory role during the process.
- Three **Strategic Planning Area (SPA) Committees** consisting of elected members, who developed policy and considered the preparation of the RSES.

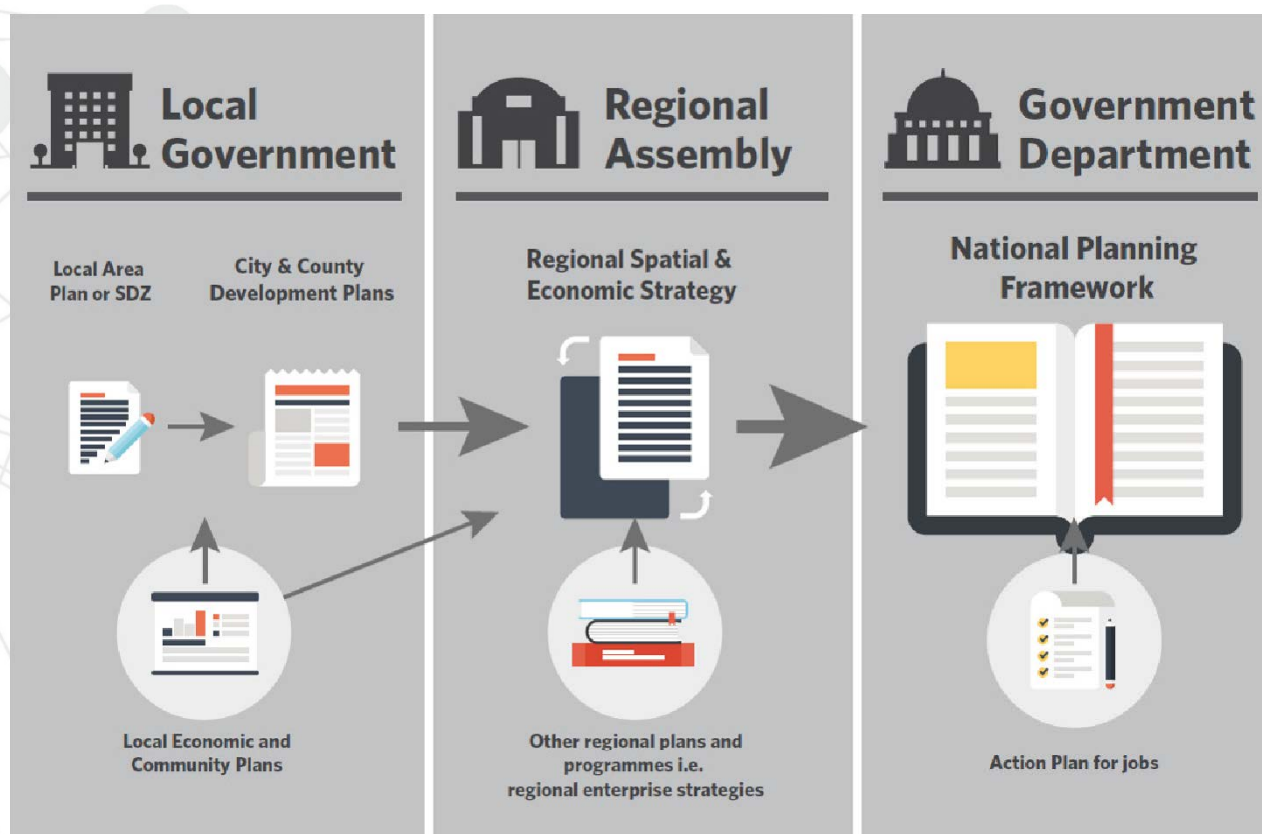
The feedback and evidence gathered during the stakeholder engagement and consultations were incorporated into the making of the draft RSES, for public display on 5th November, 2018, which was followed by a series of regional information events in each of the Strategic Planning Areas to brief our stakeholders.



Future Challenges and Opportunities

With the launch of Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework and the preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES), Ireland is undergoing a review of planning and economic policy from the national level, to the regional and the local.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 requires that all city/county development plans will be subject to review or variation within six months of the making of the RSES, which is expected in 2019. This means all city/county development plans will be subject to review during 2019/21, and broadly aligned to address a six-year period to 2026/27. Local Area Plans and Local economic and community plans will also need to be reviewed further to approval of the RSES.



Following its publication in 2019, the RSES will become the main policy driver for the implementation and monitoring of regional planning, sustainable development and economic strategy, aligned with EU, national and local policy and funding programmes in Ireland.

With the introduction of competitive bids as part of Project Ireland 2040 and similar frameworks to draw down EU and other funding, there is a need to ensure that all Local Authorities and local stakeholders have sufficient capacity to source funding streams, to prepare strong business cases and robust applications to successfully bid for and attract competitive funding.

Following adoption of the RSES in 2019, EMRA will establish implementation group/s to oversee progress on implementation and to support enhanced co-ordination across government departments, agencies, local authorities, research bodies and regional stakeholders to identify opportunities to drive regional development and leverage new funding, partnership and collaboration opportunities in the Region.

Following the local elections in May 2019, the executive also looks forward to working with the new Regional Assembly to develop a new Corporate Plan for 2020 to 2025 and as the focus moves from policy to implementation of RSES, to deliver real progress in the Region.



EU Activities

EU Policy and Funding Framework

There are 5 EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the European Union 2014 – 2020 programming period: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and Cohesion Fund (CF). Ireland is in receipt of four of these funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF). There is no Cohesion Fund allocation to Ireland as the country is not eligible. The Cohesion Fund is aimed at Member States whose Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90 % of the EU average.

ESIF	Acronym	Allocation
European Regional Development Fund	ERDF	€409.2m
European Social Fund	ESF	€542m
Cohesion Fund	CF	n/a
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	EAFRD	€2.19b
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund	EMFF	€147.6m

The shaded areas in table are Structural Funds (ESF, ERDF and CF).

The allocations in the table above represent the EU co-financing element, which in all cases is matched by exchequer spending towards delivering strategic investment objectives.

The common goal of all of the Funds is to bridge the gap between the wealthier and less well-off regions of Europe by co-financing development programmes. This will reduce disparities between regions and create a better economic and social balance within and between Member States. The total amount of ESIF in Ireland for the 2014 – 2020 programming period is **€3,289,837,222** (as per National Partnership Agreement).

The Structural Fund element of the ESIF in Ireland includes both the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Ireland will receive **€1.153** billion from the Structural Funds from 2014-2020:

- **€542million** will be in the form of ESF assistance. An additional **€68m** is provided for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which will be programmed through the ESF programme.
- **€409.2 million** is for European Regional Development Fund co-funded programmes including **€160,097,179** for the BMW Regional Operation Programme and **€249,109,350** Southern and Eastern Regional Region. Further details of these figures are given in the tables below.

The remainder of the ESIF **€3.289** billion allocated to Ireland is as follows:

- **€2.19** billion from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Fund (EAFRD). This includes the LEADER Programme funding of **€157,000,000**.
- **€147.6** million from the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF), also for the period 2014-2020.

Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs)

The Regional Assembly participated in the implementation and monitoring of both the Irish Regional Operational Programmes – the Southern and Eastern ROP and the Border, Midland and Western ROP. These programmes involve significant investment in areas that help create jobs, increase competitiveness and innovation, promote indigenous enterprise and improve the critical infrastructure which facilitates our daily lives. The current programmes target the following priorities:

1. Strengthening research, technology development and innovation
2. Information and communications technology
3. The creation of new enterprises and support for SMEs
4. Low carbon economy
5. Sustainable urban development

It is essential that investment in these areas add value to our local and regional economies, producing jobs and increased social cohesion. A better physical environment is also of benefit to the region making it a more attractive place to invest.

The Southern & Eastern ROP

Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2014-2020

As the Managing Authority for the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2014-2020, the Southern Regional Assembly is responsible for its preparation and delivery, in accordance with the Common Provisions Regulation. The S&E Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 was adopted by the European Commission on 15th December 2014.

In its fourth Annual Implementation Report for the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (ROP) for 2014-2020, the Southern Regional Assembly reports on the progress achieved under the ROP for 2018. Expenditure under the ROP was eligible from 1st January 2014. Continuous progress has been made in the implementation of all the Investment Priorities included in the ROP.

Under priority 1, nine SFI research centres were supported, the Commercialisation Fund and Innovation Partnership schemes managed through Enterprise Ireland continued to deliver strong results and 15 projects were awarded support as part of the Marine Research Programme. Priority 2 saw further progress made in the procurement process for the National Broadband Programme with the final bidder invited to submit a tender in September 2018. 2018 was the fourth consecutive year of employment growth for businesses supported by Local Enterprise Offices with jobs growth across all counties in the region. The cumulative increase in employment in supported enterprises in the S&E region for the period 2014 to 2018 is 3,948 amounting to 69% of the Operational Programme target. The Operational Programme output indicator targets for Priority 4 “low carbon economy” have already been exceeded with 27,225 households having benefited from the schemes to the end of 2018. Finally, 2018 saw a significant increase in project activity under the Designated Urban Centre Grant Scheme for priority 5 “Sustainable Urban Development”.

Please note, the totals given below are for “Public eligible cost paid to beneficiaries”.

The Southern & Eastern ROP

Priority	ERDF Support	National Counterpart	Total Funding €m	Co-financing Rate	Public eligible cost paid to beneficiaries (EUR) (1 st Jan 14 to 31 st Dec 18)		
					Total	ERDF Support	National support
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	90,000,000	90,000,000	180,000,000	50%	107,615,846	53,807,923	53,807,923
2 – ICT	30,000,000	30,000,000	60,000,000	50%	0	0	0
3 – SME Competitiveness	35,556,827	35,556,827	71,113,654*	50%	43,181,529	21,590,765	21,590,765
4 – Low Carbon Economy	66,500,000	66,500,000	133,000,000	50%	100,519,547	50,259,774	50,259,774
5 – Sustainable Urban Development	26,000,000	26,000,000	52,000,000	50%	11,823,876	5,911,938	5,911,938
6 – Technical Assistance	2,009,350	2,009,350	4,018,700	50%	1,190,260	595,130	595,130
TOTAL	250,066,177	250,066,177	500,132,354	50%	264,331,058	132,165,529	132,165,529

* This figure includes an additional allocation of €956,827 approved by the Monitoring Committee in Spring 2017.

Border, Midland and Western ROP

The Northern and Western Regional Assembly is the Managing Authority for the Border, Midland and Western ROP.

The total declaration for 2018 was comprised of expenditure incurred across four priorities of the programme:

- Priority 1: Strengthening RTDI in the BMW Region
- Priority 3: SME Support, Promotion and Capability Development
- Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy
- Priority 5: Urban development

Priority	ERDF Support	National Counterpart	Total Funding €m	Co-financing Rate	Public eligible cost paid to beneficiaries (EUR) (1 st Jan 14 to 31 st Dec 18)		
					Total	ERDF Support	National support
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the BMW Region	52,000,000	52,000,000	104,000,000	50%	40,454,979	20,227,439	20,227,439
2 – ICT	45,000,000	45,000,000	90,000,000	50%	0	0	0
3 – SME Competitiveness	29,611,742	29,611,742	59,223,484	50%	18,440,397	9,220,198	9,220,198
4 – Low Carbon Economy	18,000,000	18,000,000	36,000,000	50%	20,589,639	10,294,819	10,294,819
5 – Sustainable Urban Development	14,000,000	14,000,000	28,000,000	50%	2,005,567	1,002,783	1,002,783
6 – Technical Assistance	2,009,717	2,009,717	4,194,358	50%	439,699	219,849	219,849
TOTAL	160,708,922	160,708,922	321,417,842	50%	81,930,282	40,965,141	40,965,141

EU Programme Monitoring Activities

The EMRA had a series of important functions to perform in relation to European Affairs. Our regional government status gave us an opportunity to influence EU policy, to access EU funding, and to engage in beneficial EU projects and EU networks. The EMRA represented the Irish Member State in the management of a number of EU Programmes, sitting on the following Programme Monitoring and Steering Committees:

National Partnership Agreement (NPA)

This is the contract between Ireland (as a Member State) and the European Commission for all the European Social and Investment Funds (ESIF). These include European Rural Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Cohesion Fund.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

- Border, Midland and Western Regional Operational Programme
- Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme
- Interreg North West Europe (NWE)
- Interreg Atlantic Area
- Interreg Ireland-Wales
- PEACE
- URBACT

European Social Fund (ESF)

- Programme for Employability, Inclusion & Learning (PEIL)

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

- European Maritime and Fisheries Operational Programme

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

- Rural Development Programme (LEADER)

Meetings and Membership of Programme Monitoring Committees

Each of the Operational Programmes contained in the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) are required to have a Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC). The overall role of the Monitoring Committee is to satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and the quality of the implementation of all expenditure under the Programme. The Monitoring Committee considers the progress and impact of the co-financed expenditure and makes recommendations in this regard to the Managing Authority. The Monitoring Committee meet on an annual or more frequent basis to review the previous years' progress. Representatives also sit on the Programme Steering Committees as detailed in the NPA.

EMRA Elected Member representation on Programme Monitoring Committees:

Programme	Representative	Meeting Dates
National Partnership Agreement	Cathaoirleach Cllr Eddie Fitzpatrick	6 December 2018
Border Midland West	Cllr P. Bracken (Full); Cllr. C. Fitzgerald (Alternate);	December 2018
Southern and Eastern	Cllr L. McCarthy (Full); Cllr. T. Reilly (Full); Cllr P. Vance (Alternate)	December 2018
European Social Fund (ESF)	Cllr P. Vance	24 May 2018
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	No position on PMC	
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	No position on PMC	
Interreg Ireland Wales	Cllr B. McDonagh (Full); Cllr P. Kearns (Alternate)	12 July 2018
PEACE	Cllr T. Byrne (Full); Cllr C. Markey (Alternate)	7 November 2018

EMRA officials participating on Programme Monitoring Committees:

Programme	Participant	Meeting Attended
National Partnership Agreement	Ms Laure Antoniotti, Senior Programme Executive	6 December
Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (European Social Fund - ESF)	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	24 May
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	18 January, 3 May
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	12 December
Border Midland West Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	December
Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	December
Regional Operational Programme Quarterly Meeting	Mr Jim Conway, Director	25 January, 8 May, 11 September
Interreg Ireland-Wales (PMC)	No position on PMC	
Interreg Ireland-Wales (Steering Committee)	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	15-16 May
PEACE	No position on PMC	
Interreg Atlantic Area	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive / Laure Antoniotti, Senior Programme Executive	PMCs 21 June, 16-18 October
Interreg North-West Europe	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive / Laure Antoniotti, Senior Programme Executive	PMC 31 January- 1 February, 7 March, 29 May, 26-27 June, 25-26 October
Interreg Europe	No position on PMC	
Northern Periphery and Arctic	No position on PMC	
URBACT	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive - Ms Pauline Riordan, Senior Executive Planner	PMC workshop 5-6 March, PMC 3-5 April, 3-4 December City Festival 12-14 September

Project Evaluation (ERDF)

The EMRA team has undertaken project evaluation for proposals from three funding programmes during 2018: Interreg Ireland Wales, Atlantic Area and North West Europe.

INTERREG Ireland Wales – EMRA staff sit on the Programme Steering Group and undertook 22 evaluations (Gateway 1 and Gateway 2) for 15 unique projects over the course of the year. Participated in 1 Programme Steering Group meeting and 2 Programme Monitoring Committee meetings.

INTERREG North West Europe (NWE): The team evaluated 116 Step 1 proposals (48 from Call 6, 59 from Call 7 and 9 for the targeted Call on renewable energy) and 60 Step 2 proposals (9 from Call 4, 14 from Call 5, 17 from Call 6, 20 Call 7).

INTERREG Atlantic Area – EMRA provided ongoing support provision to the Joint Secretariat. The Interreg Atlantic Areas second call for proposals was held from 15 March to 13 June 2018. The EMRA team assessed 34 project proposals in advance of Programme Monitoring Committee meeting in October where selection and decisions regarding Call 2 proposals were made.

URBACT – EMRA took over the role of URBACT National Contact Point for Ireland in January 2018. The URBACT National Contact Point attended trans-national meetings of a number of Irish networks. EMRA aided with the organisation of the Urban Development Network Conference in Cork in March. There were 2 Programming Monitoring Committee meetings in 2018 which follow the Presidency of the EU. The first in Sofia in Bulgaria in April and the 2nd in Austria in December. A workshop was organised for Programming Monitoring Committee members on the "7th Cohesion Report Findings: Facing challenges for cities and urban territories through transnational cooperation" in March in Paris. An open Call for Transfer Networks ended on the 10th of January 2018. URBACT's Monitoring Committee approved 23 Transfer networks for Phase 2 in December 2018. The URBACT Summer University took place in Lisbon, Portugal in September 2018, and included an Irish Country discussion on URBACT.

Irish Sea Maritime Forum

Senator Gerry Horkan (former EMRA member) is the Chair of the Irish Sea Maritime Forum. EMRA participated in the Irish Sea Maritime Forum Steering Group meeting in October 2018.

ENCORE (Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe)

EMRA organised an ENCORE workshop on Ecosystem Services in Dublin and Tullamore in March 2018, which included a visit to the Rediscovery Centre in Ballymun and Lough Boora Discovery Centre. The workshop introduced ENCORE Members to Ireland and demonstrated the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services. In 2018 Denmark held the Presidency of ENCORE and EMRA participated in a conference in September where the rotating Presidency was given to the Assembly for the next two years.



European Week of Regions and Cities

The European Week of Regions and Cities (commonly known as OPEN DAYS) is an annual four-day event during which European cities and regions showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement European Union cohesion policy, and prove the importance of the local and regional level for good European governance. In 2018, the event took place from 8th – 10th October in Brussels. The Committee of the Regions (CoR) members and other Assembly members participated in the event.

Senior staff from the Assembly and from the Irish Regions office also participated through attendance at knowledge exchange workshops.

Networking events:

Staff from the Assembly participated in the following events:

- Cohesion Policy boosting regional industrial transition based on RIS3
- Community-led local development: EU funding from the bottom-up
- Powering Europe: Capital Cities & Regions delivering growth post-2020
- Idea lab on the future of transnational Interreg cooperation
- Territorial Trends and Challenges in Regional Policies

The Assembly Cathaoirleach, Director Jim Conway and staff met Ireland's Permanent Representation to the EU and representatives of the Northern Ireland Local Government Association to discuss issues of mutual interest including the impact of Brexit on border regions.



Committee of the Regions



A significant function of the Irish Regions European Office is to co-ordinate the work of the members of the national delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR). As the European Union's assembly of local and regional representatives, the CoR has 350 members from across the 28 EU Member States, all of whom must be democratically elected and/or hold a political mandate in their home country. The CoR's role is to inform the development of EU legislation and future European policies through the input of those most closely representing communities, with a focus on those EU policy areas and proposals that most greatly impact on regions and cities. The CoR mainly presents its views through written opinions or resolutions which are developed and discussed in one of six thematic Commissions covering the following policy areas:

- Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX);
- Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER);
- Economic Policy (ECON);
- Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE);
- Natural Resources (NAT);
- Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC).

Each Commission generally meets on five occasions during a calendar year to prepare the opinions which are then adopted at the 5-6 plenary sessions held annually. Commissioners, Presidency Ministers and MEPs regularly attend CoR meetings and there is an on-going exchange between the institutions on policy issues.

The Irish Delegation

The Irish delegation to the CoR is currently composed of nine full members and eight alternate members appointed by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government.

As secretariat to the national delegation, the IREO together with colleagues in EMRA provided analysis and briefing to members at each stage of the drafting process as opinions progressed through the various Commissions to the plenary level with a focus on identifying the likely impacts or opportunities for Ireland, particularly at the regional and local level. Following the triggering of article 50 by the UK, the delegation has also been provided with regular updates on the ongoing Brexit negotiations.

Irish delegation members acted as rapporteur on two opinions in 2018:

- Cllr. Deirdre Forde's opinion on "The Single Market Programme" – adopted at the December plenary
- Cllr. Mary Freehill's opinion on "The empowerment of women in the Mediterranean region" as part of the ARLEM activities, which was adopted in February 2018.

The secretariat accompanied and provided support to the Irish rapporteurs in the preparation of their opinion, including the organisation of meetings with relevant stakeholders and the drafting of speeches, speaking notes and press releases.

Examples of other topics covered by Opinions in 2018 include:

- Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) Post 2020
- Proposal for a single-use plastics directive
- Reform of the CAP
- The Multiannual Financial Framework package for the years 2021-2027
- Fair Taxation Package
- The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
- Asylum and Migration Fund proposal

Overall during 2018, the EMRA staff briefed the Irish members in advance of 31 separate commission meetings across the CoR's six broad areas of work, as well as for the six plenary sessions and eight Bureau (executive body) meetings. National delegation meetings were held in advance of each plenary meeting to discuss agenda items, ensure that any Irish perspectives were fully represented as part of the CoR discussions and coordinate the work of the delegation.

Members sought to develop political links with their colleagues in the wider political group structures in the CoR. As part of its representational role, the delegation maintains a focus on developing relationships with others who represent Irish interests in the EU, including in the Irish Permanent Representation, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The delegation also made a submission to the preparation of Ireland's National Reform Programme (NRP) as part of the annual European Semester process.



On Brexit, the delegation met with Emer Deane, head of the Brexit taskforce at the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU, to discuss the current state of the negotiations and the impact of Brexit on Irish local and regional authorities. Members took every available opportunity to raise Irish concerns and the need to identify and agree practical solutions and took part in the debate organised in plenary in December with EU Negotiator Michel Barnier. All Irish Members of the delegation participated in an inter-regional group on Brexit set up in January 2018 and Cllr Michael Murphy, Head of delegation, was appointed Vice-President of the group

The delegation also engaged in the Joint Oireachtas Committee of European Affairs. In May 2018, the Head of Delegation, Cllr Michael Murphy, attended a meeting between the Joint Committee and the CoR's Conference of Presidents, led by President Karl-Heinz Lambertz. Subjects discussed included the regional impact of Brexit and the Future of Europe debate. The full delegation met the Joint Committee in November 2018, where the delegations work on promoting Irish interests in Europe was discussed, as well as the Future of Europe debate and Brexit.

The Irish Regions European Office (IREO) is based in Brussels and represents the three Regional Assemblies and 31 local authorities of Ireland. Operating as part of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and with the support of the Department for Housing, Planning and Local Government, IREO focus is on bringing the EU closer to the wider local government sector and vice versa. IREO is a specialised support service which acts as a bridge between Irish local and regional government and the European Union, explaining and guiding its stakeholders through the Brussels scene and promoting Irish interests and best practices at the European level. It provides the only Irish presence among almost 300 representative offices established in the EU capital by regions, cities and local government associations from across Europe. IREO is also in charge of the secretariat for the Irish national Delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR).

The functions of the IREO include monitoring and reporting on the latest developments in relevant EU policy fields; providing analysis and advice to facilitate the active pursuit of funding from the programmes managed by the European Commission; and other representational, networking and liaison functions enabling Irish local authorities and Regional Assemblies to further their interaction with the EU Institutions and with counterparts elsewhere in Europe.

The EU's agenda in 2018 focussed primarily on discussions surrounding the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. The MFF is the EU's seven-year framework regulating its budget and defining spending priorities for various policy areas. In a publication called "EU Budget for the Future", the European Commission published all of its budgetary proposals, including those for regional development and cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy. This marked the beginning of budgetary negotiations between the European Commission, Council and Parliament to agree on the shape of EU's upcoming seven-year budget. The IREO continues to play an active role in monitoring the MFF developments, particularly regarding cohesion and regional development, representing the three Regional Assemblies in discussions on various policy platforms such as interest group meetings or exchanges with European institutions.

Brexit also ranked high on the EU's agenda in 2018. As negotiations intensified, the IREO provided the Assemblies with regular updates and worked closely with the Irish Permanent Representation and other institutions to voice local concerns relating to UK's departure from the EU.

Among the (non-CoR) activities carried out by IREO Brussels in 2018 were:

- Monitoring of EU policy and programming developments and attendance at various workshops, seminars and information sessions with a focus on post-2020 negotiations.
- Detailed consultation and advisory services in response to stakeholder enquiries.
- Rebranding and launch of the new IREO website www.ireo.eu and expanded use of the @IrishRegions_EU twitter feed.
- Co-organisation of a seminar on the effects of Brexit on Ireland-Wales Interreg programme with the presence of the Southern Regional Assembly.
- Devised and contributed to delegation study visits by Members of the Northern & Western Region during European Week of Regions and Cities.
- Meeting and briefings to other visiting groups/officials including, Cork City Council, LGMA, Kerry County Council, Chambers Ireland, Cork County Council, Galway 2020 and various Oireachtas committees.
- Networking and alliance-building, including with other Brussels-based regional representations and associations (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, Atlantic Strategy Group, CPMR Brexit task force, Cohesion Alliance, IBEC).
- Liaison with officials within the European Institutions, with MEPs and with representatives of Irish Government Departments to discuss and clarify issues of interest and areas of opportunity.



Corporate, Finance and HR

Corporate

In 2018 the Corporate Section continued to provide the administrative and organisation support services for the Assembly and the ongoing management of same, with 13 staff based in the offices in Ballymun, 1 staff member based in Longford County Council and 2 staff members based in Brussels.

The 2018 Programme of Works was adopted in April and circulated to the constituent Local Authorities.

The implementation of an Anti - Fraud Policy and the development of a Corporate Risk Assessment Register, enhanced the Assemblies corporate governance.

Ongoing supports are also provided to the Irish Regions European Office based in the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels.

The Corporate team also assisted with the IEN and IREO re-branding.

Finance

The main functions of the Finance section in 2018 included:

- Preparation of the Annual Financial Statement 2017.
- Financial Management, procurement and control.
- Payment, recoupment and reconciliation of accounts.
- Financial administration of the EU Affairs office in Brussels.
- Administration of EMRA payroll and superannuation through the local government payroll and superannuation shared services centre (MyPay).
- Preparation of the Annual Budget for 2019.
- Assistance with the Local Government 2017 Audit.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Section continued to implement the adopted Workforce Plan for the EMRA. Additional staff were recruited through the following recruitment campaigns over the course of the year:

- Senior Planner - Planning section (seconded)
- Assistant Staff Officer - Corporate Services
- Clerical Officer - Corporate Services
- Senior Programme Executive - Corporate Services and EU Affairs
- Staff Officer - Committee of Regions

Human Resources engaged with the Local Government Management Agency's HR Network which facilitates knowledge exchange in regards to recruitment, retention and HR policies.

Training

Training for staff continued to be provided in accordance with the objectives of the approved corporate plan. Training of staff continuing with on the job training, specially targeted training through the IPA and attendance and participation at relevant conferences.

In 2018 all staff received compulsory training on manual handling.

One staff member took part in Payroll training course and one completed the Certificate in Local Government Studies training programme organised by the IPA.

GDPR/Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulation that came into effect on May 25th 2018. To ensure compliance, EMRA has conducted a review of its policies and procedures. This review will be ongoing, and EMRA policies will change to meet this evolving regulator environment. A Data Protection Officer (DPO) has been appointed to lead EMRA's actions around GDPR compliance. This DPO engages with the other Assemblies to share best practice, and is part of the LGMA's DPO network where they receive ongoing training and up-to-date information.

Networking, Participation and Activities

Event	Date	Attendees
Dublin Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Jim Conway
Midlands Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Jim Conway
Mid - East Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Malachy Bradley
Dublin Economic Monitor	Various	Malachy Bradley/ Pauline Riordan
Climate Change Adaption Strategies Steering Committee	Various	Jim Conway
Eirgrid Implementation Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Eastern and Shannon CFRAMS Advisory Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
NPF Cross-departmental Steering Group	Various	Jim Conway
CARO steering group	Various	Jim Conway
Project Ireland 2040 Board	Various	Jim Conway
Irish Planning Institute Senior Planners Forum	6 th November	Malachy Bradley

Communications

Social Media

In 2018 we have continued to expand our online presence on various social media channels. We currently have accounts with three platforms:



Eastern and Midland
Regional Assembly



@EMRAsssembly &
@IrishRegions_EU



Eastern and Midland
Regional Assembly

Twitter is the most important dissemination platform for EMRA as most stakeholders and partners have a presence there. Our Twitter audience has grown by 65% between January and December 2017 and we have reached 456 followers by the end of the year. The growth was fully organic (non-paid for).

RSES Public Consultations

Over the course of 2018, EMRA has held two rounds of public consultation as part of development process of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The Corporate Team provided ongoing support and used all available communication channels to promote the consultation process including creating a special section on EMRA website for online submissions.

IEN and IREO rebranding

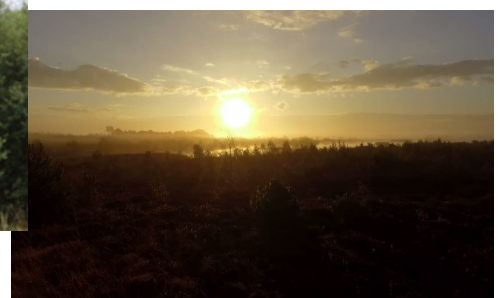
Throughout 2018 the Assembly undertook two significant rebranding projects.

A new brand was developed for the Irish Regions European Office, with a new logo and a new website designed on its basis. The new website acts as a hub for stakeholders and interested parties, allows easy access to information and thanks to added functionalities assists staff with their duties.

A new online portal and visual identification was also developed for the Innovation Enterprise Network. As a result, its reach expanded, the image of the network improved and it became possible to facilitate online communication between members of the network.

ENCORE video

EMRA has produced a three-minute video for the ENCORE Conference 2018 in Herning, Denmark. The video included a message from Cathaoirleach Eddie Fitzpatrick to ENCORE conference participants. It also featured the Lough Boora Discovery Park as an example of how former peat lands can be restored to provide natural habitat for wildlife and become an amenity for local residents and visitors.





Energy Usage

Overview of Energy Usage in 2018

The office of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly is on the third floor of the Ballymun Civic Centre. The Assembly lease the office space from Dublin City Council which occupies 3.7% of the total office space of the Ballymun Civic Centre building. The main categories of energy use are:

- Space heating,
- Water heating,
- Electrical appliances, and
- Lighting.

Electricity and gas are the main sources of energy. Overall electricity consumption increased in 2018, mainly due to increased occupancy in the Ballymun Civic Centre. Gas consumption increased in 2018, for a large part due to exceptionally cold weather in February and March 2018. Water consumption decreased due to repair of leaks.

Energy reducing initiatives implemented in 2018 include ongoing replacement of fluorescent bulbs with led light bulbs, the use of motion sensors on staircases, toilets and car parks.

Actions Planned for 2019

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly will continue to review energy initiatives, identifying areas for further efficiency gains in an effort to reduce energy consumption. EMRA will work with Dublin City Council and the Ballymun Civic Centre management team to identify potential areas for energy saving and will run energy awareness training for employees.

Climate change

The EMRA are partners in the large urban area adaptation (URB-ADAPT) project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. The goal of this project is to produce guidelines and tools to inform local climate change adaptation strategies.

A photograph of a business meeting. Two people are seated at a wooden desk. One person is writing on a document with a red pen, while the other points at the same document with a yellow pen. There are two laptops on the desk, one open and one closed. A mouse is also visible. The background is a plain wall.

Projects

EMRA Projects

In 2018 the Assembly has been involved in a number of projects, including 3 funded by the European Union. Activities of these project provide a valuable insight that can be useful in regional policy development.

GBIHealth

EMRA is a partner on the EPA funded project Green and blue spaces and health: a health-led approach (GBIHealth). GBIHealth is assessing the health profile of the Eastern & Midland Region, identifying high and low health case study sites and then characterising configurations of environmental features (e.g. trees, water, built surroundings) contributing to these health outcomes. The results of the project will provide a supplementary evidence base for input into the RSES and spatial planning generally. As part of this project, EMRA plays a key role by providing inputs in relation to the regional planning context and research expertise. The project kicked-off in February 2017 with the recruitment of a postdoctoral researcher based with the lead partner, NUI Maynooth. In 2018, the project was largely completed with the final report sent to the EPA. Follow-up activities, including further examination of the health/environment link, are planned for 2019.

Urb-ADAPT

EMRA is a partner in the large urban area adaptation (URB-ADAPT) project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of their research programme 2014–2020. Urb-Adapt aims to identify and model the impacts of climate change on the region. As part of the Urb-ADAPT project EMRA is working closely with the Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy at University College Cork to detect and characterise climate change impacts in the region up to 2060. The project team includes coastal and climate experts from UCC in conjunction with the policy experience of EMRA.

Work completed in 2018 included developing vulnerability maps for the region, assessing the current and future vulnerability of the region to global climate change. A meeting took place between the Urb-Adapt project partners and the Kildare Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) examining climate change adaptation options. EMRA assisted with the organisation of an Urb-Adapt workshop on the impacts of climate change in Ballymun in December 2018.

EnRoute

The aim of EnRoute is to contribute to the development of green infrastructure in urban areas. EnRoute aims to implement a common framework for the assessment of urban green infrastructure which European cities can use to support policies, assess and monitor urban green infrastructure and the urban ecosystem. It builds upon the experiences of a pilot project 'Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES). EnRoute aids in our understanding of how urban policy on green infrastructure at different governance levels can be mutually reinforcing. It aims to enhance contact between communities at local, regional and national level in order to exchange experiences and knowledge.

An EnRoute project meeting took place in April in which EMRA presented. EMRA participated in a conference 'Biodiver-City: Enhancing urban biodiversity and ecosystem services to make cities more resilient' in April. Ongoing work assessing and compiling data on urban green infrastructure. A final report on the EnRoute Dublin City Lab was produced and preparations were undertaken for the EnRoute final conference scheduled for January 2019.

RESILENS

The RESILENS project, in which EMRA is a partner, is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme. This is a 3-year project which commenced in May 2015 and was completed in June 2018.



RESILENS aims to address Critical Infrastructure vulnerabilities and enhance the resilience of Europe, thereby increasing the ability of societies to prepare for, respond to and recover from crises and disasters, including natural hazards and man-made threats. Critical Infrastructure (CI) includes the essential functions and services which support our societal, economic and environmental systems, e.g. water, energy, transport infrastructure. Resilience is the ability of these systems to survive and thrive in the face of a complex and uncertain future.

The international project consortium includes partners from Ireland, Portugal, the UK, Germany and Israel. They are drawn from a range of different backgrounds and are engaged in various aspects of resilience research and CI operations. Together, the partners have a broad range of expertise in project management, security, conceptual elements of resilience and resilience research, technical and engineering aspects, development of guidelines for public bodies, legal implications and technical development of interactive online platforms and tools. The expertise of the consortium is focused on moving CI Resilience from current conceptual understanding to applied, operational measures and established practices which can be adopted by key stakeholders. Key outputs delivered by the RESILENS project partners are the ERMG (European Resilience Management Guideline), ReMMAT (online interactive toolkit, including a CI resilience audit tool) and e-Learning Hub, all of which are hosted on the interactive online RES-DSP (RESILENS Decision Support Platform).

In the face of a complex and uncertain future, Resilience is becoming a widely-used concept by which places and systems are measured and assessed. To protect our future societies and economies and to enable them to respond and recover quickly from threats, crises or disasters, it will be important to incorporate resilience management into our planning systems, policy development and decision making. Thus, the ERMG will be a guideline which will lead to better crisis and disaster management and more resilient and secure economic and societal systems in the future. The ERMG and RESILENS toolkit will guide users towards developing and enhancing systems which have the ability to survive and thrive in the face of uncertainty, to minimise disruption when responding to a disaster, to absorb shocks and stresses, to recover rapidly, adapt to change and thrive under new conditions.

EMRA's participation in this project benefits the region in that it places us at the forefront of innovative thinking around the creation of better prepared, more secure, more adaptable and safer places and systems, economies and societies. EMRA was responsible for managing Work Package 4 of the project which involved pilot demonstrations to test, evaluate and validate the draft ERMG and toolkit. During 2018, EMRA collaborated with project partners to conclude the project activities, and disseminate the project's learnings and tools to the CI partners at three different international locations (Ireland, Portugal, Germany), in three different CI sectors (Water, Energy, Transport), and at different spatial scales (transnational, national, regional). Also in 2018, EMRA contributed to other work package deliverables including input to the RESILENS Website, social media sites and e-newsletter; and development of the final ERMG, toolkit, e-Learning Hub and RES-DSP.

The Innovation Enterprise Network (IEN)

The Innovation Enterprise Network (IEN) has been in operation since 2010, it is an agile network which supports unemployed high-skilled professionals, graduates, post graduates, business owners and sole traders.



The experience and knowledge that is within the IE Network provides the ideal platform for idea generation, mentoring and support, all of which empowers the members to identify a route back to the workplace, either by getting a new employer, or, if you simply cannot get a suitable job, to assist you with starting out on your own. Members are from all sectors of the business world - architects, web developers, civil, electrical and pharmaceutical engineers, solicitors and business owners. In December 2018 the Network had 2395 subscribed members. Over the course of the year, over 160 events were organised for members of the Network.

The events hosted by the IE Network are wide and varied including Social Media, Job seeking skills, Motivational talks, Resilience, Start your own business, Innovation, Creative thinking, Entrepreneurship, interview workshops, Communication skills.

The IE Network has undergone rebranding over the course of 2018, producing a new website with enhanced online communication functions for members and development of a new brand identity.

Funded by the four Local Authorities the IE network delivered motivational talks, seminars and workshops across the Dublin area. These talks took place weekly in four venues in Fingal, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, South Dublin and City Centre.





Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

Our Staff

Jim Conway - Director
Malachy Bradley, Assistant Director and Senior planner
Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive (until September)
Laure Antoniotti, Senior Programme Executive
Sarah Holden, Head of Office, Irish Regions European Office
Juan Martinez, Economist
Pauline Riordan, Senior Executive Planner
Clare Bannon, Senior Executive planner
Bernadette Quinn, Resilens project officer (until October)
Ronan Fallon, Senior Executive Planner
Hazel Healy, Corporate Management programme Executive
Michael Brennan, EU Affairs Officer
Travis O'Doherty, Research and Policy officer
Ronan Gingles, EU affairs and policy adviser (until July)
Agata Kolodynska, EU support officer
Jim Nolan, IE Network manager
Bernadette Lancaster, Assistant Staff Officer (until July)
Simon Musial, Assistant Staff Officer
Richard Kenneally, Clerical Officer
Ross Higgins, Clerical Officer
Heather Cooke, Clerical Officer



Annual Financial Statements 2017



Income and Expenditure Account 31 December 2017

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2017

EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY		
Expenditure	2017	2016
Salaries	647,750	479,184
Office Equipment & Supplies	8,985	9,787
Information Technology	32,107	63,857
Communications & Postage	8,151	6,620
Members Annual Allowances	50,547	44,421
<i>Travel & Subsistence Allowances:</i>		
I - Members Travel & Subsistence	4,195	6,321
II - Members conferences	5,955	5,719
III - Staff Travel and Subsistence	42,825	33,966
Rent	77,875	69,337
Insurance	3,995	2,872
Training	11,721	12,178
Consultancy & professional Fees	35,304	10,766
Facilities, Energy & Rates charges	54,348	41,228
Advertising	5,401	3,899
Audit Fee	6,202	6,202
Miscellaneous	9,354	8,321
EU Affairs & IRO (COR)	229,875	203,359
Celtic Sea Project	3,257	79,109
EU Operational Programme	11,786	12,026
Resilens	72,679	108,059
I.E. Network	88,986	80,341
Urb-ADAPT	5,023	6,353
Expenditure total	1,416,321	1,293,925
Income		
Local Authorities Contributions	1,103,170	1,048,710
Other Income	62,335	40,802
Superannuation	24,101	22,071
Committee of the Regions	228,420	202,711
COR Misc	1,455	648
Celtic Sea Project	3,257	45,511
Resilens	72,679	108,059
IE Network	88,986	80,341
Urb-ADAPT	5,023	6,353
Receipts total	1,589,426	1,555,206
Difference between Income + Expenditure	173,105	261,281
Opening balance at 01/01/2017	491,602	230,321
Closing Balance at end of year Surplus	664,707	491,602

Signed:

Eddie Fitzpatrick

Councillor Eddie Fitzpatrick, Cathaoirleach

Mr. Jim Conway

Mr. Jim Conway, Director

Consolidated Balance Sheet

for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2017

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2017

	2017	2016
Fixed Assets		
IT Equipment	5,000	5,000
Furniture & Fixtures	0	0
Heritage Assets	10,000	10,000
	15,000	15,000
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	557,229	431,153
Debtors	341,268	302,293
Petty Cash	84	134
Prepayments	8,199	2,939
	906,780	736,519
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & Accruals	164,809	204,504
Deferred income	77,264	40,412
Bank	0	0
	242,073	244,917
Net Current Assets	664,707	491,602
Net Assets	679,707	506,602
Financed by		
Balance @ 01/01/17	491,602	230,321
General Reserve	0	0
Inherited Fixed Assets from old DRA	15,000	15,000
Excess of Income over Expenditure	173,105	261,281
	679,707	506,602

Members' Allowances and Expenses 2018

Member (Cllr)	Fixed Allowance	Training	Committee of the Regions	Conferences/Training
Andrew Duncan (W.Meath)	€324.39	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Barry Ward (CoR) (Dublin)	€95.88	€0.00	€62.95	€0.00
Brian Fitzgerald (Meath)	€900.99	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Brian McDonagh (Dublin)	€337.69	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Catherine Fitzgerald (Laois)	€2,284.00	€421.64	€0.00	€50.00
Christy Burke (Dublin)	€719.14	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Ciaran Cuffe (Dublin)	€194.10	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Claire O'Connor (Dublin)	€95.88	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Colm Markey (Louth)	€1,066.18	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Derek Mitchell (Wicklow)	€1,118.20	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
David Healy (Dublin)	€729.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Dermot Lacey (Dublin)	€719.14	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Delcan McDonnell (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€202.49	€0.00
Deirdre Forde (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€2,833.97	€0.00
Dianne Nolan (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Eamon Dooley (CoR) (Offaly)	€1,854.99	€254.13	€103.59	€500.00
Eddie Fitzpatrick (Offaly)	€1,958.08	€2,296.15	€0.00	€0.00
Eddie Fitzpatrick Cathaoirleach Q3&Q4)	€5,850.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Enda Fanning (Dublin)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Enda Stenson (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€673.23	€0.00
Francis Duffy (Dublin)	€383.55	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Gaye Fagan (Dublin)	€383.54	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Gerry Murray (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€1,250.84	€0.00
Hugh McGrath (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€360.41	€0.00
Irene Winters (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Ivan Keatley (Kildare)	€554.23	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Jennifer Cuffe (Dublin)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Jerry Lundy (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€3,294.86	€0.00
Jimmy McClearn (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€481.81	€0.00
Kate Feeney (CoR) (Dublin)	€479.44	€205.49	€340.50	€0.00
Kieran Dennison (Dublin)	€540.51	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Kieran McCarthy (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€271.00	€0.00
Lettie McCarthy (Dublin)	€622.01	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Maria Murphy (Meath)	€513.47	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Martin Milley (Kildare)	€445.45	€0.00	€0.00	€480.00
Mary Freehill (CoR) (Dublin)	€527.38	€0.00	€752.92	€0.00
Mary Hanafin (DLR)	€239.71	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Mick Cahill (Longford)	€2,485.63	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Michael Murphy (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€4,629.62	€0.00
Mary Shields (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€480.49	€0.00
Neil McNelis (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€232.92	€0.00
Paddy Bourke (Dublin)	€384.49	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Paddy Bracken (Laois)	€1,978.12	€0.00	€0.00	€458.16
Paddy Hill (W.Meath)	€2,508.42	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Padraig McEvoy (Kildare)	€1,002.22	€676.29	€0.00	€0.00
Pamela Kearns (Dublin)	€288.01	€264.36	€0.00	€0.00
Pat Hand (Dublin)	€479.43	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Pat Vance (Wicklow)	€875.01	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
PJ Reilly (Longford)	€2,673.59	€1,233.71	€0.00	€448.65
PJ Reilly (Cathaoirleach Q1 & Q2)	€5,850.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Robert Russell	€47.94	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Rosemary Conway-Walsh (CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Thomas Cullen (Wicklow)	€902.25	€150.75	€0.00	€500.00
Tommy Byrne (Louth)	€228.75	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Tommy Reilly (Meath)	€932.06	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00

EASTERN & MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

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Tionól Reigiúnach Oirthir agus Lár-Tíre
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