



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

PROGRAMME OF WORK

2017



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
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Introduction

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014, I present the third annual programme of work to the elected members of the Assembly for approval.

During this year the substantive policy development element of the Assemblies remit, the production of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, will commence. This programme sets out the actions that consolidate the Assembly as an important contributor to, and leader of, the planning and economic development of the region. It also retains the focus on continued improvement of the region's participation in EU activities and governance. In 2015 members approved our Corporate Plan and this programme of work relates directly to its objectives and contains actions that will deliver upon its stated ethos.

As in previous programmes of work, quarterly progress reports will be issued where specific actions relating to the work item and timeline will enable members to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of the Assembly. In a modification to previous plans, this iteration focusses on the key headline areas as identified in the Corporate Plan and integrates the Assemblies activities across these headings. This will assist in maintaining a focus on policy and will help with the important role the Assembly plays in promoting participation by the 12 Local Authorities in EU related activities, with the ultimate goal of funding following policy.

This year holds a number of key objectives such as the delivery of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, participation in the National Planning Framework process, continuing to strengthen Strategic Planning Areas and participation in the implementation and monitoring of the Regional Action Plan for Jobs, the Action Plan for Rural Development and other national policy initiatives. Along with the ongoing monitoring of county and city Development Plans and Local Economic Community Plans this substantial workload will require adequate resources, and the resourcing of the Assembly is a priority. Participation within EU activities from a governance and project participation perspective also requires experience and expertise and I will recruit, train and maintain the administration resource required to provide members and stakeholders with a first class service. The activities of the Irish Regions Office in Brussels and of our Programme Executive team will underpin our EU participation.

The provision of training and information to members is also of key importance to the effective performance of the Assembly and throughout the year information presentations, seminars, workshops and conferences will be held to further members' participation in the wide range of activities with which the Assembly is involved.

I look forward to continuing the close collaboration with the Assembly members during the year ahead and I am confident that the programme of work set out for your approval will see 2017 continue with Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly at the forefront of regional economic growth, sustainable planning and EU activities.

Jim Conway, Director
Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
February, 2017

Delivery of Corporate Plan

This is an integrated programme of work undertaken by both EMRA and the Irish Regions Office. It is divided into 3 sections to reflect the delivery of the Strategic Objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Effective Governance

Be People Focused

Work	When	Update
Corporate		
Meetings of the Assembly	Q1-Q4	Ongoing service and administration of meetings
	Q1	Investigate options for secure area on website for members access to documentation
Communications	Q1-Q4	Ongoing development of platforms and use of social media
Annual Report	Q3	Delivery of Annual report within statutory timelines
Returns	Q1-Q4	Meet obligation to make quarterly and annual returns to statutory bodies
Irish Regions Office accommodation	Q1-Q4	Review the Irish Regions Office accommodation
Association of Irish Regions	Q1-Q4	Ongoing service and administration of meetings
Human Resources		
Performance Management Development System PMDS	Q1-Q4	A Pilot phase for staff will be rolled out over the course of 2017
Staff	Q1-Q4	Training plan to be developed and implemented for all staff
	Q1-Q2	Staff welfare - Employee assistance scheme being established
Workforce Plan	Q1-Q4	Ongoing recruitment will be undertaken to meet the requirements of the Workforce Plan. Review of the Workforce Plan.
In-house policies and procedures	Q1-Q4	Ongoing review and development as required

Finance		
Annual Financial Statement	Q1	Preparation of AFS within statutory timelines
Annual Budget for Assembly & Committee of Regions	Q1-Q4	Estimate revenue and expenditure, conduct financial analysis and cash flow forecasting
Payments	Q1-Q4	Ongoing compliance with relevant legislation
Procurement	Q1-Q2	Review of existing policies and framework and renewal of contracts in line with relevant legislation
Stakeholder engagement		
<i>Be People Focused</i>		
Planning	Q1-Q4	Undertake relevant stakeholder engagement in planning functions
Irish delegation to CoR	Q1-Q4	Undertake stakeholder engagement in preparing Irish input into CoR opinions
Local Authorities	Q1-Q4	Engage with Local Authorities on relevant areas
State bodies	Q1-Q4	Engage with State bodies as relevant
Other agencies/ public	Q1-Q4	Engage with other relevant agencies as relevant
Networks, Programmes and Projects	Q1-Q4	Represent local and regional interests at home and in Europe by preparing position papers, engaging in Networks, Programmes and Projects and other related functions which contribute to the achievement of our Corporate Plan
Policy and Research		
<i>Use best available information and evidence</i>		
<i>Informing / Driving policy – Shaping future considerations</i>		
Policy development	Q1-Q4	Policy submissions, analysis and observations will be prepared on behalf of the Assembly and Irish Regions Office on a wide range of upcoming topics and policy areas including climate change, maritime, economic strategy, EU post 2020
Research and policy analysis to support Irish Delegation to CoR	Q1-Q4	Provide policy briefings on priority areas such as Brexit, 'Regional Funding post 2020; Broadband and Smart cities/ regions; Rural development and agricultural policy; Blue Growth including Atlantic Area Strategy and Action Plan
EU Policy and Funding Framework	Q1-Q4	Provide analysis on relevant EU policies and funding opportunities to maximise engagement and potential draw down of EU funds
Research	Q1-Q4	Fix regional research priorities in conjunction with constituent Local Authorities
	Q1-Q4	Undertake analysis and research as required
Projects		
<i>Informing / Driving policy – Shaping future consideration.</i>		
Celtic Seas Partnership	Q1-Q2	Project to conclude 31 st March 2017. EMRA to continue to promote project outputs to key stakeholders. Afterlife plan to disseminate results. Final report to be prepared for European Commission

RESILENS (Realising European Resilience for Critical Infrastructure)	Q1-Q4	The RESILENS project is to create tools and guidance enabling Critical Infrastructures (e.g. Power, Water, Roads) to become more resilient. This year we will be testing the toolkit and guidance with the infrastructure providers in the consortium.
Urb-Adapt (to detect and characterise climate change impacts in the region up to 2060)	Q1-Q4	Assess the current and future vulnerability of the region to climate change. Then adaptation options will be identified and explored and costed in association with constituent Local Authorities.
Green and blue spaces and health: a health led approach	Q1-Q4	Conducting a literature review and characterising and mapping sites of interest. Areas of high and low reported health benefits will be identified and characterised.
Future projects	Q1-Q4	The viability of a follow on project to the Celtic Seas Partnership will be explored.
	Q1-Q4	Topics such as coastal erosion, peatlands and other areas will be explored further including funding mechanisms, potential partners, and proposed actions.
Regional priorities	Q1-Q2	Future projects to be developed in line with the regional objectives of the SPA and other regions
Urban agenda	Q1-Q2	Analyse and collate data on variety of urban related funding opportunities both in Europe and national terms
EU projects register	Q1-Q4	Maintain an EU projects register and provide reports to Members as required

Planning

Championing Sustainable Development - Maximising economic potential

Seek to improve quality of life and well being

Item	When	Update
Implementation of Regional Planning Guidelines <i>Championing Sustainable Development</i>		
Ongoing Implementation	Q1-Q4	Interaction and consultation with public bodies and stakeholders on the implementation of the RPGs and engagement for the RSES process.
Role in City / County Development Plans	Q1-Q4	Interaction and consultation with constituent Local Authorities on planning policy, including statutory functions under Section 27 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) <i>Seeking to improve quality of life and wellbeing</i>		
Preparation of RSES	Q1-Q4	Finalise governance structure, formulate works programme and report through SPA committees to the Assembly on all aspects of the RSES process.
Strategic Planning Area Committees (SPA)	Q1-Q4	Reporting on content and policy recommendations of SPA committees.
Engagement with National Planning Framework	Q1-Q4	Regional representation and input to the DHPCLG regarding the National Planning Framework process.
Economic Strategy <i>Maximising economic potential</i>		
Developing economic strategy	Q1-Q4	Capacity building the Assembly towards formulation of the economic element of the RSES
Role and function with LECPs	Q1-Q4	Role in preparation of LECPs and ongoing monitoring function
Engagement with Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Q1-Q4	Participation on implementation of the constituent Regional Action Plan for Jobs

European Affairs

Combined update from EMRA and Irish Regions Brussels Office

Informing / Driving policy – Shaping future considerations

Item	When	Update
Committee of the Regions		
Irish National Delegation	Q1-Q4	Provide support to the Irish National Delegation to deliver their Work Programme which is shaped by the activities of the CoR and the related priorities of the 3 Regional Assemblies and Irish Local Authorities.
Plenary	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 6 meetings and support delegation members
Bureau	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 8 meetings and support delegation members
Commissions		
COTER	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 5 meetings and support delegation members
CIVEX	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 5 meetings and support delegation members
ECON	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 5 meetings and support delegation members
ENVE	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 5 meetings and support delegation members
NAT	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 5 meetings and support delegation members
SEDEC	Q1-Q4	Provide briefing material for 5 meetings and support delegation members
Brexit	Q1-Q4	Undertake research and provide briefings and updates as required.
EU Funding Programmes		
National Coordinating Committee of the Funds 2014-2020 (NCCF)	Q1-Q4	Ensure complementarity, consistency, co-ordination and compliance between the assistance from the EU Funds, the EAFRD, the EMFF, the ESF, the ERDF
National Partnership Agreement	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee to oversee the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Fund Operational Programmes
Southern & Eastern Regional Operation Programme (ROP)	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Management of the Regional Operation Programme.
Border, Midland, West Regional Operation Programme (ROP)	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Management of the Regional Operation Programme.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development – including LEADER (EAFRD) PMC	Q1-Q4	Continue to provide support and participate in the monitoring of the EAFRD Operational Programme.
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) PMC	Q1-Q4	Continue to provide support and participate in the monitoring of the EMFF Operational Programme.
European Social Fund (ESF) PMC	Q1-Q4	Continue to provide support and participate in the monitoring of the ESF Operational Programme.
European Regional Development Fund – Interreg committees		
Interreg Ireland Wales	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Programme Monitoring Committee
	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Programme Steering Committee – including the assessment of all project applications.
Interreg Atlantic Area	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Programme Monitoring Committee and the National Correspondence Committee meetings. Undertake assessments of all project applications.
Interreg North West Europe	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Programme Monitoring Committee meetings. Undertake assessments of all project applications.
URBACT PMC	Q1-Q4	Participate in the Programme Monitoring Committee.
ENCORE	Q1-Q4	Participate in ENCORE and assist with bringing their annual event to Galway as part of the European Capital of Culture 2020.
Other	Q1-Q4	Participate in other meetings / committees as required.
Cohesion post 2020	Q1-Q4	Continue to monitor the development of Cohesion funding for the post 2020 period. Where possible feed into this process via ongoing involvement in the Brussels based regional funding initiative with partners from across the EU
Capacity building and communications		
Irish Regions Office website / social media	Q1-Q3	Create a new IRO website with an e-newsletter to regularly share information with local government stakeholders. A dedicated page for the Irish delegation to the CoR will also be included.
Local Authorities	Q1-Q4	Work closely with local authorities to support and develop their understanding and skills regarding EU affairs.
Regional Assemblies	Q1-Q4	Continue to develop the capacity of the Regional Assemblies in EU Affairs and to provide ongoing two-way support between Assemblies and Irish Regions Office.
National Authorities and Public bodies	Q1-Q4	Work closely with regional, national and public bodies to share information and to support their understanding of EU Affairs at the local and regional level.
EU Institutions	Q1-Q4	Continue to develop links and relationships with EU Institutions and networks

Appendix 1 – Elected Members participation on relevant committees

Name	Party	Local Authority	Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) Membership	Full / alternate	Appointed when
Lettie McCarthy	Labour	Dún Laoghaire	Southern & Eastern Regional Operational PMC- Dublin	Full	13/02/15
Kate Feeney	Fianna Fáil	Dún Laoghaire	Southern & Eastern Regional Operational PMC- Dublin	Alternate	09/12/16
Tommy Reilly	Fianna Fáil	Meath	Southern & Eastern Regional Operational PMC- Mid-East	Full	13/02/15
Pat Vance	Fianna Fáil	Wicklow	Southern & Eastern Regional Operational PMC- Mid-East	Alternate	24/04/15
Paddy Bracken	Fianna Fáil	Laois	Boarder, Midland and Western Regional Operational PMC	Full	13/02/15
Catherine Fitzgerald	Fianna Fáil	Laois	Boarder, Midland and Western Regional Operational PMC	Alternate	24/04/15
Brian McDonagh	Labour	Fingal	Ireland Wales Operational PMC	Full	27/03/15
Pamela Kearns	Labour	South Dublin	Ireland Wales Operational PMC	Alternate	24/04/15
Tommy Byrne	Fianna Fáil	Louth	PEACE PMC	Full	30/03/15
Colm Markey	Fine Gael	Louth	PEACE PMC	Alternate	24/04/15