

ERDF Developing our Regions, Counties, Towns and Communities

The Southern Regional Assembly is the managing authority for the roll out of the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027, the latest European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programme, which is investing €663 million across 18 counties in the Southern Region and the Eastern and Midland Region in Ireland.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the
European Union



Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

Launched in April 2023, the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027 is co-financed by the European Union and the Government of Ireland. The programme area has a population of 4.2 million and covers just over half of the country – Limerick, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Waterford, Carlow, Tipperary, Wexford, Kilkenny, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow, Louth, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly, Longford as well as Dublin.

“The programme will have a direct impact on balancing regional disparities in Ireland by targeting support at regional level for research and innovation, energy efficiency and sustainable regeneration of our regional towns,” according to David Kelly, Director of the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA).

“Over the past half-century, Ireland’s EU membership has changed how we live, work, study and travel for the better. This new chapter in the story of ERDF in Ireland will continue to improve our way of life in the Irish regions by addressing key regional challenges,” he added.

BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The programme assists the Government’s aim of promoting balanced regional development by supporting implementation of the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies in both regions in the programme area and is focused on the following key strategic outcomes:

- 1. Developing Smarter More Competitive Regions** by building RD&I capacity in public research institutions, accelerating the translation of cutting-edge research into commercial applications at a regional level, supporting innovation diffusion and strengthening regional innovation ecosystems in line with Ireland’s Smart Specialisation Strategy and the Regional Enterprise Plans. Funding will be targeted at universities and enterprise clusters in the programme area. Funding calls will be managed by the Higher Education Authority, Science Foundation Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.
- 2. Creating Greener More Energy Efficient Regions and a Just Transition** by scaling up investment in actions that improve the energy efficiency of residential homes while targeting homeowners in, or at risk of, energy poverty. Funding will

be directed through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to provide free home energy upgrades to qualifying homeowners.

- 3. Supporting Sustainable Urban Development in our Regions** by promoting an integrated strategic approach to the regeneration of towns within a Town Centres First Framework. Funding calls will be managed by the Southern Regional Assembly and will support local authorities responsible for implementing the Town Centres First policy within key towns and strategic growth centres in the programme area.

Funding calls under the new programme have already commenced with the earliest calls targeting universities and technological universities, while funding calls targeting local authorities and regional enterprise ecosystems will follow in the second half of 2023.

All funding calls are published on www.southernassembly.ie/.



Pictured at the launch of the programme in Kilkenny Castle on 25 April were (l-r): SRA’s Cathaoirleach Cllr Oliver Walsh, and Director David Kelly with Miia Jouppi, European Commission’s Programme Manager of Regional Policy, and Andrew Condon, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform

EU Regional Programme 2021-2027

Further information on the new ERDF Northern and Western Regional Programme and the new EU JTF Programme is available on the Northern and Western Regional Assembly website www.nwra.ie and the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly website www.emra.ie

BENEFITS OF ETC NETWORK

European Territorial Co-operation (ETC), more commonly known as Interreg, is one of the key objectives of ERDF and EU Cohesion Policy. ETC provides a framework for the implementation of joint projects between national, regional and local stakeholders from different EU member states with the goal of finding common solutions to common problems.

The ETC Network in the Southern Region is a forum for all those working on and/or interested in ETC projects and is hosted by the Southern Regional Assembly. Members can benefit and learn from each other's projects, share experiences to build a meaningful platform and network to support the delivery of sustainable regional development (including RSES and other regional initiatives) to the benefit of the region.

There are currently over 200 members of the ETC Network in the Southern Region, the majority of whom are involved in Interreg Programmes while there are also members who are involved other EU-funded programmes.

Benefits of ETC Network membership include:

- Regular updates on ETC programmes and funding calls.
- Informational Sessions towards capacity building events throughout the year.
- Annual conferences.
- Targeted interactions linking Local Authorities, Higher Education Institutions, SMEs and Civil Societies.
- Networking opportunities.

For details visit www.southernassembly.ie/etc-network

ETC PROGRAMMES AND FUNDING CALLS

The **Interreg North-West Europe (NWE) Programme** fosters transnational co-operation to make North-West Europe a key economic player and an attractive place to work and live, with high levels of innovation, sustainability and cohesion.

- 'Call 3', for small-scale projects, closed on 12 July. The National Contact Point (NCP) is Sarah Davoren, Southern Regional Assembly; email: sdavoren@southernassembly.ie

The **Interreg Europe Programme** helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy.

- Call 2 closed on 9 June with Call 3 expected to open in early 2024 (72 of 134 projects were approved in Call 1 while 145 proposals were submitted for Call 2).

The **Interreg Northern Periphery & Arctic Programme** aims to help generate vibrant, competitive, and sustainable communities by harnessing innovation, expanding the capacity for entrepreneurship, and seizing the unique growth initiatives and opportunities of the Northern and Arctic regions in a resource efficient way.

- Call 4 is expected to open this year on 4 October and close on 17 November.



SRA's Cathaoirleach Cllr Oliver Walsh pictured with attendees at a recent ETC Network Conference in Wexford County Hall.

The **Interreg Atlantic Area Programme** objective is to implement solutions to answer regional challenges in innovation, resource efficiency, environment, and protection of cultural assets, to generate a better quality of life in the Atlantic Area territory.

- For updates on future calls, email Travis O'Doherty, NCP for Interreg Northern Periphery & Arctic and Atlantic Area, on todoherty@nwra.ie

URBACT aims to enable cities to work together to develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges, by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies.

- A call for 'Innovative Transfer Mechanisms' will open early 2024, with a call for 'Good Practices' later in 2024 and a call for 'Transfer Networks' in early 2025. Email Karl Murphy, NCP for URBACT, for details on kmurphy@emra.ie

The **ESPON 2030 Programme** bridges research with policies by providing territorial analyses, data and maps to support EU development policies with facts and evidence and to help public authorities to benchmark their region or city, identify new challenges and potentials and shape successful development policies for the future.

- More calls for tenders for European research territorial studies are expected this year. Stakeholder proposals for ESPON Targeted Analyses can be submitted at any time. Email Caroline Creamer, ESPON NCP, to further discuss the programme on Caroline.creamer@mu.ie

For further information about the Southern, Eastern and Midland Regional Programmes visit: www.southernassembly.ie/euprogrammes