

# €663M INVESTMENT IN NEW REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-27 is co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) by the EU and the Irish Government and is managed by the Southern Regional Assembly. ERDF aims to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU by correcting the imbalances between its regions.

This programme will invest in activities to build research, development and innovation capacity, assist homeowners in or at risk of energy poverty and contribute to the revitalisation of Ireland’s regional towns centres through sustainable urban development. The programme area has a population of 3.8 million and covers just over half of the country.

Counties Limerick, Clare, Cork, Kerry, Waterford, Carlow, Tipperary, Wexford, Kilkenny, Kildare, Meath, Wicklow, Louth, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly, Longford as well as Dublin are targeted as part of the programme area.

Over €663m will be invested in 18 counties across the Southern Region and the Eastern & Midland Region over the next seven years to help create quality jobs, transition to low carbon and to support local authorities, the higher education sector, enterprises and public bodies in delivering balanced regional development.

## BALANCING REGIONAL DISPARITIES

Aligned with the national and regional objectives under ‘Project Ireland 2040: The National Planning Framework,’ it will assist the Government’s aim of promoting balanced regional development by supporting the implementation of the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies in the Southern and Eastern & Midland regions of the programme’s area.

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) will lead the roll-out of the programme as the managing authority. According to

David Kelly, SRA Director, “This 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.”

He added that over the past half-century, Ireland’s EU membership has changed how people 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,” Kelly noted.



Pictured at the launch of the regional development programme in Kilkenny Castle on 25 April were (l-r): SRA’s Cathaoirleach Cllr Oliver Walsh (2022-2023) 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.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

The Programme will target its funding supports through three strategic priority areas:

- Priority 1** – The creation of smarter and more competitive regions by enhancing research and innovation capacity and supporting regional enterprise – has a total budget of €337m. Six of the country’s universities and two Institutes of Technology are in the targeted programme area, and it is also home to four newly established technological universities. Investing in collaborative research and innovation activities will build capacity within and between the institutions and collectively support the regional innovation ecosystem and knowledge economy. These schemes will be rolled out by the programme’s delivery partners, which include Science Foundation Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and the Higher Education Authority.
- Priority 2** – The creation of Low Carbon, Energy Efficient Regions – has a budget of €199m, which will be achieved by supporting investments to improve energy efficiency of residential homes, targeting homeowners in or at risk of energy poverty. Responding to the energy challenges, the programme will fund deep retrofitting to ease the burden of homeowners in or at risk of experiencing energy poverty, reducing the amount they are spending on energy consumption and reducing their carbon emissions. These deep retrofits will be delivered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).
- Priority 3** – Sustainable & Integrated Urban Development involves taking an integrated strategic approach to the regeneration of Ireland’s towns using a Town Centres First Framework. Funding calls will be managed by the Southern Regional Assembly in partnership with local authorities responsible for implementing the Town Centres First policy in selected towns in the programme area.



**“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,”** noted David Kelly, SRA Director.

Aligning closely with the objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies for the Southern Region and Eastern & Midland Region, the programme supports regeneration of regional town centres as the vibrant heart of local communities to live, work and visit. A budget of €90m has been set aside for this work which will be rolled out by the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) through the local authorities in the programme area.

Jim Conway, Director of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA), said that both regions in this programme area have strong opportunities and diverse challenges. “While they both have a strong urban feature, they also each have a rural and smaller regional focus and we have

many opportunities and challenges that can be addressed together.”

He added that the programme will support targeted investments which will make a real difference to quality jobs and inclusive growth by breathing new life into Ireland’s regional towns and villages.



**Miia Jouppi, European Commission's Programme Manager of Regional Policy.**

For further information on the list of programmes visit  
[www.southernassembly.ie/euprogrammes](http://www.southernassembly.ie/euprogrammes)



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