From:	Caroline Creamer < ████████████████ >
Sent:	23 January 2019 13:15
To:	RSES
Subject:	All Ireland Smart Cities Forum - Submission to Draft RSES
Attachments:	EMRA RSES - AISCF Submission - PublicConsultation - Jan19.pdf
Importance:	High
Follow Up Flag:	Follow up
Flag Status:	Flagged

To whom it concerns,

Please find attached submission from the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum on the Draft RSES Public Consultation document.

We are very supportive of this process, and welcome the reference to the role of smart cities in regional development.

For further discussions on this submission, please contact the Facilitator of AISCF, Ms. Caroline Creamer. Caroline can be contacted at caroline.creamer@mu.ie or by telephone on 086 8170436.

Please acknowledge receipt of submission by return email.

Sincerely Yours,

Caroline
Ms. Caroline Creamer
Facilitator, All Ireland Smart Cities Forum
T: █████████████
E: ████████████████████
W: www.smartcitiesireland.org
Twitter: @smart_cities_I

Ms. Caroline Creamer
Director, International Centre for Local and Regional Development
T: █████████████
E: ██████████████████████████████
W: www.iclrd.org
Twitter: @ICLRD _Org

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ICLRD)

Submission to the Public Consultation on the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

January 2018

The All Ireland Smart Cities Forum (AISCF) welcomes the publication of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly's Draft *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (RSES). As a new concept in Irish planning, this document plays a key role in setting out the future direction of the region in its own right, but also in terms of its relations with neighbouring Assembly areas and also Northern Ireland. This rounded and joined-up approach is to be welcomed.

The AISCF welcomes the dedication of a chapter within the draft RSES to 'All Island Cohesion' and the strong links between the EMR and Northern Ireland. This is particularly evident along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. Indeed, the Forum is supporting Dublin City Council and Belfast City council on a number of joint SBIR/SBRI challenges, including one on last mile delivery. Within the uncertainties resulting from the UK's proposed exit from the EU, the need to work together on a cross-border basis is more important than ever. The Corridor is also a strategic entry point to airports and ports, and there is a need for continued investment in transport connectivity, the interconnection of electricity grids and telecommunications networks.

The recognition of the positive role that the smart city concept can make to regional development is well received. The work of Smart Dublin is a clear demonstrator of what can be achieved in this space – and the role 'smart' can play in addressing key social, economic and environmental challenges faced by policy-makers at all levels. The AISCF welcomes its recognition within the document, and will continue to be a platform for knowledge sharing. We are delighted to welcome the city of Newry on board as a partner from January 2019.

The Smart City Concept offers opportunities for living labs, test-beds and the deployment of disruptive technologies. The four Local Authorities have used the smart city concept effectively under the umbrella of Smart Dublin. Consideration needs to be given to how this concept can support the development of the Regional Growth centres – with links to the local Universities and Research Centres.

The Smart District – such as Smart Docklands – is an interesting concept that can bring technology providers, citizens and local government together to solve challenges and promote entrepreneurial activity. It supports Innovation 2020, aids in the delivery of the objectives of the Regional Action Plan for Jobs, and can improve service delivery.

In terms of the smart agenda, we would welcome consideration being given to the its potential role in rural development. The EU are actively investigating the role of smart towns and villages in local and regional development policy and practice – an initiative being led by the Committee of the Regions. In late 2018, Leitrim County Council hosted the first National Smart Towns and Villages Conference, an event which demonstrated the currently latent potential of this concept. As leaders in the area of 'smart' , we would welcome the EMRA embracing a role in the diffusion of 'smart' beyond our urban centres. The Forum will support any such initiatives where we can.

The EMR indeed has a wealth of opportunities to be drivers of smart specialisation and cluster development. That this should be linked to higher education (Universities, IoTs, SFI Research Centres, etc.) is wholly accepted and encouraged. Key to EMR will be ensuring that any such specialisation/clustering does not become confined to the Dublin Metropolitan Region.

Achieving the goal of effective regional development requires a real push to ensure the more peripheral areas within EMR – Longford, Offaly, and Laois benefit from these policies – building on their local asset bases.

The impact of connectivity on quality of life cannot be under-estimated. This includes access to a high quality integrated public transport system and digital networks. A major challenge for the region is providing alternatives to the car – a shift that can only be achieved by achieving a better balance in the distribution of activity and ensuring people can live close to where they work. Promotion of the concept of compact growth will go some way to alleviating this over-dependence and encourage more active modes of travel.

In terms of digital connectivity, questions must be asked around 'how blue is the 'blue'? in terms of strength of digital connection within the Dublin MASP. Clarifications continue to be sought on the future of the NBP – and when/if it will be delivered. Such challenges – and solutions for - must be picked up in the emerging new National Digital Strategy.

The promotion of the green infrastructure and the transition to a low carbon economy are ambitious goals for a region so heavily dependent on the private car. Being home to the largest population in the state and the epicentre for economic development brings with it many pressures – long commuting patterns, housing pressures, environmental stresses, energy demands, etc. Achieving a better geographical spread of population and job growth, leading to a better proximity between where people live and work, is an ambitious goal, but one that will bring multiple benefits to the environment and to people's overall health, well-being and quality of life. The possible role of technology is achieving this goal cannot be under-estimated.

Linked to environmental quality, and shifting to a low-carbon economy, is the concept of e-mobility and e-cars. There is a need for a regional conversation on the future of e-mobility in this region, and the provision of the infrastructure needed to enable this shift away from the traditional car. And this is not only about cars – but also public transport, trucks/vans, last mile delivery, etc.

In terms of a clean and healthy environment, it is striking how smart technologies are currently being piloted by a number of Councils, including the four Dublin Authorities under the banner of Smart Dublin, to improve air quality, water quality, flood management, etc. – with clear potential there for this to be expanded to noise and light pollution through the SBIR Challenges operated by Enterprise Ireland.

Climate change is a reality, with diverse and wide-ranging impacts. Becoming a low-carbon economy through the reduction of greenhouse gases, minimising energy demand and waste is key to reducing the effects of climate change. This requires a shift to clean mobility and a reduction in car-demand (commuting).

A resilient supply of energy is also critical for the future growth of the region. The Celtic and North/South Interconnectors are key projects to ensure continued supply for the growth envisioned – and more. There is a dependence on electricity and gas at present, and this needs to be diversified to include renewable energies. The promotion of Smart Grids and Smart electricity management are two initiatives that need to be actioned across the region as a whole. This includes EIR's Grid25 Project.

The acknowledgement of the changing demographic profile of the region – and the implications of this for future housing supply, access to services, access to transport – is to be welcomed. Planning for age and families is an increasingly critical objective of the planning system, and a space in which technology can play a key role.

Appendix 1: All Ireland Smart Cities Forum (AISCF)

The All Ireland Smart Cities Forum is a community of practice focused on the advancement of cities in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland through the deployment of, and value creation from, technology enabled urban services (i.e. smart programmes). It is characterised by practitioners with a common sense of purpose who agree to work together to solve problems, share knowledge, cultivate best practice and foster innovation. The cities involved in the Forum are:

- Smart Dublin (represented by the four local authorities)
- Waterford City and County
- Cork City and Cork Smart Gateway
- Limerick City and County
- Galway City
- Derry City and Strabane
- Newry
- Belfast City

Each city is represented by one senior official from the relevant local authority and/or a representative from their smart city programme office or equivalent.

The use of technology is viewed as an enabler of social and economic good and, as such, city participants will, through this Forum, represent their perspectives irrespective of their own functional expertise. It is recognised that there is a diversity in cities across the island of Ireland in terms of urban and or regional responsibilities.

The main principle of the Forum is to be citizen-focused. All objectives and tasks originating from the Forum will adhere to the principle of: city users as customers.

Contact Point:
Ms. Caroline Creamer
Facilitator – All Ireland Smart Cities Forum

Iontas Building
Maynooth U
Maynooth