

A network diagram background consisting of various sized circles (nodes) connected by thin lines (edges). The top half of the image is orange, and the bottom half is blue, separated by a curved line. The nodes and lines are in shades of orange and blue, matching the background colors.

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly

2019 Annual Report





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Message from An Cathaoirleach

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

Throughout 2019, the members from our 12 Local Authority areas have ensured that our core functions and the objectives of the Corporate Plan continue to be delivered. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues for their contribution to the work of the Assembly.

Our monthly Assembly meetings have enabled us to focus on a number of topics of interest for the Region. 2019 was a particularly important and noteworthy year for the Assembly as we made our Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES). Following on from the extensive consultation process and with the close co-operation of our constituent local authorities and other key stakeholders, the Assembly made its RSES on June 28th, 2019.

This is the first such strategy and gives regional clarity and direction to the provisions of Project Ireland 2040 and the National Planning Framework. It gives our Assembly the policy document to concretely shape the economic and spatial development of our territory and to act as a platform for all the regional stakeholders. The successful delivery of the strategy demonstrates the ability of regional government to deliver strategic leadership and a vision for regional development that is close to communities and citizens.

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

I wish to thank my Leas Cathaoirleach Councillor Pádraig McEvoy for his support and work throughout the year and would also like to thank my predecessor Councillor Eddie Fitzpatrick for his work during his period as Cathaoirleach of the Assembly.

The work carried out this year has built on the strong foundations established since the establishment of the assembly the Assembly to in a strong position to fully take on its role as leader of the development of our Region.

Sadly, in February 2019, we lost our friend and colleague Hazel Healy. Our sympathies go to her family, friends and colleagues. Finally, I would like to thank the Director and his staff for their work and support throughout the year.

Cllr. Eamon Dooley

Cathaoirleach



Message from the Director

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

2019 was a milestone year that saw the members make the first Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the region. A new assembly of members, nominated by their respective counsels, met for the first time in July and the Assembly moved into the delivery of the RSES. EU activities and involvement in projects continued as did the many corporate responsibilities involved in the running of Assembly.

A full complement of 10 Plenary meetings of the Assembly was held including the Annual meeting at which Councillor Eamon Dooley was elected Cathaoirleach and I would like to thank him and all the members of the Assembly for their support. I would also like to thank outgoing members who did not re-join the Assembly following the nomination process after the local elections.

The making of the RSES was a significant event in Irish planning, the first to be made nationally following the adoption of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan by Government. It is the policy driver for the region for the next 12 years. Monitoring of local authority plans moved from implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines to the RSES during the ensuing months. The making of the plan demonstrated the strategic significance of the assembly and the coherence of the members' approach to regional priorities.

EMRA has continued to play an active role in the monitoring and implementation of the Regional Operational Programmes and various other European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. The Assembly continued its role as the Irish contact point for the URBACT programme with the task to promote the programme and provide support to Irish applicants.

The Irish National Delegation to the Committee of the Regions (CoR) continued its activities during the year with Cllr. Dooley having an opinion adopted in October. Supports for the committee are primarily delivered through the Irish Regions European Office (IREO) in Brussels and managed through this Assembly. CoR members received assistance in preparation for their attendance at full plenary meetings of the CoR, and also for the members who participate on Commissions throughout the year. As in previous years, the support of Ireland's Permanent Representation to the EU in this process is invaluable and co-operation between the IREO and the Perm Rep continued throughout the year.

Attendance by the Cathaoirleach and staff at the European Week of Regions and Cities again ensured an important presence at various events in Brussels. The Assembly also actively engaged in relevant networks such as ENCORE and sat on Regional Enterprise Committees and bodies such as the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategies Steering Group and the Climate Change Regional Offices.

Projects worked on during the year include PROGRESS, Next2Met, QGasSP, Care Peat, EnROUTE and Urb-Adapt.

From a Corporate Governance perspective, the Assembly continued to fulfil its legal requirements in relation to finance and audit. Several successful recruitment campaigns were carried out throughout the year.

This year's report contains a set of accounts for 2018 audited by the Local Government Audit Service. Governance and financial controls continued to be managed during the year.

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

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

Jim Conway

Director





Introduction

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

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

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

At European level, EMRA is now recognised as a NUTS 2 region¹, a classification that mirrors the administrative reality of Ireland following the Local Government Reform Act 2014 that created the three Regional Assemblies; Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA), Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) and Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA).

Functions of Regional Assemblies

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



¹ The NUTS classification is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU. It is also used in the calculation and allocation of cohesion funding and to collect, develop and harmonise European statistics.



Assembly Meetings & Membership

Assembly Meetings & Membership

Assembly Members are nominated by the constituent Local Authorities in the region in proportion to the size of the Local Authority's population. Also, Councillors nominated to the Committee of the Regions become de facto Members of the Regional Assembly.

One of the key events of 2019 was the local elections and their effect on the constitution of the Assembly. After the election was held on May 24th, all local authorities had to nominate their representatives to the Regional Assembly. The membership of the Assembly was therefore completely reshuffled and a new Assembly was established at the Annual General Meeting on July 12th.



Members List Pre-election

Councillor	Local Authority	Changes
Paddy Bourke	Dublin City Council	
Paddy Bracken	Laois County Council	
Christy Burke	Dublin City Council	
Tommy Byrne	Louth County Council	Resigned Feb 2019
Mick Cahill	Longford County Council	
Ciaran Cuffe	Dublin City Council	
Thomas Cullen	Wicklow County Council	
Kieran Dennison	Fingal County Council	
Eamon Dooley	Offaly County Council	
Francis Duffy	South Dublin County Council	
Andrew Duncan	Westmeath County Council	
Gaye Fagan	Dublin City Council	
Kate Feeney	Dun Laghaoire Rathdown County Council	
Catherine Fitzgerald	Laois County Council	
Brian Fitzgerald	Meath County Council	
Eddie Fitzpatrick	Offaly County Council	
Mary Freehill	Dublin City Council	
Mary Hanafin	Dun Laghaoire Rathdown County Council	
Pat Hand	Dun Laghaoire Rathdown County Council	
David Healy	Fingal County Council	
Paddy Hill	Westmeath County Council	
Pamela Kearns	South Dublin County Council	
Ivan Keatley	Kildare County Council	
Conor Keelan	Louth County Council	Appointed April 2019
Dermot Lacey	Dublin City Council	
Colm Markey	Louth County Council	
Lettie McCarthy	Dun Laghaoire Rathdown County Council	
Brian McDonagh	Fingal County Council	
Padraig McEvoy	Kildare County Council	
Martin Miley	Kildare County Council	
Derek Mitchell	Wicklow County Council	
Maria Murphy	Meath County Council	
Claire O'Connor	Dublin City Council	
PJ Reilly	Longford County Council	
Tommy Reilly	Meath County Council	
Rob Russell	South Dublin County Council	
Pat Vance	Wicklow County Council	
Barry Ward	Dun Laghaoire Rathdown County Council	
Irene Winters	Wicklow County Council	

Members list from July 12th onwards

Councillor	Local Authority	Changes
Daryl Barron	Dublin City Council	
Fintan Brett	Kildare County Council	
John Browne	Longford County Council	
Micheál Carrigy	Longford County Council	
Jennifer Carroll MacNeill	Dun Laghaire Rathdown County Council	
Emma Coffey	Louth County Council	
Joe Costello	Dublin City Council	
Avril Cronin	Wicklow County Council	
Eamon Dooley	Offaly County Council	
Francis Duffy	South Dublin County Council	
Kate Feeney	Dun Laghaire Rathdown County Council	
Catherine Fitzgerald	Meath County Council	
Brian Fitzgerald	Laois County Council	
Eddie Fitzpatrick	Offaly County Council	
Mary Freehill	Dublin City Council	
Mary Hanafin	Dun Laghaire Rathdown County Council	
David Healy	Fingal County Council	
Lawrence Hemmings	Dublin City Council	
Deirdre Heney	Dublin City Council	
Paddy Hill	Westmeath County Council	
Vincent Jackson	Dublin City Council	
Pamela Kearns	South Dublin County Council	Appointed October 2019
Conor Keelan	Louth County Council	
Cathal King	South Dublin County Council	Resigned September 2019
Dermot Lacey	Dublin City Council	
Brigid Manton	Fingal County Council	
Steven Matthews	Wicklow County Council	
Tony McCormack	Offaly County Council	
Padraig McEvoy	Kildare County Council	
Paddy Meade	Meath County Council	
Aisling Moran	Laois County Council	
Peter O'Brien	Dun Laghaire Rathdown County Council	
Robert O'Donoghue	Fingal County Council	
Damien O'Reilly	Meath County Council	Appointed September 2019
Aengus O'Rourke	Westmeath County Council	
Larry O'Toole	Dublin City Council	
Robert Power	Kildare County Council	
William Priestley	South Dublin County Council	
Conor Tormey	Meath County Council	Resigned September 2019
Gerry Walsh	Wicklow County Council	
Barry Ward	Dun Laghaire Rathdown County Council	
Irene Winters	Wicklow County Council	

Number per council as of 31/12/2019

Dublin City Council	8	Louth County Council	2
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council	5	Meath County Council	3
Fingal County Council	3	Offaly County Council	3
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



By Party as of 31/12/2019

Party	Number of Members
Fianna Fáil	16
Fine Gael	9
Labour	6
Green Party	5
Independent (Non Party)	3
Sinn Féin	1

Assembly meetings were held on the second Friday of the month, throughout the year, in City Hall, Dame Street, Dublin 2.

10 Assembly meetings were held in 2019 as no meeting was held in June in anticipation of the nomination by the constituent local authorities.

The average attendance rate over the year was of 65.7% and can be divided as follows:

- 1st half attendance: 68.5%
- 2nd half attendance: 63.1%

2019 Schedule of meetings

Month	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
January	11/01/2019
February	15/02/2019
March	01/03/2019
April	12/04/2019
May	03/05/2019
June	No Meeting (election)
July	12/07/2019
August	No Meeting
September	13/09/2019
October	11/10/2019
November	08/11/2019
December	13/12/2019

Election of An Cathaoirleach

The Annual General Meeting held on July 12th saw the election of Cllr Eamon Dooley as Cathaoirleach and Cllr. Pádraig McEvoy as Leás-Cathaoirleach.

Cllr. Eddie Fitzpatrick	Cathaoirleach	July 2018 to July 2019
Cllr. Catherine Fitzgerald	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2018 to July 2019
Cllr. Eamon Dooley	Cathaoirleach	July 2019 to present
Cllr. Padraig McEvoy	Leas Cathaoirleach	July 2019 to present



The Assembly organised two training events in 2019 that were both held in Tullamore, Co. Offaly:

- one in April to discuss the future of the European Union post-2020 and Brexit and the future of the Assembly
- one in December aimed at new members to present the structure and functions of the Assembly. This was combined with a site visit to Lough Boora and Ferbane.

Conferences and Training Attended in 2019

Title	Location	Representatives
Celtic Conferences - Understanding Asylum in Ireland	Clonakilty, Co. Cork	1
Celtic Conferences - EU Educational Programmes	Carlingford, Co.Louth	1
Celtic Conferences - Ireland & Plastic Waste	Carlingford, Co.Louth	3
Celtic Conferences - Cross Border Tourism	Carlingford, Co.Louth	1
Mac Gill Summer School	Glenties, Co. Donegal	(At least 2) records not on drive)
EMRA training event held 11th April	Tullamore, Co. Offaly	14
EMRA training event held 12th December	Tullamore, Co. Offaly	



An aerial photograph of a town and a highway interchange. The town is in the center, surrounded by green fields and some industrial buildings. A multi-lane highway with a roundabout interchange is visible in the lower right. The background shows a large body of water with many islands. A large orange circle is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, containing the title text.

Regional Planning & Economic Strategy

Regional Planning Guidelines and New Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

In 2019 the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly continued its responsibility 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 were replaced by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031, for the Eastern and Midland Region, which was made on the 28th June 2019.



The RSES brings together spatial planning and economic policy providing the environment for investment and in doing so it marks a significant policy milestone for not only regional government in Ireland, but also national and local government. The primary statutory objective of the RSES is to support implementation of Project Ireland 2040 – which links planning and investment through the National Planning Framework and ten-year National Development Plan (NDP) – and the economic and climate policies of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the Region. As part of this, it sets the context for each local authority within the Eastern and Midland Region to develop their county and city development plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align. The Strategy is underpinned by three key cross-cutting principles; Economic Opportunity, Healthy Placemaking and Climate Action. The central need is for the RSES to be people focussed, as ‘quality of life’ encapsulates strong, economic output and stability, good environmental performance and a good standard of living for all.

Up to the end of June 2019, the RPGs were implemented by way of engagement with local authorities, state agencies and other stakeholders and by way of 6 no. submissions. The majority of these submissions were by the Assembly performing its statutory functions in accordance with Section 27 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to ensure consistency between development plans, their core strategies and the RPGs. The finalisation of the RSES on the 28th June 2019 required a restart, review or variation of the local authority’s city and county development plans within the Region, depending on when the review period was due. A further 21 no. submissions were made from the end of June to December 2019, following the making of the RSES. This resulted in a total of 27 no. submissions during the 2019 year by the Assembly.

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

Breakdown of Submissions - Total 27 no. submissions

Type of Submission	Level of Submission	Approval
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City/CountyDP=16 LAP=1, SDZ=1 Other=9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional=17 Local=5 National=4 EU/International=1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly=21, Cathaoirleach=5 Director=1

Up to the end of June 2019, the Assembly made observations on development plans and variations of development plans in view of the RPGs with respect to the local authorities of Westmeath, Louth, Roscommon, Meath, Offaly, Monaghan, Dublin City and South Dublin.

Following the making of the RSES on 28th June 2019, the Assembly made observations on the variations of development plans in the local authorities of Dublin City, South Dublin and Fingal. The Assembly also made observations on the Issues Papers to the review of the county development plans of Louth, Offaly, Longford and Wicklow. The Assembly also made observations on variations to the Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) Planning Schemes at North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock (Dublin City), and to the Draft Dublin Airport Local Area Plan (LAP) 2020-2026.

The Assembly ade submissions to the draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies of the North Western Regional Assembly and the Southern Regional Assembly.

In influencing EU and national policy by implementing the RSES there have been submissions made to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the Review of Planning Provisions regarding SHDs, on the Marine Policy Statement Draft Consultation and on Ireland’s Long-term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction. A submission was also made to the Office of the Planning Regulator’s Draft Strategic Plan 2019-2024. In the area of economic development, a submission was made to the IDA’s new strategy; Ireland’s Strategy Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2020-2024. At EU level, a submission was made to the European Union Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network.



RSES Implementation & Monitoring

The primary objective of the RSES is to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a twelve-year long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region.

The success of the Strategy depends on its policy and programme delivery at national, regional and local level. Implementation of the Strategy requires streamlined governance arrangements and focused public capital investment priorities. The RSES will be reviewed within 6 years of its adoption.

Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) for the RSES are set out in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the economic policies and objectives of the Government. Some of the key mechanisms included in the Strategy to support its implementation include a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), to facilitate improved coordination and delivery of strategic sites in Dublin's Metropolitan Area, and a development framework which sets out the context for the preparation of core strategies in local authority development plans, with which they must be consistent.

The RSES will also directly influence the content of Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) which must be formulated in accordance with the regional framework set out in the regional strategy, thereby providing for further implementation of national and regional policy at local level.

Implementation of the Strategy will be focused on policies, actions and investment to deliver the Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) set out in the Strategy.



A number of structures are in place to drive implementation, including;

- RSES and MASP Implementation Groups and Regional Monitor - EMRA will establish implementation groups with key stakeholders, to monitor and review implementation of the RSES and the MASP. The evidence base will be updated to support development of indicators to monitor delivery. In Q4 2019 EMRA initiated the process of establishing the MASP Implementation Group with initial meetings held with the Senior Officials of the respective local authorities in the Region.
- In Q4 2019 EMRA successfully acquired the GeoDirectory commercial database, with the objective that the three regional assemblies of Ireland will explore, design and develop a variety of standalone publications, including a "Regional and Local Economy Analysis", including commercial composition and vacancy rates for each region and county, along with each county's large towns (>10,000 population), small towns (10,000 – 1,500 population) and villages.
- Review of City and County Development Plans within six months of RSES adoption and broadly aligned from 2019/21 to 2026/27, along with Local Area Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs). Key state agencies and sectoral bodies to consider their strategies and investment plans in light of the NPF and RSES. The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) has a monitoring role to ensure alignment with national and regional policy. Following the adoption of the RSES on 28th June 2019, the local authorities in the region commenced the process of reviewing or varying their respective development plans to enable the process of alignment of national, regional and local policy objectives. In Q3 and Q4 of 2019, Offaly, Louth, Longford and Wicklow released Issues Papers on the review of their County Development Plans. Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council and Dublin City Council commenced the process of varying their respective development plans. Submissions/observations with respect to the Issues Papers and proposed Variations were made by the Executive and approved by the Assembly and/or Cathaoirleach.
- Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board to oversee delivery of NPF/NDP by key departments and to co-ordinate cross sectoral funding and regional investment decisions. A new Land Development Agency (LDA) has been established to unlock state lands for housing and regeneration.
- Project Ireland and other funds - the RSES is a key policy framework for accessing funds including the four Project Ireland funds - Urban and Rural Regeneration, Disruptive Technology and Climate Action - as well as the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund, Enterprise Funding Schemes, EU funds and the European Investment Bank.
- EU programmes - the Regional Assembly aims to have an increased role in management and funding of European programmes post 2020, in line with the other Regional Assemblies.



**EU Policy
& Funding
Framework**

EU Policy & Funding Framework

There are five EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the European Union 2014 - 2020 programming period: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and Cohesion Fund (CF). Ireland is in receipt of four of these funds: ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF and is not eligible to the Cohesion fund.

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 in order to reduce disparities between regions and create a better economic and social balance within and between Member States. The total amount of ESIF in Ireland for the 2014 - 2020 programming period is **€3,289,837,222** (as per National Partnership Agreement).

- The Structural Fund element of the ESIF in Ireland includes both the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Ireland will receive €1.153 billion from the Structural Funds from 2014-2020:
- €542million will be in the form of ESF assistance. An additional €68m is provided for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which will be programmed through the ESF programme.
- €409.2 million is for European Regional Development Fund co-funded programmes including €160,097,179 for the BMW Regional Operation Programme and €249,109,350 Southern and Eastern Regional Region. Further details of these figures are given in the tables below.

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

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

Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs)

In Ireland, ERDF is administered through two Regional Operational Programmes (ROP) – the Southern and Eastern ROP and the Border, Midland and Western ROP – which are respectively managed by the Southern Regional Assembly and the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

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.

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 current programmes target the following priorities:

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



The Southern & Eastern ROP

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

In its fifth Annual Implementation Report for the Southern & Eastern Regional Operational Programme (ROP) for 2014-2020, the Southern Regional Assembly reports on the progress achieved under the ROP for 2019. Expenditure under the ROP was eligible from 1st January 2014. Continuous progress has been made in the implementation of the Investment Priorities included in the ROP.

Priority	ERDF Support	National Counterpart	Total Funding €m	Co-financing Rate	Total public eligible expenditure declared (EUR) [1st Jan 14 to 31st Dec 19]		
					Total	ERDF Support	National support
1 Strengthening RTDI in the S&E Region	91,572,685	91,572,685	183,145,370	50%	57,739,330	28,869,665	28,869,665
2 ICT	30,000,000	30,000,000	60,000,000	50%	0	-	-
3 SME Competiveness	35,556,827	35,556,827	71,113,654	50%	23,876,575	11,938,288	11,938,288
4 Low Carbon Economy	66,500,000	66,500,000	133,000,000	50%	57,160,665	28,580,333	28,580,333
5 Sustainable Urban Development	24,427,315	24,427,315	48,854,630	50%	13,637,147	6,818,574	6,818,574
6 Technical Assistance	2,009,350	2,009,350	4,018,700	50%	536,760	268,380	268,380
TOTAL	250,066,177	250,066,177	500,132,354	50%	152,950,477	76,475,239	76,475,239

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

Border, Midland and Western ROP

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

The total declaration for 2019 was comprised of expenditure incurred across four priorities of the programme:

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



Priority	ERDF Support	National Counterpart	Total Funding €m	Co-financing Rate	Total public expenditure declared (EUR) [1st Jan14 - 31st Dec 19]			
					Total	ERDF Support 50%	National support 50%	
1	Strengthening RTDI in the BMW Region	52,000,000	52,000,000	104,000,000	50%	40,454,979	20,227,489	20,227,489
2	ICT	45,000,000	45,000,000	90,000,000	50%	0	0	0
3	SME Competitiveness	29,611,742	29,611,742	59,223,484	50%	18,440,397	9,220,198	9,220,198
4	Low Carbon Economy	18,000,000	18,000,000	36,000,000	50%	28,308,453	14,154,226	14,154,226
5	Sustainable Urban Development	14,000,000	14,000,000	28,000,000	50%	3,000,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
6	Technical Assistance	2,009,717	2,009,717	4,194,358	50%	439,699	219,849	219,849
TOTAL		160,708,922	160,708,922	321,417,842	50%	90,643,528	45,321,764	45,321,764

EU Programme Monitoring Activities

The EMRA performs a series of important functions 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 Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). These include European Rural Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

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

European Social Fund (ESF)

- Programme for Employability, Inclusion & Learning (PEIL)

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

- European Maritime and Fisheries Operational Programme

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

- Rural Development Programme (LEADER)

Meetings and Membership of Programme Monitoring Committees

Each of the Operational Programmes contained in the National Partnership Agreement 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.



EMRA Elected Members representation on Programme Monitoring Committees

Programme	Representative	Meeting Dates
National Partnership Agreement	Cathaoirleach Cllr Eamon Dooley	11th December
Border Midland West	Cllr P. Bracken (Full); Cllr. C. Fitzgerald (Alternate) until July Cllr. C. Fitzgerald (full); Cllr. T McCormack (alternate) since July	6th June
Southern and Eastern	Cllr L. McCarthy (Full); Cllr. T. Reilly (Full); Cllr P. Vance (Alternate) until July Cllr. M Hanafin (full) Cllr. D Lacey (alternate); Cllr G. Walsh (full) Cllr. S Matthews (alternate) since July	5th June
European Social Fund (ESF)	No position on PMC	
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) until July Cllr. B Manton (full), Cllr. S Matthews (alternate) since July	6th June
PEACE	Cllr T. Byrne (Full); Cllr C. Markey (Alternate) until July Cllr. C. Keelan (Full); Cllr. J Costello (alternate) since July	18th June – 14th November

EMRA officials participating on Programme Monitoring Committees

Programme	Participant	Meeting Attended
National Partnership Agreement	Mr Jim Conway, Director	11th December
Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (European Social Fund - ESF)	Ms Laure Antoniotti, EU and Corporate Affairs Manager	17th June
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	May, November
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)	Mr Jim Conway, Director	
Border Midland West Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	6th June
Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme	Mr Jim Conway, Director	5th June
Regional Operational Programme Quarterly Meeting	Mr Jim Conway, Director Ms Laure Antoniotti, EU and Corporate Affairs Manager	20th May, 16th September
Interreg Ireland-Wales (PMC)	No position on PMC	
Interreg Ireland-Wales (Steering Committee)	Ms Laure Antoniotti, EU and Corporate Affairs Manager	No meeting in 2019
PEACE	No position on PMC	
Interreg Atlantic Area	Ms Laure Antoniotti, EU and Corporate Affairs Manager	20th-21st March and 26th-27th November
Interreg North-West Europe	Ms Laure Antoniotti, EU and Corporate Affairs Manager	10th January, 6th-7th February, 12th-13th June, 24th- 26th September
Interreg Europe	No position on PMC	
Northern Periphery and Arctic	No position on PMC	
URBACT	Ms Pauline Riordan, Senior Executive Planner	Meetings in June and December

European Territorial Cooperation programmes (ERDF)

The EMRA team follows the implementation and evaluates project proposals for three INTERREG programmes in which Ireland is involved: Ireland Wales, Atlantic Area and North West Europe and for the URBACT programme for which EMRA is also the National Contact Point.

INTERREG Ireland Wales - The EMRA staff sit on the Programme Steering Group and undertook 1 Gateway 1 evaluation and 7 Gateway 2 evaluations over the course of the year. One Programme Monitoring Committee meeting took place in June 2019.

INTERREG Atlantic Area - The EMRA provide ongoing support provision to the Joint Secretariat. No calls were launched in 2019. The EMRA participated in Programme Monitoring Committee meetings in March and November 2019. Feedback was provided to the Atlantic Areas Joint Secretariat on the 'Midterm Evaluation of the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme 2014-2020'.

INTERREG North West Europe (NWE): The EMRA provide ongoing support provision to the Joint Secretariat. The EMRA participated in Programme Monitoring Committee meetings in January, February, June and September. The EMRA team assessed project proposals for calls 7, 8 and 9 (140 step 1 applications and 41 step 2 applications).



URBACT - The EMRA provides the URBACT National Contact Point for Ireland. URBACT promotes integrated sustainable urban development. A Call for Action Planning Networks opened in January and closed in April 2019, an Information day was organised in Custom House in January to promote the Call and support applicants. There were 6 successful Irish partners in the Call. The EMRA attended URBACT Monitoring Committee meetings in June and December and participated in a National Contact Point Co-ordination meeting in April. EMRA co-organised an URBACT Campus for Transfer Networks in the UK in May which provided networking opportunities for existing Irish URBACT projects. Throughout 2019 the EMRA promoted URBACT in Ireland through 6 newsletters, 8 articles on the URBACT Ireland webpage and 61 posts on the URBACT Ireland Twitter and Facebook pages, the URBACT Ireland Facebook has 81 followers and the URBACT Ireland Twitter has 611 followers.



Preparation for the next programming period 2021-2027

In 2018, the European Commission published its legislative proposals for the next round of European funding covering the 2021-2027 period. These proposals notably set out the framework for the future cohesion policy, including European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

2019 saw EMRA involved in the preparations of this next round of funding in Ireland. EMRA sees the new programming period as an opportunity to align national and regional policy with the delivery of EU funding and has been advocating for a revised architecture of the management and implementation of ERDF funding that would reflect the different regional needs and put all three regional assemblies on an equal footing.

The Assembly representatives have been working with the two other Regional Assemblies, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and the Directorate General for Regional Policy of the European Commission to rethink the architecture of the delivery of European Structural and Investment Funds in Ireland after 2020. The three Regional Assemblies developed a joint position paper on the future of the delivery of EU structural funds in Ireland that was submitted to DPER and the Assembly took part in a consultation process initiated by DPER on the review of the management of ERDF structures in Ireland.

This culminated in EMRA being invited to join the Partnership Process Steering Group set up under the aegis of DPER and that will commence its work in early 2020. This group will have the responsibility to prepare the future Partnership Agreement that will govern the management and delivery of European Structural and Investment Funds in Ireland for 2021-2027.

EMRA has been appointed by DPER to participate to the activities of the North West Europe and Atlantic area task forces which will prepare and draft the future North West Europe and Atlantic Area INTERREG programmes. EMRA will also sit on the group tasked with the preparation of the future Urbact programme.

EMRA has been invited to join the PEACE + Programme Development Steering Group which will design the future PEACE + programme aimed at Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland (including Louth).



Other EU related activities

ENCORE (Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe)

For the period 2019-2021 the EMRA has the Presidency of ENCORE which is a political platform and forum for Environment Ministers and other relevant political leaders of the regions of Europe relating to Environmental and Sustainable Development issues. The three themes of ENCORE are; circular economy, climate adaptation, and ecosystem services. The EMRA chaired and co-organised the first ENCORE steering Group meeting of the year in Joensuu, Finland. The Assembly also represented the Network at the 'Change the Change' international conference on climate change where an Cathaoirleach and the Director made a presentation to a meeting of a UN Network addressing climate issues through regional co-operation. The EMRA organised and secured EU funding from TAIEX for a successful ENCORE Steering Group Meeting and expert exchange on ecosystem services in the Netherlands on the 4th and 5th of July. The EMRA brought a local authority Heritage Officer from Ireland to participate in the international expert exchange and learn from experience elsewhere. ENCORE's main tool is its biennial Conference for regional environment ministers and other political leaders. EMRA is organising the next ENCORE conference which is scheduled for September 2021 in Tullamore, County Offaly. Regions and political leaders from all over Europe will be present, sharing knowledge, experience and good practices and building partnerships.



European Week of Regions and Cities

The European Week of Regions and Cities is an annual four-day event during which European cities and regions showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement European Union cohesion policy and prove the importance of the local and regional level for good European governance. In 2019, the event took place from 7th – 10th October in Brussels.

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) members and an Cathaoirleach participated in the event and attended a meeting with EU Commissioner Phil Hogan, a briefing on Brexit at the Irish Permanent Representation and a meeting with Irish MEPs.

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



Irish Regions European Office

The Irish Regions European Office (IREO) is a specialised support service which acts as a bridge between Irish local and regional government and the European Union, explaining and guiding its stakeholders through the Brussels scene and promoting Irish interests and best practices at the European level.

IREO has four main functions by which it seeks to provide timely and relevant guidance and advisory services to stakeholders in order to inform and facilitate their individual and collective understanding of and engagement in European activities. During 2019, IREO's work included:

Committee of the Regions - IREO provides the secretariat to the Irish delegation to the Committee of the Regions and during 2019, it continued to enhance the strategic linkages between their activities and the priorities of Irish local and regional government (See separate section). Communication was received from Government and from the Council of the EU confirming the Members of the COR for the new mandate, commencing in Feb 2020.

European Policy - IREO monitored and reported on number of important EU policy development. The highlight issues related to Brexit and the implications for Ireland, the EU budget (the MMF negotiations) the future Cohesion policy and the funding envelope for Ireland, the future shape of ETC (INTERREG) programmes. In addition, policy developments in relation to agricultural, trade and environmental policy including the new EU Green Deal were closely monitored. Developments on the establishment of the Just Transition Mechanism were also closely monitored and input provided to ensure Irish participation in the programme.

IREO has established strong working relationships with key EU stakeholders and policy makers, including Irish local and regional representation on Brussels-based specialised networks. During 2019, IREO worked closely with these stakeholders in relation to ongoing cohesion policy negotiations and Brexit. IREO staff meet regularly with representatives of the EU institutions to communicate Irish interests, including the Irish MEPs in the European Parliament, European Commission officials and Irish Government officials in the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU.

The IREO organised a visit for Cork County Council to Brussels in November 2019, on the subject of EU agricultural policy. Meetings were held with a wide range of EU policy makers including with the Irish Representation to the EU, European Commission officials and Irish MEPs.

Funding and financing - During 2019, the IREO used its new launched website and social media to share relevant EU affairs information and funding opportunities with Irish local and regional audiences. Funding calls, particularly in WiFi 4 EU, Urban Innovative Actions, as well as a number of preparatory funding events, held both in Brussels and Ireland were also highlighted. Also, a Euro Focus section in the Council Review publication is now regular feature. In addition, support was provided to Offaly County Council on Technical Assistance tools for the Coal Regions in Transition initiative in form of research and engagement with the initiative's secretariat.

The IREO held briefing sessions with a number of Irish organisations during 2019. These included presentations to University College Cork, Cork Smart Gateway, Trinity College Dublin which focused on collaboration of universities and local authorities on EU funding opportunities. Presentations to Chambers Ireland and meetings with Enterprise Ireland were also held throughout the year.

Networking - IREO worked closely with stakeholders and partner organisations in Brussels to promote Irish local and regional government interests. A highlight of 2019 was the organisation of activities for EMRA, NWRA and SRA during the European Week of Regions and Cities in October. An itinerary including a meeting with the EU Trade Commissioner, Phil Hogan, who outlined the current state of play in negotiations on the EU / UK trade arrangements post Brexit. The delegation also had an official Brexit briefing from Department of Foreign Affairs as well as a meeting with Irish MEPs in the European Parliament. The delegation used the opportunity to promote the collective views of Irish local and regional authorities. IREO also assisted with meetings and promotion of Galway Capital of Culture team throughout the year, which resulted in the formal launch of Galway 2020 in Brussels in October.



Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions

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

As the European Union's assembly of local and regional representatives, 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.



Irish delegation contributions

Legislative Works



- Cllr Eamon Dooley's (Offaly County Council) opinion on Research Infrastructures the Future of the European Research Area (ERA) from a Regional and Cross-border Perspective was adopted in October 2019 plenary session
- In October 2019, Cllr Michael Murphy (Tipperary County Council) was appointed a rapporteur for opinion on the Implementation of Free Trade Agreements – the local and regional perspective.
- Cllr Deirdre Forde (Cork City Council) held a follow-up consultation for her opinion on the Single Market Programme with the European Parliament and met with the EP rapporteur on the topic to exchange views and voice local concerns on the matter (MEP Nicola Danti, Italy)
- The Irish Delegation tabled delegation-wide amendments to the opinion on Towards a more efficient and democratic decision making in EU tax policy, defending the Irish government position on taxation issues (June 2019).



Priorities of the 2019 work programme

- **Future of Europe:** CoR provided input into a broader debate led by the European Commission to shape the future priorities of the European Union, with a view to the post-Brexit period and the mandate of the newly elected European Parliament in May 2019.
- **MFF:** while most CoR opinions on the MFF package were adopted in plenaries in October and December 2018, in 2019, the CoR continued to focus on promoting its position on the key MFF files and in seeking to influence the ongoing negotiations around funding, with priorities including Cohesion Policy (including ERDF and ETC) and CAP. Irish Delegation took part in both debates, as well as external events to voice the concerns of Irish LRAs in terms of future EU funding. The Delegation also held a number of meetings with Irish officials from EU institutions and the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU to present LRAs' position on the matter. The Irish delegation, via a number of County Councils, continue to be Members of the #CohesionAlliance, a group set up in 2018 to defend a strong budget for a cohesive Europe.
- **Brexit:** in 2019, the focus of the EU in relation to Brexit shifted towards the question of future relationship between the EU and the UK. The Irish delegation has consistently argued that the CoR should maintain as close a relationship as possible with the UK following Brexit. All full and alternate Irish members continue to be members of the interregional group on Brexit, the CoR's main platform for knowledge and information exchange in relation to Brexit. Furthermore, 2019 saw the beginning of discussions in relation to a CoR EU-UK Consultative Group, which would allow the UK to participate in the work of the CoR post-Brexit, and particularly in areas of interest such as agriculture or ETC.

Contributions of note

- **CoR contribution to the National Reform Programme:** the Irish delegation provided input to the National Reform Programme 2019. The contribution linked EU policy to the work of Irish LRAs on ground, highlighting particularly the role of RSEs in EU policy implementation.
- **Representational function:** The Delegation held meetings and regular contact with Irish MEPs in the European Parliament as well as with the Irish Commissioner Phil Hogan to ensure that the voice of Irish local government is heard on the EU stage.
- **Local position on the impact of trade disputes on agri-food sector:** as rapporteur on the opinion on implementation of Free Trade Agreements, Cllr Michael Murphy officially endorsed a resolution tabled by the Spanish Delegation to the CoR on the impact of the ongoing US-EU trade dispute on the agri-food sector. This exchange was publicised in papers both in Ireland as well as a number of other Member States, including Spain and France.



Main opinions and resolutions adopted in 2019

Resolutions

- Proposals of the European Committee of the Regions for the new European Union legislative mandate
- Resolution on the 2019 European Semester and in view of the 2020 Annual Growth Survey
- Resolution on Developments in the Interinstitutional negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027
- Resolution on the Green Deal in partnership with local and regional authorities

Opinions

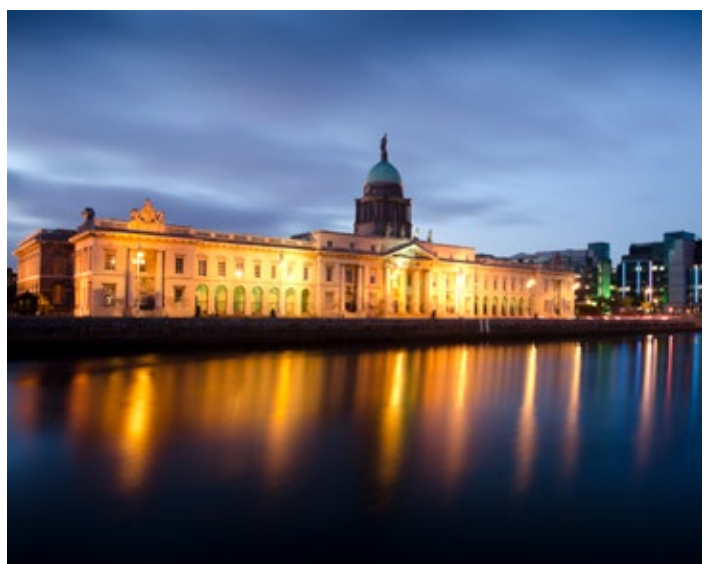
- The European Semester and Cohesion Policy: aligning structural reforms with long-term investments
- Recommendations for the successful design of regional development strategies beyond 2020
- The CoR's contribution to the renewed Territorial Agenda with special emphasis on Community-Led Local Development
- Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level
- The challenges of metropolitan regions and their position in the future cohesion policy post 2020
- Improving administrative capacity of local and regional authorities to strengthen investments and structural reforms in 2021-2027
- The socio-economic transformation of Europe's coal regions

Opinions of note in preparation

- Opinion on a Strong Social Europe for Just Transition (this opinion is partially related to the new Just Transition Fund and Mechanism which will be made operational in 2021)
- Irish opinions in preparation:
- *Cllr Michael Murphy* - Implementation of FTAs: local and regional perspective
- *Cllr Enda Stenson* - Helping towns and villages drive a rural revival in the European Union

Other

- Set-up of the EU-UK Consultative group post-Brexit is in progress
- Set-up of a Consultative group on the new Green Deal is in progress
- Conference on the Future of Europe: a two-year process of open, inclusive and transparent debate bringing together citizens, including young people, civil society, national, regional and local authorities and European institutions. It will be launched on Europe Day 2020 (9 May) and will run until summer 2022. This will be of importance to the Irish delegation as over the last number of months, Ireland has been called as a positive example of citizen engagement, mainly via Citizens' Assemblies and the Public Participation Networks.





Projects

Projects

In 2019, the Assembly has been involved in a number of projects, including five funded by the European Union. The activities developed by these projects provide a valuable insight that can be useful in regional policy development.

PROGRESS



EMRA is a partner on the Interreg Europe PROGRESS project which brings together six regional partner organisations from across the EU - Ireland, Italy, Spain, Latvia, Romania and Hungary - to exchange experience for the design and enhancement of natural ecosystems and the environmental, social and economic services they provide. The aim of the project is to promote the governance of regional ecosystem services through policy learning and capacity building activities. Through stakeholder network activity and the development of a dedicated Action Plan, the objective of the PROGRESS partnership for EMRA is to improve the governance of ecosystem services across the Eastern and Midland Region.

The recruitment process for a Project Officer commenced in September 2019, with the project kick-off meeting taking place in October 2019. EMRA was represented at the kick-off meeting of the Interreg Europe Blue Green City project - on which the Southern Regional Assembly is a partner - in September 2019. With a shared start-date, aligned objectives and a shared National Policy context, the potential for collaboration between projects was identified. The dedicated Project Officer is due to commence in January 2020 and the 1st Interregional Thematic Seminar is scheduled to take place in March 2020. The groundwork undertaken in late 2019 lays a solid foundation for fruitful relationships and collaborations with project partners, local stakeholders and related projects over the duration of PROGRESS.

Next2Met



Next2Met is an innovative interregional exchange project which aims to increase the attractiveness of the Midlands Region as a place to live, work and visit focusing on soft digitalisation measures. The project focuses on attracting and retaining qualified people and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Midlands Region.

The first Next2Met meeting took place on the 9th September 2019 in Brussels. The meeting brought together 6 EU partners and defined the focus of the project in terms of digitalisation, good practices, action plans and project management.



In preparation for the second partner meeting in Lahti, Finland in January 2020:

- A territorial analysis identifying regional strengths and needs related to digitalisation in the region was prepared
- Good Practices to highlight the strengths of the Midlands region were identified.



In order to identify Good Practices taking place in the Midlands Region a stakeholder meeting was held on 2nd December 2019. The meeting brought together the Broadband Officers of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath County Councils with the EMRA project team, and focused on the Officers' work creating Local Digital Strategies.

A number of Good Practices were identified at this meeting including improving digital connectivity through blending EU and national funds to create digital hubs within communities, using digital solutions to enhance tourism and using digital consultations to gain insights into the key priorities for citizens, businesses, and communities in relation to the digital development agenda.

Quantitative Greenhouse Gas Impact Assessment Method for Spatial Planning Policy (QGasSP)

The EMRA formed a partnership of public bodies in four European Countries and wrote a successful application in June 2019 for an ESPON Targeted Analysis (QGasSP) aimed at developing robust methods to quantify the influence of spatial planning policies on greenhouse gas emissions, funded by the ESPON 2020 Cooperation Programme. Methods developed will be applicable across Europe and will link to the achievement of national/EU level emissions targets. Ultimately it will assist national, regional and local policy decision-makers in meeting their GHG emission reduction targets.

Care Peat



EMRA is an Associate Member of the INTERREG NWE Project Care-Peat. The project has nine partners working together to reduce carbon emissions and restore the carbon storage capacity of different types of peatlands in North-West Europe. In 2019, the EMRA engaged with lead Irish partners, attending and contributing to Care-Peat events in June (Manchester) and September (Dublin). EMRA took part in the Care-Peat team who briefed TDs and political advisors (of all parties) on November 20th. This briefing consisted of a project overview, detailing the relevance peatland restoration to the Irish political agenda and upcoming EU objectives and how the project outputs can assist Ireland in meeting its obligations under various EU Directives. The EMRA also provided input to a Care-Peat team which briefed 34 MEPs (all parties, including Irish MEPs) on the project in Brussels (December).

EU Social Progress Index (EU-SPI)

The key aim is to test how the EU-SPI index could be used to inform and improve policy-making. It aims to actively involve regional stakeholders in the exchange of knowledge and review of the EU-SPI so as to identify aspects to be improved. To that end a focus group was organised in Ballymun on the 9th and 10th of July 2019. This provided useful knowledge on how to strengthen the existing measurements to ensure better uptake by regional governments.

EnRoute (Enhancing Resilience Of Urban Ecosystems through Green Infrastructure)



The EnRoute final project final conference took place in Brussels on the 29th of January, EnRoute officially ended in February 2019. The EnRoute project final report was published on the 1st of February. A letter of support expressing gratitude for the participation of the greater Dublin city region as city-lab in the project was issued to EMRA from the European Commission on the 26th of February.

Urb-Adapt (to detect and characterise climate change impacts in the region up to 2060)



Urb-Adapt identified possible risks to the population living in the Greater Dublin Region and future risks posed under a changing climate for future populations. A report was produced on the Urb-Adapt workshop hosted in Ballymun. The project officially ended on the 2nd of September 2019.

IN (Innovation Enterprise Network) -

this project set up to support unemployed high-skilled professionals, graduates, post graduates, business owners and sole traders came to an end in 2019.



Working with our stakeholders

EMRA sits on a series of forums and boards to closely follow policy and projects development at local, regional and national levels and to ensure that the regional strategic vision is taking into account and delivered by other stakeholders in their own activities.

Event	Date	Attendees
Dublin Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Jim Conway
Midlands Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Jim Conway
Mid - East Regional Action Plan for Jobs	Various	Malachy Bradley
Dublin Economic Monitor	Various	Malachy Bradley/ Pauline Riordan
Climate Change Adaption Strategies Steering Committee	Various	Jim Conway / Malachy Bradley
DCCAIE REPDF Steering Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Eirgrid Implementation Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Eastern and Midland CARO steering group	Various	Jim Conway
Dublin CARO steering group	Various	Malachy Bradley
National SEA Forum	Various	Malachy Bradley/Nicci Nolan
National AA Forum	Various	Nicci Nolan
Project Ireland 2040 Board	Various	Jim Conway
Irish Planning Institute Senior Planners Forum	Various	Malachy Bradley
HNDA Advisory Board	Various	Pauline Riordan
Development Plan Guidelines Advisory Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Cross Border Development Plan Group	Various	Malachy Bradley
Irish Planning Institute Public Sector Committee	Various	Clare Bannon
Smart Dublin Advisory Board	Various	Pauline Riordan





**Corporate, HR,
Finances**

Corporate, HR, Finances

In 2019 the Corporate Section continued to provide the administrative and organisation support services for the Assembly and the ongoing management of same. Functions such as Finance, Corporate Services and Human Resources are delivered in line with organisational objectives.

The 2019 Programme of Works was adopted in April and circulated to the constituent Local Authorities.

Objectives of the 2019 Programme of Works included;

- Preparation of a new corporate plan
- Preparation of the annual report

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

In the framework of the preparation of the new Corporate Plan, two workshops were organised for the staff to discuss and start designing the overall strategy of the Assembly for the new mandate. Once the new Assembly was established in July, a working group made up of members was set up specifically to input into the Corporate plan. The Corporate is to be completed in 2020.



Finance

The main functions of the Finance section in 2019 included:

- Preparation of the Annual Financial Statement 2018.
- Financial Management, procurement and control.
- Payment, recoupment and reconciliation of accounts.
- Financial administration of the EU Affairs office in Brussels.
- Administration of EMRA payroll and superannuation through the local government payroll and superannuation shared services centre (MyPay).
- Preparation of the Annual Budget for 2019.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Section continued to implement the adopted Workforce Plan for EMRA.

Additional staff were recruited through the following recruitment campaigns over the course of the year:

- Administrative officer - Head of Irish Regions Office
- Senior Staff Officer
- Assistant Staff Officer
- Clerical Officer
- EU Projects Officer

The Human Resources Department worked with management across the organisation to deliver on their resourcing requirements in the context of the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

To that end, a programme of resourcing and recruitment was undertaken in areas such as EU Support and Corporate Services. The requirement for EU project officers to assist with Interreg Europe projects, Next2Met and PROGRESS was identified along with other support staff in Corporate Services.

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

Staff Support Services

In 2019, EMRA maintained its provision of staff support services as part of an overall employee assistance programme. Procurement of an external supplier of this service commenced in Q1 2019.

GDPR

The Data Protection Officer provided training for staff to gain an understanding of GDPR and how best to meet their specific obligations. The DPO continued to provide advice in relation to GDPR and FOI requests throughout 2019.



Communication

Social Media

In 2019 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 18% between January and December 2019 and we have reached 559 followers by the end of the year. The growth was fully organic (non-paid for). Our Facebook page had 190 likes and our LinkedIn profile had 102 followers on 31st Dec 2019.

Website

Throughout 2019 we have continued to maintain our website www.emra.ie and update it with relevant information particularly in relation to the development process of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. We have also secured funding for the redevelopment of the website in 2020 budget.

RSES Public Consultations

In 2019 EMRA held a round of public consultation in relation to Material Amendments process as part of the development of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

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

Council Review

Following the adoption of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy the EMRA was also featured in the Council Review magazine and website on the 24th July 2019.



Ireland's First Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

Posted on 24 July 2019 by admin_ocean

The newly-elected Cathaoirleach of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) has said that his Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy – the first of its kind to be adopted [Continue Reading](#) →

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Annexes

List of staff

Jim Conway

Director

Malachy Bradley

Assistant Director and Senior Planner

Laure Antoniotti

EU and Corporate Affairs Manager

Juan Martinez

Economist

John Daly

Economist

Pauline Riordan

Senior Executive Planner

Clare Bannon

Senior Executive Planner

Ronan Fallon

Senior Executive Planner - until March 2019

Nicci Nolan

Senior Executive Planner

Michael Brennan

EU affairs officer

Travis O'Doherty

Policy and research officer

Sarah Holden

Head of the Irish Regions European Office - until February 2019

Teresa Lennon

Head of the Irish Regions European Office

Agata Kolodynska

EU support officer

Jim Nolan

IE Network manager - until June 2019

Simon Musial

Senior Staff officer

Hazel Healy

Senior Staff Officer, until February 2019

Alan Lambe

Assistant Staff officer

Richard Kenneally

Clerical officer - until January 2019

Ross Higgins

Clerical officer

Heather Cooke

Clerical officer - until July 2019

Hertes O DaSilva


Clerical officer - until May 2019


Nathan Williamson

Clerical officer - until October 2019

Income and Expenditure Account 31 December 2018

EASTERN AND MIDLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY		
Expenditure	2018	2017
Salaries	765,025	647,750
Office Equipment & Supplies	17,002	8,985
Information Technology	23,726	32,107
Communications & Postage	8,089	8,151
Members Annual Allowances	44,182	50,547
Travel & Subsistence Allowances:		
I - Members Travel & Subsistence	5,314	4,195
II - Members conferences	7,131	5,955
III - Staff Travel and Subsistence	46,845	42,825
Rent	78,000	77,875
Insurance	3,899	3,995
Training	14,807	11,721
Consultancy & professional Fees	269,172	35,304
Facilities, Energy & Rates charges	65,934	54,348
Advertising	9,434	5,401
Audit Fee	6,227	6,202
Miscellaneous	15,354	9,354
EU Affairs & IRO (COR)	256,905	229,875
Celtic Sea Project	0	3,257
EU Operational Programme	4,108	11,786
Resilens	46,598	72,679
I.E. Network	95,054	88,986
Urb-ADAPT	4,302	5,023
Expenditure total	1,787,110	1,416,321
Income		
Local Authorities Contributions	1,152,406	1,103,170
Other Income	249,330	62,335
Superannuation	24,934	24,101
Committee of the Regions	256,005	228,420
COR Misc	900	1,455
Celtic Sea Project	0	3,257
Resilens	46,598	72,679
IE Network	95,054	88,986
Urb-ADAPT	0	5,023
Receipts total	1,825,227	1,589,426
Difference between Income + Expenditure	38,117	173,105
Opening balance at 01/01/2018	664,707	491,602
Closing Balance at end of year Surplus	702,825	664,707


 Councillor Eamon Dooley, Cathaoirleach


 Mr. Jim Conway, Director

Consolidated Balance Sheet for the Financial Year ending 31st December 2018

	2018	2017
Fixed Assets		
IT Equipment	5,000	5,000
Furniture & Fixtures	0	0
Heritage Assets	10,000	10,000
	15,000	15,000
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank	568,972	557,229
Debtors	481,197	341,268
Petty Cash	289	84
Prepayments	20,954	8,199
	1,071,413	906,780
Current Liabilities		
Creditors & Accruals	272,970	164,809
Deferred income	95,618	77,264
Bank	0	0
	368,588	242,073
Net Current Assets	702,825	664,707
Net Assets	717,825	679,707
Financed by		
Balance @ 01/01/18	664,707	491,602
General Reserve	0	0
Inherited Fixed Assets from old DRA	15,000	15,000
Excess of Income over Expenditure	38,117	173,105
	717,825	679,707

Members' expenses 2019

Member (Cllr)	Local authority	Fixed Allowance	Training	Committee of Regions	Conference
Daryl Barron	(Dublin CC)	€102.61	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Paddy Bourke	(Dublin CC)	€239.72	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Paddy Bracken	(Laois)	€773.18	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Fintan Brett	(Kildare)	€314.74	€203.25	€0.00	€0.00
John Browne	(Longford)	€717.85	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Christy Burke	(Dublin CC)	€239.72	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Tommy Byrne (R.I.P.)	(Louth)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Michael Cahill	(Longford)	€701.05	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Micheal Carrigy	(Longford)	€425.34	€0.00	€0.00	€100.00
Jennifer Carroll MacNeill	(DLR)	€156.60	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Emma Coffey	(Louth)	€336.65	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Joe Costello	(Dublin CC)	€153.91	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Avril Cronin	(Wicklow)	€88.93	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Ciaran Cuffe	(Dublin CC)	€33.61	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Thomas Cullen	(Wicklow)	€436.79	€518.75	€0.00	€403.24
Kieran Dennison	(Fingal)	€239.72	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Eamon Dooley (Cath)	Cathaoirleach	€5,850.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Eamon Dooley	(Offaly)	€1,219.46	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Francis Duffy	(Sth Dublin)	€297.74	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Andrew Duncan	(W.Meath)	€121.40	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Gaye Fagan	(Sth Dublin)	€47.94	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Kate Feeney (CoR)	(CoR) (Dublin)	€198.49	€0.00	€30.51	€0.00
Brian Fitzgerald	(Meath)	€612.68	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Catherine Fitzgerald	(Fingal)	€1,132.25	€138.20	€0.00	€500.00
Eddie Fitzpatrick	(Offaly)	€1,141.88	€1,593.52	€0.00	€0.00
Eddie Fitzpatrick	Cathaoirleach	€5,850.00	N/A	N/A	N/A
Deirdre Forde (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€1,435.91	€0.00
Mary Freehill	(CoR) (Dublin CC)	€496.23	€0.00	€71.10	€80.00
Mary Hanafin	(DLR)	€347.34	€227.50	€0.00	€0.00
Pat Hand	(DLR)	€143.83	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
David Healy	(Fingal)	€496.23	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Lawrence Hemmings	(Dublin CC)	€102.60	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Deirdre Heney	(Dublin CC)	€256.52	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Paddy Hill	(W.Meath)	€937.57	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Vincent Jackson	(Dublin CC)	€256.51	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Pamela Kearns	(Sth Dublin)	€200.22	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Ivan Keatley	(Kildare)	€232.51	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Conor Keelan	(Louth)	€585.89	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Cathal King	(Sth Dublin)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Dermot Lacey	(Dublin CC)	€496.23	€227.05	€0.00	€120.00
Jerry Lundy (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€1,033.11	€0.00
Brigid Manton	(Fingal)	€156.60	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Colm Markey	(Louth)	€323.88	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Steven Matthews	(Wicklow)	€283.39	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Lettie McCarthy	(DLR)	€426.51	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Tony McCormack	(Offaly)	€382.34	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Brian McDonagh	(Fingal)	€143.83	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Declan Mc Donnell (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€857.33	€0.00
Padraig McEvoy	(Kildare)	€675.39	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Hughie Mc Grath (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€304.27	€0.00
Niall Mc Nelis (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€172.45	€0.00
Paddy Meade	(Meath)	€493.90	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Martin Miley	(Kildare)	€172.92	€181.36	€0.00	€284.78
Derek Mitchell	(Wicklow)	€351.69	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Aisling Moran	(Laois)	€352.77	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Maria Murphy	(Meath)	€253.15	€270.19	€0.00	€0.00
Michael Murphy (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€3,931.02	€0.00
Gerry Murray (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€798.95	€0.00
Pater O'Brien	(DLR)	€102.60	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Claire O'Connor	(Dublin CC)	€95.88	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Robert O'Donoghue	(Fingal)	€57.57	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Damien O'Reilly	(Meath)	€159.28	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Aengus O'Rourke	(W.Meath)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Larry O'Toole	(Dublin CC)	€51.30	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Robert Power	(Kildare)	€368.49	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
William Priestly	(Sth Dublin)	€153.91	€225.65	€0.00	€0.00
PJ Reilly	(Longford)	€696.57	€0.00	€0.00	€500.00
Tommy Reilly	(Meath)	€284.02	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Rob Russell	(Sth Dublin)	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Enda Stenson (CoR)	(CoR)	€0.00	€0.00	€354.14	€0.00
Conor Tormey	(Meath)	€55.11	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Pat Vance	(Wicklow)	€266.59	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
Gerry Walsh	(Wicklow)	€332.66	€245.36	€0.00	€0.00
Barry Ward (CoR)	(CoR) (DLR)	€0.00	€0.00	€34.95	€0.00
Irene Winters	(Wicklow)	€269.02	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00



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