

EASTERN & MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

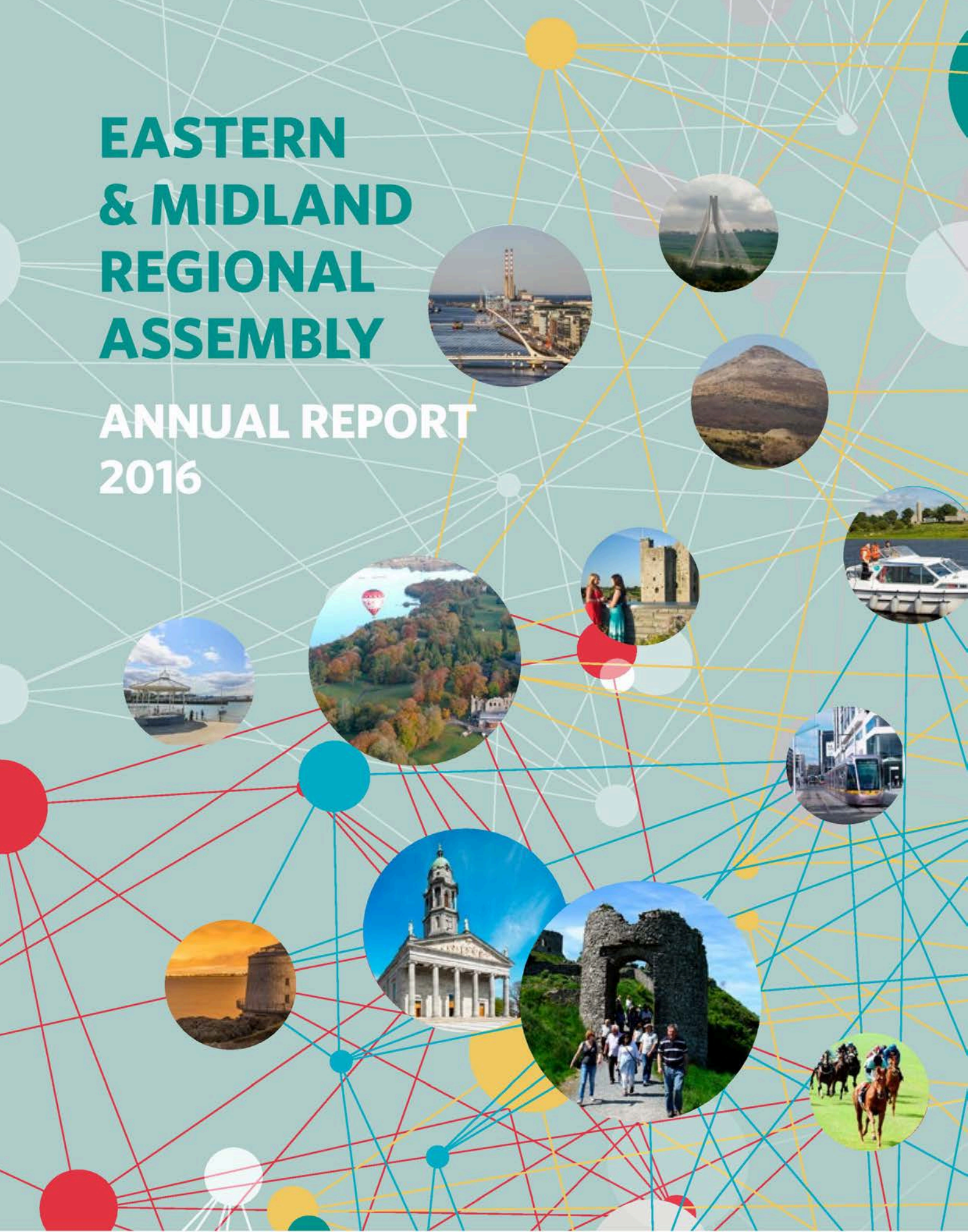


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A message from An Cathaoirleach

I am delighted to have this opportunity to introduce the second Annual report for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly.

2016 has seen a continuation of work by the 37 members from our 12 Local Authority areas to consolidate regional governance and place it at the forefront of regional planning and EU activities. This has been reflected in well attended monthly meetings where we discussed areas such as the National Planning Framework, the future of the peatlands in Ireland, European Funding post 2020 and national infrastructure requirements.

During the year we had a number of changes in members and I would like to thank those who left us for pastures new, for their important contributions to establishing EMRA and to welcome the new members. As an Assembly we have worked well to promote and develop the region. Throughout the year members have participated in establishing Strategic Planning Area Committees, participated in Programme Monitoring Committees, attended seminars and training events and provided oversight of the governance of the region.

While the recovery of the Irish economy continues, regional approaches, policies and views will be important to support an equitable distribution of the benefits of this recovery. Through active participation in the development of regional policies members have played an important role in regional development in Ireland.

2016 saw the establishment of EMRA as a NUTS II Region in its own right at European level and we have worked throughout the year in close co-operation with the other two regional assemblies, the Northern and Western; and the Southern, to ensure EU funding coming into the regions have been maximised and used to the best advantage of the citizens of the regions.

In particular, I wish to thank my Leas Cathaoirleach Lettie McCarthy for her support and work throughout the year and would also like to thank my predecessor Councillor Pat Vance for his work during his period as Cathaoirleach of the Assembly.

The second year of a new organisation gives an opportunity to reflect on its direction and impact and I believe this Annual Report shows that EMRA has quickly become a significant contributor to the development of our region in a meaningful way. I am optimistic that, with good will from National Government, we can build on our achievements and move to a new approach to strengthening regions in Ireland. For that to happen however, there needs to be further debate with those who determine Local and Regional policy in our Country. Ireland needs such a debate, Ireland needs real Local and Regional Government reform.

Unfortunately January 2016 also saw the sudden passing of a member of staff, Walter Foley our thoughts and sympathies remain with his family and friends.

Finally, I would like to thank the Director and his staff for their work and support throughout 2016. The Assembly has been exceptionally fortunate in those who work for it.



A message from the Director



The 2016 Annual Report for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) sets out the actions undertaken throughout the year to deliver the objectives of the Corporate Plan. This is supported by the Annual Works Programme approved by the members at the start of the year.

This year saw the Assembly continue with its establishment and take a lead role in regional planning, economic and EU related activities.

11 Plenary meetings of the Assembly were held throughout the year including the Annual meeting at which Councillor Dermot Lacey was elected Cathaoirleach and I would like to thank him and all the members of the Assembly for their support and participation throughout the year. All members have ensured that long term strategies are at the forefront of the Assemblies agenda and as we approach the development of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies the debate as to the elements that will form these strategies is well advanced.

From a spatial planning perspective 32 submissions were made across a wide range of policy areas in 2016, underpinning the implementation of the 2010 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin, Midlands and Border regions. Stakeholder engagement in the preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies continued throughout the year with presentations to the members and meetings at executive level. The Assembly also completed the first Local Economic and Community Plans process during the year with 5 statutory observations made. 2016 also saw the initiation of the National Planning Framework process to replace the National Spatial Strategy and the Assembly played a full role in advancing the knowledge base for this process.

EMRA continued to provide supports to the Irish National Delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR), in particular through the Irish Regions Office (IRO) in Brussels which is managed through this Assembly. In addition to full plenary meetings of the CoR, members also participate on Commissions throughout the year with active participation in opinions and topics of regional and national significance. Close ties are maintained with Irelands Permanent Representative to the EU to ensure a cohesive approach to policy issues.

The functions of the IRO 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.

EMRA has continued to play an active role in the monitoring and implementation of the Regional Operational Programmes and various other European Programmes. This has included the evaluation of 257 INTERREG project proposals by the EMRA team on behalf of the Irish Member State. We have also increased its participation in EU projects in 2016 with involvement in URBAadapt, and GBI Health. Involvement in RESILENS continued and the Celtic Seas Project reached conclusion.

This year's report contains a set of accounts for 2015 audited by the Local Government Audit Service. Governance and financial controls continued to be strengthened during the year with the Agresso financial system becoming fully operational.

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 her for her continued support.

Recruitment continued in 2016 with all but one staff vacancy being filled. The enthusiasm and professionalism of staff was again evident throughout 2016 and I would like to personally thank them for ensuring that we achieved all our works plan objectives for the year.



WHO WE ARE - REGIONAL PROFILE

Our Region



Statistics:

Population density: 154 persons per square kilometre, 2.3 times the national average (CSO, 2011).

Disposable income per capita of €20,540 (State average €19,468 per capita, Dublin €28,018 per capita) (CSO, 2014)

Contributes >50% of national GDP (CSO, 2014).

400 County Councillors in 12 Local Authorities.

36 elected representatives on the Regional Assembly

**a population increase of 184,000 persons over the period 2006-2011 (CSO, 2011)*

Introduction to our region

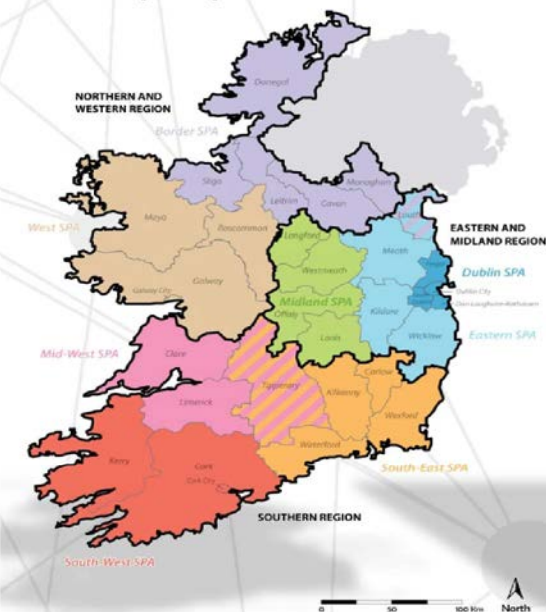
Introducing the Regional Assembly

Following on from the enactment of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 a number of changes were made to the regional structures in Ireland, where the eight regional authorities were dissolved. Three new Regional Assemblies came into effect on 1st January 2015, namely the Southern Regional Assembly, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) is the smallest region in terms of land area, however it is the biggest in terms of population as it accommodates a population of over 2.33 million persons. The main settlement centre is the Dublin metropolitan area which is supported regionally by key strategic county towns. The region contains an extensive rural hinterland and incorporates 12 city and county councils. EMRA 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 37 elected members (councillors) who are principally elected by their peers in the 12 councils to represent them regionally.

Our Region in Ireland

REGIONS and Strategic Planning Areas (SPAs)



Functions of Regional Assemblies

- To manage **Regional Operational Programmes** monitoring and making proposals in all EU programmes of assistance from the EU.
- To co-ordinate, promote or support **strategic planning and sustainable development** of the regions
- 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 **promote effectiveness** in local government and public services in the region, in conjunction with the National Oversight & Audit Commission.

European Recognition

The NUTS classification (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU into *NUTS Regions*. 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.

Following the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the two previous Regional Assemblies were reorganised into the three Regional Assemblies; Eastern & Midland Region (EMRA), Southern Region (SRA) and Northern & Western Region (NWRA). However, the NUTS 2 regions remained unchanged, and the current round of ERDF funding (for 2014-2020) is still administered using the old NUTS regions by SRA and NWRA through their Regional Operational Programmes. EMRA has no Regional Operational Programme at present, and the Eastern and Midland Region is administered under the Regional Operational Programme aligned with the former Regional Assemblies – Border, Midlands and Western and the Southern and Eastern



Regional Authorities



2 x NUTS II Regions

Former Regional Assemblies



3 x NUTS II Regions
Current regional structure

In January 2016 an application was made to Eurostat to change the NUTS 2 classification to reflect the configuration of the 3 Regions in Ireland. A new NUTS 2 structure, with 3 NUTS 2 regions mirroring the assemblies was approved and entered into force in December 2016. Eurostat and the CSO will start publishing data according to the new NUTS 2 regions from January 2018, depending on the availability of the datasets. Given the new NUTS 2 structure, there can be an enhanced administrative role for the EMRA in the management of future ERDF, in line with the other Regional Assemblies.



**Assembly
Meetings
and Membership**

Membership of the Assembly 2016

Councillor	Local Authority	2016 Changes
Paddy Bourke	Dublin City Council	
Sylvester Bourke	Wicklow County Council	
Tom Brabazon	Dublin City Council	
Paddy Bracken	Laois County Council	
Christy Burke	Dublin City Council	
Tommy Byrne	Louth County Council	
Mick Cahill	Longford County Council	
Thomas Cullen	Wicklow County Council	
Jennifer Cuffe	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Appointed July 2016
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	Appointed June 2016
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	
Pat Hand	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Appointed July 2016
David Healy	Fingal County Council	
Paddy Hill	Westmeath County Council	
Gerry Horkan	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Resigned May 2016
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	
Seamus McGrattan	Dublin City Council	
Martin Miley	Kildare County Council	Appointed April 2016
Maria Murphy	Meath County Council	
Fiona O'Loughlin	Kildare County Council	Resigned March 2016
PJ Reilly	Longford County Council	
Tommy Reilly	Meath County Council	
Neale Richmond	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Resigned May 2016
Pat Vance	Wicklow County Council	
Barry Ward	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Appointed September 2016
Irene Winters	Wicklow County Council	Appointed September 2016

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 2016, with an average attendance of 69%.

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 when a Member was nominated to the Committee of the Regions, they automatically became a Member 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 2016 was as follows:

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

Cathaoirleach & Leas Cathaoirleach 2016

Cllr. Pat Vance	Cathaoirleach	July 2015 to July 2016
Cllr. Fiona O'Loughlin	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2015 to March 2016
Cllr. Dermot Lacey	Cathaoirleach	July 2016 to present
Cllr. Lettie McCarthy	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2016 to present

Election of Cathaoirleach at Annual Meeting 8th July 2016

At the second Annual Meeting of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly on Friday, 8th July 2016, Cllr. Dermot Lacey was elected Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Lettie McCarthy was elected Leas-Cathaoirleach.



2016 EMRA Meeting Schedule

Month	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly - meeting dates	Month	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly - meeting dates
January	15 th January	July	8 th July
February	12 th February	August	No Meeting
March	11 th March	September	9 th September
April	8 th April	October	21 st October
May	13 th May	November	11 th November
June	10 th June	December	9 th December

Meetings and Membership of Sub-Committees

In 2016 three strategic planning area committees were established for Dublin, Eastern and Midland strategic planning areas (SPAs) with adopted procedures, standing orders and nominated chairs. These committees met in quarter 2, 3 & 4 of 2016:

Dublin SPA	Eastern SPA	Midland SPA
Meetings held on 17th June/ 7th October/16th December	Meetings held on 24th June/ 23rd September/ 2nd December	Meetings held on 1st July / 16th September/ 2nd December
Members		
Paddy Bourke	Sylvester Bourke	Paddy Bracken
Tom Brabazon	Tommy Byrne	Catherine Fitzgerald
Christy Burke	Thomas Cullen	Mick Cahill
Jennifer Cuffe	Brian Fitzgerald	PJ Reilly
Francis Duffy	Ivan Keatley	Eamon Dooley
Kieran Dennison	Colm Markey	Eddie Fitzpatrick
Gaye Fagan	Padraig McEvoy	Andrew Duncan
Enda Fanning	Martin Miley	Paddy Hill
Kate Feeney	Maria Murphy	
Mary Freehill	Tommy Reilly	
Pat Hand	Pat Vance	
David Healy	Irene Winters	
Pamela Kearns		
Dermot Lacey		
Lettie McCarthy		
Brian McDonagh		
Seamas McGrattan		
Barry Ward		

Conferences and Training Attended in 2016

Title	Location	Representatives
AIR Annual Training Event	Waterford	13
Budget 2016	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	2
Galway Seminars (Community & Social Inclusion and Living with Dementia)	Galway	5
MacGill Summer School	Co. Donegal	5
ENCORE (Europe)	Klagenfurt, Austria	1
Irish Public Bodies Conference	Kilkenny	1



The Association of Irish Regions

The Association of Irish Regions (AIR) is the national representative organisation of the three Regional Assemblies in Ireland (and previously the 8 Regional Authorities also). Its objectives are to:

- express the collective view of its membership on matters concerning their constitution and the functions for which they have statutory responsibilities;
- and to offer advice to Government on matters pertaining to economic and social development, including balanced regional development.

Association of Irish Regions Training event 2016

On 20th May 2016 a training event was organised by the Association of Irish Regions, in conjunction with the Southern Regional Assembly, titled "Regional & Local Economic Development - New Roles for Regional Government". This event provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Assemblies in relation to the regional economic aspects of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and oversight of the development and monitoring of Local Economic and Community Plans.

Mr Jim Conway, Director, presented on Local Economic and Community Plans - Implementation & Monitoring role for the Regional Assemblies. Other speakers included Jim Power, Economist, Friends First who gave a keynote address on the Future for Regional Economic Development in Ireland. Juan Martinez-Covarrubias, Economist for the three Regional Assemblies, who presented the theory behind emerging Regional Economic Planning. Local Economic and Community Plans - An overview of the experience to date from a regional perspective was presented by Derville Brennan, Programme Executive, Policy & Communications, Southern Regional Assembly.





Planning

Regional Planning Guidelines

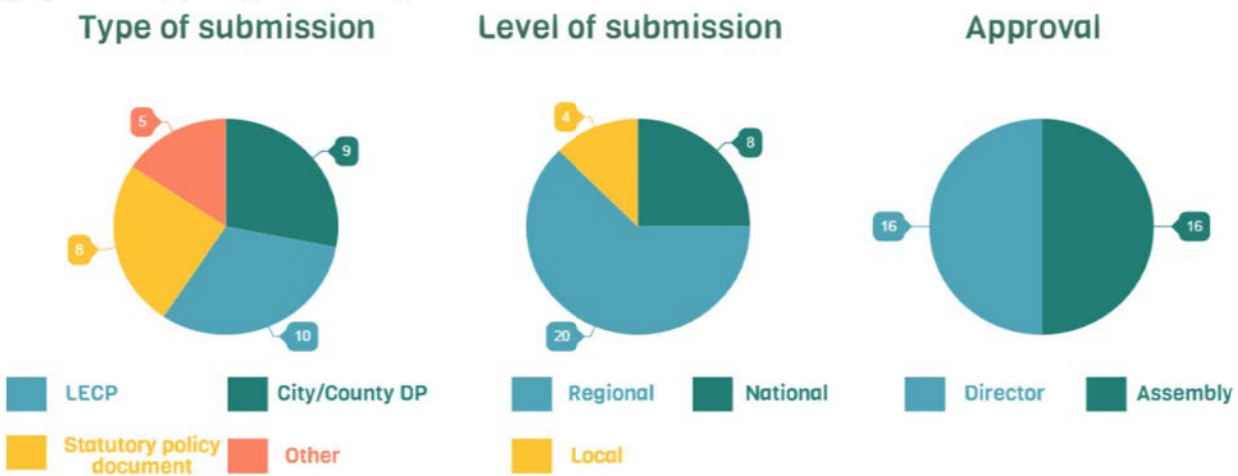
The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly is responsible for the ongoing implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-22; the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midlands Region 2010-2022 and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010-22 (EMRA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

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.

Since the adoption of the Regional Planning Guidelines in 2010, significant progress has been made in implementing the strategic planning framework set out in the National Spatial Strategy, by the integration of regional objectives within County and City Development Plans. The primary mechanism for this has been through the provision of core strategies supporting an evidence based approach to spatial land use planning and growth strategies, as provided for in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

In 2016 the Regional Planning Guidelines have been central across a range of policy areas and consultations by way of engagement with local authorities, state agencies and other stakeholders and by way of 32 formal submissions. Some of these submissions were the Assembly performing its statutory functions in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) by way of observations on Development Plans and variations of Development Plans and statements on Local Economic and Community Plans.

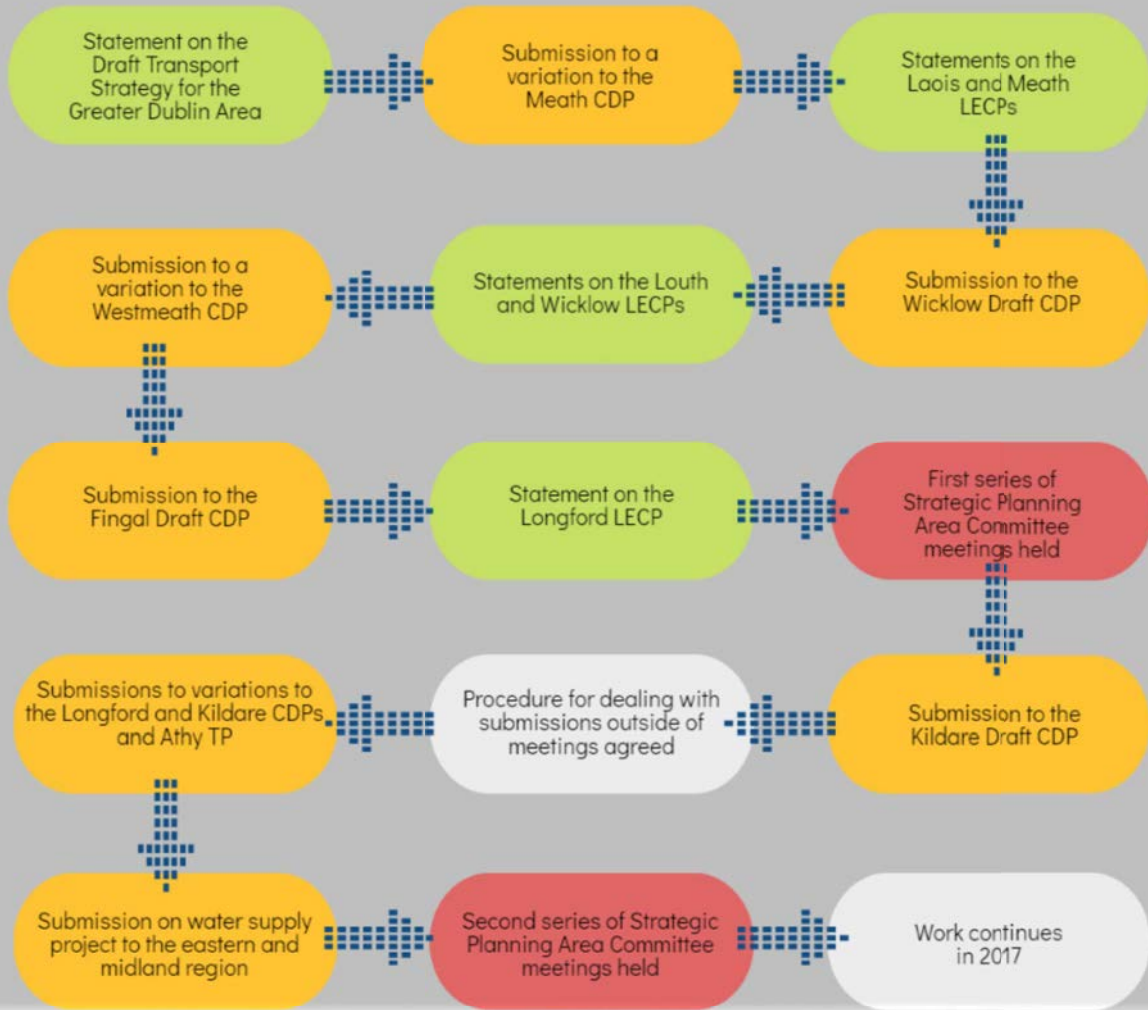
Breakdown of Submissions



In preparing 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 27B of the Planning and Development Act 2000, and informally through the executive in preparation of the core strategy of Development Plans. The Assembly has made observations on Development Plans and variations of Development Plans in the local authorities of Meath, Wicklow, Westmeath, Fingal, Kildare, Longford, Laois and Athy Town Plan and on the Poolbeg East Strategic Development Zone.

In influencing national policy by implementing the Regional Planning Guidelines there have been submissions and statements made on the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, on the Irish Water's Water Investment Plan, the Water Supply Project to the Eastern and Midland Region (which will eventually be a proposal in front of An Bord Pleanála), the Maritime Spatial Planning Regulations, the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport Strategy, the strategy towards Climate Change Action Plans and the Eirgrid Implementation Plan.

2016 PLANNING MILESTONES



Regional Policy

Ensuring other Regional Policy Areas

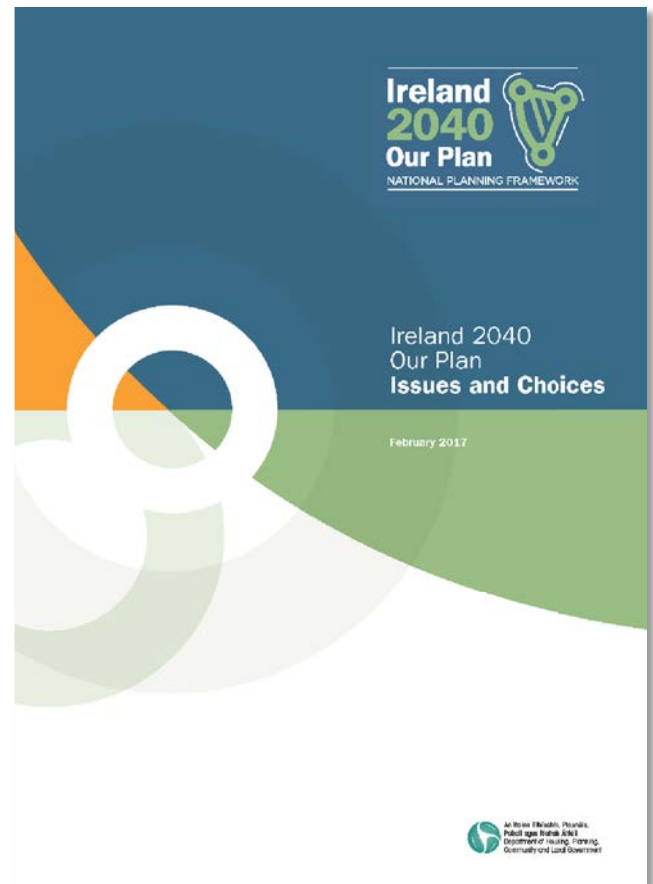
The Regional Assembly continues to work with a range of agencies and organisations to ensure that regional planning informs emerging and existing policy areas such as;

- Involvement in the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAMS) project for the Eastern Area and the Shannon Area including ongoing management and flood assessment of the District's rivers.
- Engagement with Irish Water on the Water Investment Plan process.
- Participation on the Eirgrid Steering group for their Implantation Plan.
- Engagement with Healthy Ireland on the preparation of an emerging evidence based framework to inform the health sector.

Preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies

One of the main functions of the Regional Assembly will be the preparation and adoption of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which will be the successor to the Regional Planning Guidelines. "The objective of regional spatial and economic strategies shall be to support the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region for which the strategies are prepared which shall be consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the economic policies or objectives of the Government." This project will be run in tandem with the production of the National Planning Framework (NPF) as a successor to the National Spatial Strategy. The Assembly engaged with DHPCLG along with the other 2 Regional Assemblies during 2016 on the formation of the supporting documentation for the framework. This included the econometric steering group and the SEA / AA group. The Assembly also assisted on the initial stakeholder consultation days in June and provided specific inputs to the issues paper.

The executive of the Assembly have focused on ongoing engagement with key stakeholders in the RSES process and to this end have continued to meet and liaise with the senior planning staff of all the local authorities in the region. We have also met with numerous key state agencies who will be involved in the production of the RSES. This engagement has led to agencies presenting to the members of the Assembly, in 2016, including Bord Na Mona (June) and DHPCLG on the National Planning Framework (October).



Regional Assembly role in Local Economic and Community Plans

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly has performed the role under Section 66C of the Local Government Act 2001 (inserted by section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014) in particular section 66C 2(c) and 3(c) which states that the consideration of an LECP by a Regional Assembly shall relate to its consistency

1. With the core strategy and the objectives of the development plan of the local authority concerned,
2. With any regional spatial and economic strategy or, as appropriate, regional planning guidelines that may apply, and
3. Between the economic and community elements of the Plan.

The role of the Assembly has been further expanded by the DECLG Circular LG 01/2015 AG 01/2015 – Guidelines on Local Economic and Community Plans issued 21/01/2015, and Circular LG 06/2015; AL 04/2015 – Guidance Note on Local Economic and Community Plans issued 17/07/2015. These Circulars provide for the Assembly having a significant role in the formation of the LECP, in conjunction with the Local Authority by commenting on all stages of the process from the Socio Economic Statement, and various drafts of the emerging LECP before performing its statutory function under section 66C as outlined above. The Assembly further enhanced this role, by direct engagement with local authority staff on the preparation of the draft LECPs, and regional coordination with local authorities by facilitating Strategic planning Area level meetings

With regard to the formal statements the Assembly has issued statements for the draft LECPs of the following local authorities Louth, Meath, Wicklow, Laois and Longford, in 2016, this completed all the LECP's in our region.

Given our regional function in the preparation and adoption of LECPs and the relationships established by the assembly during the process it was considered prudent to undertake a review of the first round of LECPs once they were all adopted. The purpose of this review was to gain key insights from the teams delivering the LECPs and to set out key lessons and recommendations for the review of LECPs. This process was commenced through the established SPA working groups and the report of the review will be finalised and issued in Q1 of 2017.

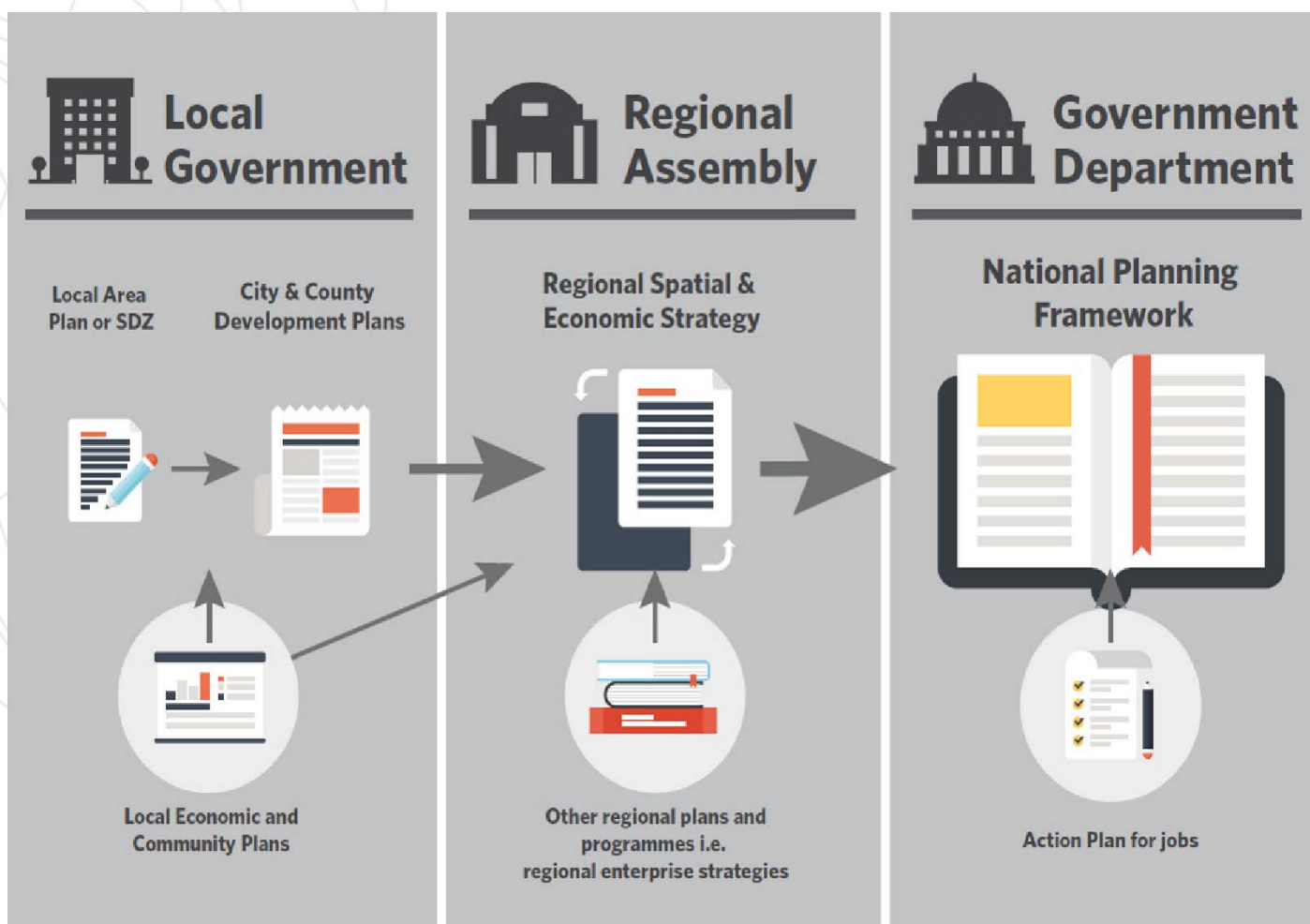
We have also committed to the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for Jobs for the Midlands, Mid East, Dublin and the North East/North West Region by participation on the steering and implementation bodies for each of these Action Plans.

Future Challenges and Opportunities

The first year of the new Regional Assembly was considered a success in establishing our role and function in regional strategic planning and economic strategy, this was further enhanced by deeper engagement and commitment with stakeholders in 2016. There has been greater engagement at a national level in the emerging National Planning Framework, which in turn has improved the capacity of the Assembly to inform policy making and raised our profile at a national and regional level. This has been performed alongside ongoing implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines, which are still the relevant regional planning document to implement and monitor regional planning and respond to the changing dynamics of regional governance.

The future of the Assembly is in the preparation of the National Planning Framework, which in turn will influence our main policy document the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). Whilst preparatory work had continued on the NPF in 2016 the official process has not yet commenced, this in turn affects our progress of policy making at a regional level.

In preparing for the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy the Regional Assembly will endeavour to ensure that our preparatory work is robust and fit for regional policy making, with our committed range of stakeholders in a co-production process. 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.





EU Activities

EU Policy and Funding Framework

There are 5 EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the European 2014 – 2020 programming period. These are 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 4 of these funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF). There is no Cohesion Fund allocation to Ireland as we are outside the threshold. The Cohesion Fund is aimed at Member States whose Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant is less than 90 % of the EU average. It aims to reduce economic and social disparities and to promote sustainable development.

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 the differences 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:

- €542 million 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.

Technical Adjustment

In 2016, Ireland was awarded an additional **€3.6m** in EU funding due to a technical adjustment to the budget for EU Structural Funds. This additional allocation is provided specifically for the "investment for growth and jobs" goal and has resulted in an additional **€2m** being allocated to the European Social Fund (ESF) and €1.6m to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The additional funding will be targeted at areas where it can have a positive impact relative to the amount of additional funding available.

Drawdown to Date

There has been a significant level of activity on the ground across the ESI Funds. This has not yet been reflected in drawdown from the EU budget as each Programme (with the exception of the Rural Development Programme and LEADER) must have an independent assessment of the systems and processes for managing the programmes completed before a payment claim **may be submitted to the EU Commission. This process is underway for all of the relevant Funds and will be completed in time to submit payment claims in line with the regulatory deadlines.**

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:

- Strengthening research, technology development and innovation
- Information and communications technology
- The creation of new enterprises and support for SMEs
- Low carbon economy
- 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

EMRA elected members Cllrs Lettie McCarthy (Full), former member Gerry Horkan (Alternate), Tommy Reilly (Full), Pat Vance (Alternate) and EMRA Director Jim Conway sit on the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) for the Southern and Eastern ROP.

Priority	ERDF Support	National Counterpart	Total Funding €m	Co-financing Rate	Spend to-date (1 st Jan 14 to 31 st Dec 16)		
					Total	ERDF Support	National support
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	90,000,000	90,000,000	180,000,000	50%	38,900,000	19,450,000	19,450,000
2 - ICT	30,000,000	30,000,000	60,000,000	50%	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 - SME Competitiveness	34,600,000	34,600,000	69,200,000	50%	20,200,000	10,100,000	10,100,000
4 - Low Carbon Economy	66,500,000	66,500,000	133,000,000	50%	66,900,000	33,450,000	33,450,000
5 - Sustainable Urban Development	26,000,000	26,000,000	52,000,000	50%	2,890,000	1,445,000	1,445,000
6 - Technical Assistance	2,009,350	2,009,350	4,018,700	50%	611,000	305,500	305,500
TOTAL	249,109,350	249,109,350	498,218,700	50%	129,501,000	64,750,500	64,750,500

Border, Midland and Western ROP

EMRA elected members Cllrs Paddy Bracken (Full), Catherine Fitzgerald (Alternate) and EMRA Director Jim Conway sit on the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) for the Border, Midland and Western ROP. As of December 2016, **€104.128** million in public eligible expenditure has been reported, representing 32.52% of the total allocation to the Operational Programme.

Priority	ERDF Support	National Counterpart	Total Funding €m	Co-financing Rate	Spend to-date (1 st Jan 14 to 31 st Dec 16) Figures to be agreed by the PMC 7th June 2017		
					Total	ERDF Support	National support
1 - Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	52,000,000	52,000,000	104,000,000	50%	44,000,000	22,000,000	22,000,000
2 - ICT	45,000,000	45,000,000	90,000,000	50%	0.00	0.00	0.00
3 - SME Competitiveness	29,000,000	29,000,000	58,000,000	50%	27,400,000	13,700,000	13,700,000
4 - Low Carbon Economy	18,000,000	18,000,000	36,000,000	50%	31,800,000	15,900,000	15,900,000
5 - Sustainable Urban Development	14,000,000	14,000,000	28,000,000	50%	111,000	55,500	55,500
6 - Technical Assistance	2,097,179	2,097,179	4,194,358	50%	700,000	350,000	350,000
TOTAL	160,097,179	160,097,179	320,194,358	50%	104,011,000	52,005,500	52,005,500

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 Regional 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 Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 and Border, Midland and Western Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020.

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	Former Cathaoirleach Cllr P Vance	12 th December
Border Midland West	Cllr P. Bracken (Full); Cllr. C. Fitzgerald (Alternate);	12 th May
Southern and Eastern	Cllr L. McCarthy (Full); Cllr. T. Reilly (Full); Cllr G. Horkan (Alternate); Cllr P. Vance (Alternate)	10 th May
European Social Fund (ESF)	Cllr P. Vance	13 th May, 11 th November
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)	7 th July, 24 th November
PEACE	Cllr T. Byrne (Full); Cllr C. Markey (Alternate)	March, September, November

EMRA officials participating on Programme Monitoring Committees:

Programme	Participant	Meeting Attended
National Partnership Agreement	Mr Jim Conway, Director	12 th December
Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (European Social Fund - ESF)	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	13 th May, 11 th November
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	Launch event 14 th January, PMC 26 th February, 18 th May, 8 th December
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	7 th September
Border Midland West Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	12 th May
Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	10 th May
Interreg Ireland-Wales (PMC)	No position on PMC	
Interreg Ireland-Wales (Steering Committee)	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	21 st July (cancelled)
PEACE	No position on PMC	
Interreg Atlantic Area	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	Launch event 24 th May, NCC 30 th and 31 st August, PMC 7 th and 8 th September
Interreg North-West Europe	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	ETC meeting 8 th February, PMC 3 24 th and 25 th February, PMC 4 25 th May, ETC meeting 24 th August; PMC5 13 th - 15 th September
Interreg Europe	No position on PMC	Launch event 23 rd March
Northern Periphery and Arctic	No position on PMC	27 th - 29 th September
URBACT	Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive	PMC 3 rd May, Info Day 15 th December



Project Evaluation (ERDF)

The EMRA team have undertaken project evaluation for proposals from 3 funding programmes during 2016: Interreg Ireland Wales, Atlantic Area and North West Europe.

INTERREG North West Europe (NWE): The team evaluated 139 Step 1 proposals (80 from Call 2 and 59 from Call 3); and 27 Step 2 proposals (15 from Call 1 and 12 from Call 2). EMRA hosted 2 European Territorial Cohesion meetings to discuss project selection in advance of PMC3 and PMC 5 in February and September respectively. Participated in Interreg NWE PMC 3 in February, PMC 4 in May and PMC5 in September.

INTERREG Ireland Wales EMRA staff sit on the Programme Steering Group and undertook 19 evaluations (Gateway 1 and Gateway 2) for 10 unique projects over the course of the year.

INTERREG Atlantic Area Participated in the Atlantic Area Launch event in Porto in May. The EMRA team evaluated 72 Step 1 applications. Attended the National Correspondence Committee (NCC) meeting in in September and participated in the PMC in October.

INTERREG Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme Participated in PMC and attended Stakeholder Conference in September.

URBACT Participated in URBACT PMC in May. Ongoing work and progress meetings with the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DHPCLG) and URBACT and ESPON National Contact Points regarding joined up thinking around urban initiatives.

Other committees where the Assembly plays a role:

Irish Maritime Forum

Cllr Gerry Horkan (former EMRA member)

ENCORE (Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe)

Mr. Jim Conway, Director participated at ENCORE events

11th and 12th April; 22nd and 23rd September

ENCORE Conference - Participated in the ENCORE Conference in September

ENCORE refers to the Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe. It provides a platform to political leaders in relation to Environmental and Sustainable Development issues. ENCORE is dedicated to transnational co-operation between the regions of Europe. ENCORE aims to contribute to the effective implementation of EU environmental policy, to improve environmental governance and to foster sustainable development in the regions of Europe.

Mr Jim Conway participated in the ENCORE meeting 11th and 12th April. Cllr L. McCarthy represented the Assembly at the ENCORE biannual conference in September.

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 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 2016 the event ran from 10th – 13th October and Cllr Dermot Lacey participated in the event on behalf of the Assembly. The Committee of the Regions members from the Assembly also participated in the event.

Mr Jim Conway, Director, Ms Labhaoise McKenna, Senior Programme Executive, Ms Sarah Holden, Head of Irish Regions Office and Mr Ronan Gingles, EU Affairs and Policy Analyst also participated. As part of the event, Mr Jim Conway made a presentation on the role of regions to 20 members of Chambers Ireland.

Networking events:

Staff from the Assembly participated in the following events:

- Participation at the INTERREG Europe Let's Cooperate event
- Eurostat training on regional data sources March 2016
- Participated in the CoR EU Urban Agenda event in May
- Atlantic Area launch event

Committee of the Regions



A significant function of IRO Brussels is to coordinate 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 5 occasions during a calendar year to prepare the opinions which are adopted at the 5-6 plenary sessions held annually. Commissioners, Presidency Ministers and MEPs regularly attend CoR meetings and there is an ongoing exchange between the institutions on policy issues. As its key output during 2016, the CoR agreed and adopted 49 Opinions, plus 9 Resolutions.

The Irish Delegation

There were further changes to the Irish delegation following the Dáil and Seanad elections in 2016. This included the appointment of three new full members; Cllr. Deirdre Forde, Cllr. Gerry Murray and Cllr. Michael Murphy (also Head of Delegation). The revised delegation included four new alternate members including three EMRA representatives, Cllr. Irene Winters, Cllr. Barry Ward and Cllr. Eamon Dooley. The other new alternate member was Cllr. Dianne Nolan. Each full member of the Irish delegation was also appointed as a member of 2 CoR Commissions.

As secretariat to the national delegation, the IRO 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 UK referendum in June 2016, the delegation has also been provided with regular updates on the key Brexit issues. Irish delegation members acted as rapporteur on two opinions in 2016:

- Cllr. Neale Richmond completed an opinion *on Trade for all: Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy*
- Cllr. Kieran McCarthy completed an opinion on *Digitising European Industry*

Examples of other topics covered by Opinions in 2016 include:

- Simplification of ESIF from the perspective of Local and Regional Authorities
- Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy
- Mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework
- Combatting Radicalisation and Violent Extremism: Prevention mechanisms at local and regional level
- Indicators for territorial development – GDP and beyond
- Supporting young European farmers



Overall during 2016, the EMRA staff briefed the Irish members in advance of 30 separate commission meetings across the CoR's 6 broad areas of work, as well for the 5 full plenary sessions and 8 Bureau (executive body) meetings. National delegation meetings were also held in advance of each plenary meeting to discuss agenda items and ensure that any Irish perspectives were fully represented as part of the CoR discussions. Members also 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. In June 2016, the delegation held a meeting with Ambassador Kelleher, the Irish Permanent Representative to the EU to discuss Irish priorities in the EU. Regular meetings and contacts have also been maintained with Irish officials in the European Commission and the Irish Permanent Representation on priority areas including Brexit. The delegation also made a submission to the preparation of Ireland's National Reform Programme (NRP) as part of the annual European Semester process

In November 2016, the Irish delegation and regional assemblies hosted a visit by the CoR President Markky Markkula to Dublin and Cork. This included a visit to the Houses of the Oireachtas and visits to EU funding projects in Dublin. As part of this visit President Markkula also took part in a local citizens' debate on the EU with Minister of State for European Affairs and Data Protection, Dara Murphy.

Further information can be found at <http://emra.ie/committee-of-the-regions/>

Irish Regions Brussels Office



The Irish Regions Brussels Office (IRO) is an EU support facility collectively provided by the three Regional Assemblies and managed by EMRA. It is the sole organisation with a mission to enable the engagement of the broad Irish local government sector and its stakeholders in EU initiatives and opportunities. As such, the IRO 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. On behalf of the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DHPCLG), the IRO, in tandem with EMRA, provides the secretariat for the Irish national Delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR).

The functions of the IRO 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.

In Brussels, 2016 saw the policy debate begin to focus on the shape of the EU budget post 2020 and the possible consequences for key EU policy areas, including Cohesion policy and Regional Development funding. The IRO has played an active role in tracking developments and working with other EU regions to advocate for the continuation of financial support for all European regions in the post 2020 period. This debate and analysis, which is key for Irish regions, will continue throughout 2017. The shape of future EU funding programmes has also become closely linked to the vote of the United Kingdom to leave the EU on the 23rd June 2016. The Brexit process dominated EU debate in the second half of the year as key decisions and arrangements for the negotiations were put in place. The Irish Regions Brussels Office has worked closely with colleagues in the Irish Permanent Representation and other regional offices and networks to provide regular briefing on these developments and to raise awareness of the particular impacts for Ireland and the NWRA as a border region.

Among the (non-CoR) activities carried out by IRO Brussels in 2016 were:

- Monitoring of EU policy and programming developments and attendance at various workshops, seminars and information sessions.
- Timely and succinct research and reporting/briefings on recent developments and funding opportunities of specific relevance to our clientele, for example the URBACT 3 Implementation Networks, Life: Environment & Action, and Europe for Citizens Programme's on town twinning.
- Detailed consultation and advisory services in response to stakeholder enquiries.
- Lead for Irish assemblies involvement in the Brussels based regional campaign for sufficient European Structural and Investment Funding for all regions post 2020 including EMRA involvement in the Summit of Regions in September 2016 with Commissioner Cretu
- Expanded use of the *@IrishRegions_EU* twitter feed.
- Organisation of a 2 day visit programme for Cork County Council including meeting with Southern Irish MEPs and relevant policy briefings.
- Meeting and briefings to other visiting groups/officials including ICBAN, Chambers Ireland, local authorities and Institutes of Technology from the Northern and Western Region and the Galway Capital of Culture team. Ongoing contacts with other Government agencies including Enterprise Ireland and Pobal.
- Organisation of CoR visit to Dublin and Cork including Citizen's debate with the Minister of State for European and Data Protection, Dara Murphy.
- Networking and alliance-building, including with other Brussels-based regional representations and associations (Campaign for regional funding post 2020, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, Atlantic Strategy Group).
- 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

The Corporate Section continued to provide the systems and processes for the Assembly during 2016 and the ongoing management of same, with 13 staff based in the offices in Ballymun and one staff member based in Longford County Council.

The 2016 Programme of Works was adopted in March and circulated to the constituent Local Authorities. The Communication Strategy was also adopted in the early part of the year. Additional corporate policies were prepared as required.

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

There were quarterly meetings of the 3 Assemblies at Director and Assistant Director level throughout 2016 to streamline approaches and work practices.

Finance

The main functions of the Finance section in 2016 included:

- Preparation of the Annual Financial Statement 2015.
- Implementation of a new financial management system - Agresso.
- 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 2016.
- Assistance with the Local Government 2015 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:

- Economist (shared service for the three assemblies)
- Senior Executive Planner x 2
- Corporate Management Programme Executive
- EU Programme Executive
- Research & Policy Officer
- Project Officer - RESILENS

Training

Training for staff continued to be provided in accordance with the objectives of the approved corporate plan.

A Training Needs Survey was conducted in March 2016. Eurostat provided training on regional data sources to both Elected Members, officials and Local Authority Staff in March.

There was a Joint Assembly Training event in Tullamore on the 1st and 2nd of December 2016. Topics covered included cross assembly communication of duties, procedures and strategies. Staff participated in a workshop on challenges and opportunities facing the individual assemblies and across the 3 assemblies. There was also a focus on knowledge exchange between the different functions of the assemblies with an emphasis on the new planning function and the formulation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.

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
North East / North West Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Malachy Bradley
Dublin Economic Monitor	Various	Malachy Bradley
Irish Academy of Engineering		Jim Conway
Climate Change Adaption Strategies Steering Committee	Various	Jim Conway
AILG Training Events	Various	Jim Conway
Eirgrid Implementation Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Eastern and Shannon CFRAMS Advisory Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Irish Water Capital Investment Plans	22 nd January	Malachy Bradley
DIT Planning School	19 th February	Jim Conway and Malachy Bradley
IBEC Midlands Executive	16 th May	Malachy Bradley
EU funding Wicklow CoCo	2 nd June	Labhaoise McKenna
CSO	5 th September	Jim Conway and Malachy Bradley
Botswana delegation	15 th September	Jim Conway
EU funding Meath CoCo	3 rd October	Labhaoise McKenna
Joint Oireachtas Committee	9 th November	Jim Conway

Communications

Social Media

In 2016 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



@EMRASsembly &
@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 a 100% between May and December 2016 and we have reached 131 followers by the end of the year. The growth was fully organic (non-paid for).



Website

We are continuously managing and improving the assembly's website. The latest additions include interactive maps of the region and refreshed layout of the Members' page.

Census Mapping Module: Eastern and Midlands

AIRO

Change Data

Preliminary Census 2016 Results >> Total Population (2016)

Legend

- Census 2016 Preliminary Results
- 92.0 - 359.0
- 359.1 - 739.0
- 739.1 - 1,943.4
- 1,943.5 - 3,618.4
- 3,618.5 - 38,924.0
- Electoral Divisions
- Eastern Region
- National

Click on a region to view appropriate map.

Name	Total Population (2016)
034 Esker/Balaghassaan	477
035 Firry/Newgrove	195
046 Brish/Cappard	322
085 Ballinac/Lackan	600
Abbeyleix	300
2,779	
682	

Total Population (2016)

Region	2011	2016
Eastern	2,325,122	
National	4,757,976	

Midland Region: Longford, Westmeath, Offaly, Laois

Eastern Region: Louth, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow

Dublin Region: Fingal, Dublin City, South Dublin, Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown

Conferences

Our staff are committed to continuous training and skills acquisition in order to stay on top of latest developments in the communications field. Our representatives attended a number of conferences and events in 2016 including:

- EuropCom 2016 7th European Conference on Public Communication organised by the Committee of Regions in Brussels
- Digital Society - What We Need To Know as Local Authority Communicators workshop organised by the Local Government Management Agency
- Digital Government 2016 Conference organised by Eolas



Juan Martinez-Covarrubias and Simon Musial at Digital Government Conference

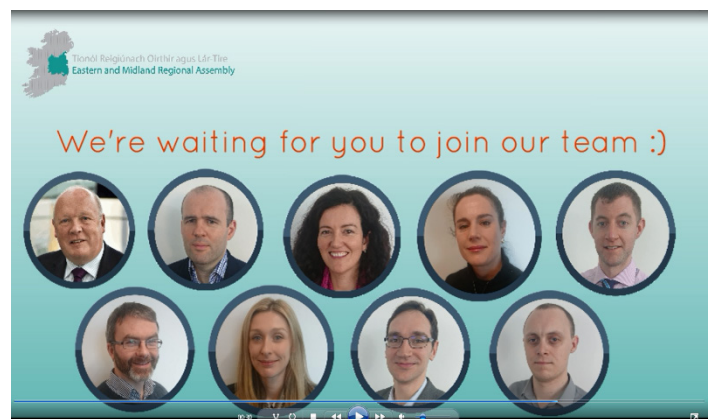
Security

In order to prevent cyber-attacks and ensure full functionality the website's Content Management System and plugins are backed up and updated on a regular basis.

Recruitment campaign

In December 2016 the Assembly launched a recruitment campaign to fill a vacant Project Officer post. A number of communication channels were used to broaden the reach of the campaign including social media, website and print advertisements.

While using traditional communication channels we constantly try to introduce innovation to the way we interact with our external audiences. Our staff member assigned to communications prepared a 40 second animated video to encourage potential candidates to apply and present EMRA as a good place to work in.



A frame out of the video created as part of the recruitment campaign



Energy Usage

Overview of Energy Usage in 2016

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly occupies part of the 3rd floor of the Ballymun Civic Centre. The floor is leased from Dublin City Council and the assembly occupies approximately 3.9% of the total floor area of this building. Electricity is the main energy source of energy use in the Ballymun Civic Centre offices, energy consumption is broken into the following categories:

- Space heating for the office.
- Lighting.
- Powering of electronic devices and other office equipment, and
- Water heating.

Gas consumption increased in 2016 due to requests for heating to be left on longer hours. In 2016, the following energy saving initiatives were introduced throughout the Civic Centre:

- Water consumption has decreased due to repair of various leaks.
- Electrical consumption has decreased due to installing LED lamps and occupancy sensors.

Actions Planned for 2017

In 2017, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly will continue to review energy initiatives within the building in conjunction with Dublin City Council. The assembly also intend to identify potential areas for further energy savings and will run energy awareness training for all employees.

Climate change

The EMRA participated in a regional climate change adaptation training workshop in 2016 with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA) as part of the Climate Ireland project. The goal of this project is to produce guidelines and tools for local authorities to inform local climate change adaptation strategies. The workshop provided hands on experience of adaptation strategy development.



Projects

EMRA Projects

In 2016 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.

Celtic Seas Partnership

The EMRA is a partner in the Celtic Seas Partnership (CSP) which is a European LIFE+ funded project which is a transnational grouping of experts and organisations from across the U.K, France and Ireland. Project number: LIFE11/ENV/UK/392.



CSP aims to draw people together from across the Celtic Seas to set up collaborative and innovative approaches to managing their marine environment. The focus is on supporting the delivery of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) - key European legislation aiming to conserve and protect Europe's seas while allowing sustainable use of our natural marine resources.

A Strategic Management Framework (SMF) was developed by the EMRA as part of the CSP to explore local level implementation of MSFD. In developing the SMF the EMRA worked with a wide range of stakeholders to encourage stakeholder engagement and establish a stakeholder platform bringing together representatives of national, regional, city and local governments, statutory organisations, universities, marine, environmental, fishing, energy and transport sectors, etc. The EMRA networked and promoted the SMF at a wide variety of events nationally and networked with other projects.

Two stakeholder workshops were organised by the EMRA in 2016. The first workshop 'Data and Information - the key to success' took place on the 15th of February 2016, and explored data availability in Dublin Bay and was used to launch the Dublin Bay Dashboard. The second workshop 'Maritime Spatial Planning' held on the 8th of June 2016 identified new opportunities and actions for enhancing Dublin Bay as a resource for the Dublin region, its citizens and visitors were identified.

The EMRA attended the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Conference: Connecting people and nature on the 26th of October 2016 in University College Dublin. The conference featured international and local speakers who provided an insight into UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves, and highlighted the work of a wide range of Dublin Bay stakeholders within the Dublin Bay Biosphere.

The EMRA assisted with the organisation of the final CSP final conference in Croke Park on the 18th and 19th of October 2016. The EMRA Director chaired the final conference sessions and the EMRA presented the SMF at the showcase session.



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 will be completed in April 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 which will be 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 will be 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 is responsible for managing Work Package 4 of the project which involves pilot demonstrations to test, evaluate and validate the draft ERMG and toolkit. During 2016, EMRA collaborated with project partners to design the pilot demonstration implementation and evaluation methodology. A plan of work was developed to commence in January 2017 and to include the project's CI partners at three different international locations (Ireland, Portugal, Germany), in three different CI sectors (Water, Energy, Transport), and at different spatial scales. Also in 2016, EMRA contributed to other work package deliverables including development of the RESILENS Website, social media sites and e-newsletter; initial development of the draft ERMG, toolkit, e-Learning Hub and RES-DSP as well as contributing to the delivery of the project mid-term review which was submitted in the last quarter of 2016.

The Innovation Enterprise Network (IEN)

The Innovation Enterprise Network (IEN) has been in operation since 2010. Its members consist primarily of unemployed-high skilled professionals seeking re-employment or intending to establish their own businesses.

At the end of 2016 the network has grown to 3,673 members and is now not only supporting unemployed high-skilled professionals but also graduates, post graduates and the self-employed.

The IE Network has hosted over 140 network events during 2016.

The events 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 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.

The network is now integrated with the 4 Local Authorities in Dublin and has a direct link to the Local Enterprise offices and the local economic and community plans.

Funded by the four Local Authorities the IE network delivers motivational talks, seminars, workshops across the Dublin area. These talks take place on Mondays - Fingal, Wednesday's - Dún Laoghaire Rathdown, Thursday's - South Dublin and Friday's - City Centre.

You can Change, BE THE CHANGE.

Become a member today www.ienetwork.ie



**INNOVATION
ENTERPRISE
NETWORK**



Career Re-Ignition for High-Skilled / Professionals

GBIHealth

EMRA became a partner on the EPA funded project Green and blue spaces and health: a health-led approach (GBIHealth). GBIHealth will assess the health profile of the Eastern & Midland Region, identify 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 is to play a key role by providing inputs in relation to the regional planning context and research expertise. The project will kick-off in February 2017 with the recruitment of a postdoctoral researcher based with the lead partner, NUI Maynooth.

Urb-ADAPT

EMRA is a partner in the large urban area adaptation (URB-ADAPT) project which concerns adaptation to climate across the Eastern and Midlands Region and is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of their research programme 2014-2020. The project team includes coastal and climate experts from UCC in conjunction with the policy experience of the EMRA. Urb-adapt aims to enhance the resilience of urban areas to weather-climate related impacts, identify weather or climate related risks to urban areas, devise, test and cost adaptation options and provide guidance on how to implement adaptation options. Progress in 2016 included extensive hazard profiling of the region. Impact profiling will then take place which will determine the impacts on the region. Arising from this, climate actions will be developed which will reduce these impacts in consultation with stakeholders. The project will provide a comprehensive document providing implementation guidelines for specific urban areas.



Staff

Our 2016 STAFF



Jim Conway
Director



Malachy Bradley
Assistant Director



Labhaoise McKenna
Senior Programme
Executive



Sarah Holden
Head of Office
Irish Regions Brussels
Office



Juan Martinez-
Covarrubias
Economist (Three
Regional Assemblies)



Clare Bannon
Senior Executive Planner



Pauline Riordan
Senior Executive Planner



Hazel Healy
Corporate Management
Programme Executive



Pat Lonergan
Corporate Management
Programme Executive



Michael Brennan
RESILENS Project Officer



Travis O'Doherty
Project Officer



Ronan Gingles
EU Affairs and Policy
Advisor



Jim Nolan
IE Network
Manager



Susan Mahon
Assistant Staff Officer



Richard Kenneally
Clerical Officer



Simon Musial
Clerical Officer



Ross Higgins
Clerical Officer

Three coins are shown on a light-colored wooden surface. The coin in the foreground is a 1 Euro coin, featuring the harp and the word 'eure' and the year '2003'. The other two coins are smaller and less distinct.

Annual Financial Statements 2015

**Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly -
Income and Expenditure Account 31 December 2015**

Expenditure	EMRA 2015
Salaries	474,952.47
Office Equipment	35,390.90
Communications	6,189.79
Members Annual Allowances	41,645.36
<i>Travel & Subsistence Allowances:</i>	
I - Members Travel & Subsistence	12,355.87
II - ROP Members Travel and Subsistence	367.84
III - Staff Travel and Subsistence	18,386.12
Rent and Rates	104,659.66
Miscellaneous	40,738.63
EU Affairs & IRO	209,428.00
Celtic Sea Project	35,955.76
EU Operational Programme	4,193.00
Resilens	348.52
I.E. Network	63,925.18
Bank Charges	147.00
Expenditure total	1,048,684.10
Income	
Local Authorities Contributions	1,048,710.02
Other Income	14,527.98
Superann	10,549.23
Regional Assembly Transfer	29,915.99
Committee of the Regions	194,550.75
COR Misc	1,005.23
Celtic Sea Project	22,310.00
Resilens	20,000.00
Bank Interest (BoI)	70.85
Receipts total	1,341,640.05
Difference between Income + Expenditure	292,955.95
Closing Balance at end of year Surplus	292,955.95

Signed: 
Councillor Dermot Lacey, Cathaoirleach


Mr. Jim Conway, Director

Consolidated Balance Sheet

for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2015

Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly	
Balance Sheet 2015	
Fixed Assets	
IT Equip	€5,000.00
Furniture & Fixtures	€0.00
Heritage Assets	€10,000.00
	€15,000.00
Current Assets	
Cash at Bank	€585,403.05
Debtors	€57,521.09
Petty Cash	€9.25
Opening Balance difference on Petty Cash 31/12/2014	€14.49
	€642,947.88
Current Liabilities	
Creditors & Accruals	€303,814.23
Deferred income	€108,812.50
Credit Cards	€0.00
Bank	€0.00
	€412,626.73
Net Current Assets	€230,321.15
Net Assets	€245,321.15
Financed by	
Balance @ 01/01/15	-€62,634.80
General Reserve	€0.00
Inherited Fixed Assets from old DRA	€15,000.00
Excess of Income over Expenditure	€292,955.95
	€245,321.15

Members' Allowances and Expenses 2016				
Member (Cllr)	Annual Allowance (Fixed)	AIR Training Waterford	Committee of the Regions	Conference/Training
Andrew Duncan (W.Meath)	€ 804.17			
Barry Ward (COR) (Dublin) Note 1	€ 110.14		€ -	
Brian Fitzgerald (Meath)	€ 1,100.76			
Brian McDonagh (Dublin)	€ 374.08			
Catherine Fitzgerald (Laois)	€ 1,876.94	€ 237.40		€ 400.00
Christy Burke (Dublin)	€ 371.72			
Colm Markey (Louth)	€ 667.19			
David Healy (Dublin)	€ 820.77			
Dermot Lacey (Dublin)	€ 792.41	€ 318.92		€ 689.33
Dermot Lacey (Cathaoirleach Q3&Q4)	€ 5,850.00			
Delcan McDonnell (CoR)			€ 459.70	
Deirdre Forde (CoR)			€ 715.21	
Eamon Dooley (CoR) (Offaly)	€ 1,900.38	€ 298.83	€ 569.08	€ 300.00
Eddie Fitzpatrick (Offaly)	€ 1,336.94	€ 262.21		
Enda Fanning (Dublin)	€ 216.35			
Enda Stenson (CoR)			€ 800.03	
Francis Duffy (Dublin)	€ 323.68			
Fiona O'Loughlin (CoR)			€ -	
Gaye Fagan (Dublin)	€ 420.10			
Gerry Horkan (Dublin) Note 2	€ 210.05			
Gerry Murray (CoR)			€ 356.13	
Hugh McGrath (CoR)			€ 1,468.01	
Ivan Keatley (Kildare)	€ 367.34	€ 440.60		
Jennifer Cuffe (Dublin) Note 3	€ 57.63			
Jerry Lundy (CoR)			€ 1,594.60	
Jimmy McClearn (CoR)			€ 240.36	
Kate Feeney (CoR) (Dublin)	€ 427.53		€ 50.29	
Kieran Dennison (Dublin)	€ 541.16	€ 314.19		€ 732.08
Kieran McCarthy (CoR)			€ 585.07	
Lettie McCarthy (Dublin)	€ 1,038.67			€ 657.18
Maria Byrne (CoR)			€ 331.25	
Maria Murphy (Meath)	€ 700.16			
Martin Miley (Kildare)	€ 312.52			
Mary Freehill (CoR) (Dublin)	€ 474.13		€ 845.97	€ 380.00
Mick Cahill (Longford)	€ 2,376.67	€ 366.70		€ 300.00
Maurice Quinlivan (CoR)			€ -	
Michael Murphy (CoR)			€ 1,027.78	
Mary Shields (CoR)			€ 351.41	
Neale Richmond (CoR)(Dublin) Note 4	€ 105.02		€ 344.93	
Neil McNelis (CoR)			€ -	
Paddy Bourke (Dublin)	€ 424.15	€ 326.00		€ 289.97
Paddy Bracken (Laois)	€ 2,222.44	€ 263.22		€ 400.00
Paddy Hill (W.Meath)	€ 1,657.18	€ 399.25		€ 317.74
Padraig McEvoy (Kildare)	€ 1,015.81			
Pamela Kearns (Dublin)	€ 215.11			
Pat Hand (Dublin) Note 5	€ 380.58			€ 471.15
Pat Vance (Wicklow)	€ 1,003.88	€ 328.37		€ 420.95
Pat Vance (Cathaoirleach Q1&Q2)	€ 5,850.00			
PJ Reilly (Longford)	€ 2,442.83	€ 422.71		€ 440.00
Rosemary Conway-Walsh (CoR)			€ -	
Seamas McGrattan (Dublin)	€ 265.09			
Sylvester Bourke (Wicklow)	€ 931.14			€ 400.00
Thomas Cullen (Wicklow)	€ 1,063.50			€ 310.00
Tom Brabazon (Dublin)	€ 161.20			
Tommy Byrne (Louth)	€ 195.15			
Tommy Reilly (Meath)	€ 1,591.57	€ 373.09		
William Paton (CoR)			€ -	

Note 1: Cllr Barry Ward commenced as a CoR member in July 2016

Note 2: Cllr Gerry Horkan resigned membership in May 2016

Note 3: Cllr Jennifer Cuffe replaced Cllr Gerry Horkan from May 2016

Note 4: Cllr Neale Richmond resigned membership in April 2016

Note 5: Cllr Pat Hand replaced Cllr Neale Richmond from May 2016

EASTERN & MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

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