

# EU News Bulletin

The latest monthly EU opportunities, news & policy, publications and events of relevance to Ireland's local and regional level.

## Number 84, July 2011

Produced by the Irish Regions Brussels Office  
in association with the Institute of Public Administration.



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### SPECIAL ANALYSIS:

## PROPOSED EU BUDGET 2014-2020

As mentioned briefly in last month's *Bulletin*, on 29 June, the European Commission published its proposals for the EU's 2014-2020 budget – the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The MFF translates into financial terms the European Union's priorities up to 2020. It sets out spending limits for each category of expenditure and is intended to provide a predictable flow of resources for EU programmes and certainty for programme managers, projects and beneficiaries.

A 4.8% increase from the current budget of €976 billion to €1,025 billion has been proposed. The EU budget currently represents 1.12% of its Member States' Gross National Income (GNI) and is funded mainly through direct national transfers (on the basis of their GNI) but also from 'own resources', which include levies from agricultural and customs duties and a portion of VAT collected at national level. In 2011, about 76% of the EU budget came from national contributions, 12% from customs duties and 11% from VAT.

For the 2014-2020 budget, the Commission is proposing to reduce the proportion of national contributions to an average 1.05% GNI in order to help garner support from Member States opposed to increases in the overall budget. To compensate, the Commission is proposing a new own resource system to include a new tax on financial transactions and an EU VAT.

### Spending Priorities

The breakdown of the MFF among the expenditure categories is seen as conservative, with the two main areas – Agriculture and Regional Policy – continuing to receive the largest portions of the budget. There are some new areas: the EU's External Action Service (introduced under the Lisbon Treaty) and Home Affairs – border control, security and immigration. However, with the established categories there are also some new proposals and new priorities for existing programmes.

- Heading 1 – Smart & Inclusive Growth (€490.9 billion)
- Heading 2 – Sustainable Growth (€382.9 billion)
- Heading 3 – Security & Citizenship (€18.5 billion)
- Heading 4 – Global Europe (€70.0 billion)
- Heading 5 – Administration (€62.6 billion)

The following is an overview of some of the key proposals:

#### Heading 1 - Smart and Inclusive Growth

This is the largest heading in the budget and includes significant policy areas such as: Cohesion Policy; Research and Innovation; a new 'Connecting Europe' facility for infrastructure; and other policy areas such as SMEs, education, training, youth and sport. There are a number of important aspects under this heading for Ireland.

#### **Cohesion Policy - €336 billion**

Cohesion Policy has been allocated 36.7% of the budget, which represents a slight increase on the 2007-2013 period. The

structure of the policy has been changed slightly, with the creation of a new category of 'transition regions', regions with levels between 75-90% EU GDP. The budget for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is broken down as follows:

- *Convergence Regions* (below 75% EU GDP) - €162.6 billion (48.5%)
- *Transition Regions* (between 75-90% EU GDP) - €38.9 billion (11.6%)
- *Competitiveness Regions* (above 90% EU GDP) - €53.1 billion (15.8%)
- *Territorial Cooperation* (INTERREG programmes) - €11.7 billion (3.5%)
- *Cohesion Fund* (for Member States below 90% EU GDP) - €68.7 billion (20.5%)

*European Social Fund (ESF)* – The ESF will make up at least 25% of the total Cohesion Policy budget (i.e. €84 billion) and must comprise a minimum of 40% of Transition regions' allocation and 52% of a Competitiveness Region's allocation.

As present, both Irish Regions (NUTS II – Regional Assemblies) qualify as Competitiveness Regions. However, given the impacts of the economic crisis, both regions' GDP levels are in sharp decline, with the latest available figures for the BMW being 93% EU GDP (for 2008). Depending on the outcome of negotiations, when decisions are taken (and what figures are available) and the political will to make a case, it may be possible for the BMW region to qualify for additional funds under the new Transition category. Significantly, this may also be important for the region, when the regional State Aid provisions are negotiated.

Other important changes in Cohesion Policy will be a strengthened focus on results and the effectiveness of spending. To help achieve this, the Commission is proposing:

- *A Common Strategic Framework (CSF)* for all Structural Funds (to include ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, and EMFF (see below));
- *Partnership Contracts* between the Commission and each Member State, setting out national and

regional objectives and indicators to assess performance;

- Funding will be targeted on a more limited number of priority themes;
- There will be increased *conditionality*, with certain provisos having to be met before funds are allocated;
- A *reserve of 5%* of the Cohesion budget will be set aside and allocated following a mid-term review.

### **Connecting Europe facility (new) - €40 billion**

Allied to Cohesion Policy is the establishment of a new 'Connecting Europe' facility which will fund pre-identified transport, energy and ICT infrastructure of priority EU interest. Under the proposal, 'Connecting Europe' is being allocated €40 billion: €9.1 billion for the energy sector; €21.7 billion for transport (plus €10 billion under the Cohesion Fund); and €9.2 billion for ICT.

The Facility will be centrally managed by the European Commission, with implementation by project promoters. The co-funding rates will depend on the type of project and geographic location - whether investments take place in Convergence or Competitiveness Regions. The 'Connecting Europe' facility will also be linked with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to use innovative financing tools and the concept of EU project bonds may also feature in realising some projects.

The annexes of the proposed MFF set out the preliminary list of pre-identified projects, with some projects of significance to Ireland.

As part of the 'core network corridors' for transport, the Dublin-London-Paris-Bruxelles Corridor is identified, with the rail connection from Belfast to Dublin identified as a route where on-going works will be financed until 2018. However, there is no specific mention of the section from Holyhead to Birmingham/London, as some had hoped.

Also in the transport section, the Shannon-Cork-Dublin rail connection is identified as an 'other core network' which could be financed.

On the energy corridors, the 'Offshore Electricity Grid in the Northern Seas' is a priority, which includes submarine grid solutions and connections to interconnectors in the North Sea, Irish Sea and Channel region to link renewable energy sources with the main consumption centres. The North-South Gas Corridor in Western Europe is also identified, which includes further infrastructure to increase capacities in Ireland.

On ICT and Broadband, actions will apply to all Member States but under more competitive bidding processes through various Calls. There may be opportunities here for local/regional authorities in partnership with telecom companies and other utilities to invest in passive broadband networks.

### **Research & Innovation - €80 billion**

The current research and innovation instruments – 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework Programme (FP7), the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) and the European Institute for Innovation and Technology – will be brought together in a common strategic framework, to be called 'Horizon 2020'.

This will be linked to policy priorities such as health, food security and the bio-economy, energy, and climate change, with a focus on excellence in the science base, tackling societal challenges and creating industrial leadership and boosting competitiveness. There will also be an emphasis on simplifying how the programme works, with a single set of rules for participation across all schemes and streamlined implementation rules.

The Commission proposes to allocate €80 billion to 'Horizon 2020', a significant increase of €25 billion on the 2007-2013 figures. This is to be complemented by measures funded through the Structural Funds.

### Other Aspects of Smart and Inclusive Growth

There are two other aspects of this budget heading which are of interest. These are:

- **Competitiveness & SME Programme** (improving access to finance; working towards the objectives of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA), developing competitiveness in the tourism sector and other supports) **Total Budget: €2.4 billion;**
- **Education Europe Programme** (a continuation of education programmes such as Erasmus but also Sport, including support for grassroots sports organisations addressing societal challenges). **Total budget: €15.2 billion.**

### Heading 2 - Sustainable Growth – natural resources

This is the second largest budget heading, dominated by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) but also including maritime and fisheries and environment and climate action policy programmes.

#### Common Agricultural Policy

The Commission is proposing to allocate 36.2% of the budget to the Common Agricultural Policy (down from 39.4% under the current budget) with €281.8 billion provided for Pillar I (direct payments to farmers and market measures) and €89.9 billion for Pillar II (rural development). This is to be complemented by spending under other budget headings, such as Research & Innovation, food safety and the European Globalisation Fund.

The basic structure of the CAP remains, but the changes are being driven by: (a) a move towards a more equitable distribution of direct payments; (b) a greening of payments, linking agriculture and environment policy; and (c) agriculture's contribution to a vibrant rural economy. The changes in the system of direct payments will have potentially significant impacts on Ireland.

It is proposed that 30% of direct support will be conditional on 'greening', while direct payments would be determined on a per hectare basis across the EU. This is something of a priority issue for the Romanian Commissioner, as well as the current Polish EU Presidency which backs an altering of the historical payments model to essentially shift resources towards the newer Member States.

The rural development funds will be subject to the same performance-based conditionality as will apply to Cohesion Policy, with the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) being part of the Common Strategic Framework (see above on Cohesion Policy) – combining all available EU funds in a single contract (between the Commission and the Member State). The contract will be linked to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the relevant National Reform Programme. The allocation of aid for rural development will also be changed, with shares determined on the basis of a series of territorial and economic criteria.

To enable the CAP to respond more effectively to challenges, it is proposed to permit flexibility between the two pillars. What this means in effect has yet to be elaborated by the European Commission.

The Commission is also proposing to make up to €4.5 billion from the European Globalisation Fund (EGF) available to assist farmers whose livelihoods may be affected by globalisation. This is the first time that the EGF will apply to the agricultural sector.

#### Maritime and Fisheries Policy

A reformed maritime and fisheries policy will be centred on a new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to be structured around four pillars:

- **Smart, Green Fisheries** (proposals have been tabled earlier this month on reforming the Common Fisheries Policy);
- **Smart, Green Aquaculture;**

- **Sustainable and Inclusive Territorial Development** – to reverse the decline of coastal and inland communities dependent on fishing, bringing added-value to fishing and related activities and diversification to other sectors;
- **Integrated Maritime Policy** – marine knowledge, maritime spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, maritime surveillance and adaption to climate change in coastal areas.

The EMFF is being allocated €6.7 billion for 2014-2020. As mentioned above, it will also be covered by the Common Strategic Framework and the partnership contract between the Commission and Member State, covering the Structural Funds.

### Other Aspects of Sustainable Growth

There is one other aspect of this budget heading which is of interest:

- **Environment and Climate Action** – while environment and climate actions are mainstreamed into the other major funding programmes, it is proposed to continue the **LIFE+ Programme** and allocate it a total of **€3.2 billion** (€2.4 billion for environment, €800m for climate). This is an increase on the €2.14 billion budget for the current period.

### Heading 3 – Security and Citizenship

This heading is relatively small and comprises a number of diverse programme categories, including migration management, justice, rights and citizenship, civil protection, food safety and others. It does contain a number of programmes that may be of interest to various authorities/agencies in Ireland:

- **Migration Management Fund** – a multi-annual fund to support actions on asylum and migration and integration of third country nationals. **Total Budget €3.6 billion**

- **Civil Protection Instrument** – preparedness for natural and man-made disasters with internal EU and external dimensions. **Total Budget: €455 million (€245m. for internal aspects).**
- **Creative Europe Programme** – unlocking the job creation potential of cultural and creative industries. **Total Budget: €1.6 billion**

### Reactions

Initial reactions to the MFF were predictable. The UK Government immediately criticised the proposals, labelling them as unrealistic; the German Government considered the proposals for an EU tax as unnecessary; while the French Government said it was open to discussions on new sources of funding but vowed to fight to maintain CAP spending at current levels.

The reactions in Ireland were generally more restrained and tended to focus largely on changes in the direct payments to farmers, while an official Irish position is likely to emerge later and be based on pragmatic concerns on financial draw-downs that the country can expect across all budget lines. In this regard, the CAP (including rural development) and Cohesion Policy provide the only certainties in terms of financial allocations over the seven year period 2014-2020, with dedicated national allocations. In nearly all other budget headings, the process is more competitive and Irish interests need to be willing and prepared to compete.

From a regional perspective, the proposed MFF is generally seen as positive. The proportion of the budget allocated to Cohesion Policy is seen as a success given that there was some disagreement within the College of Commissioners on this. Despite being supported by the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, the proposed establishment of the new category of Transition Regions is likely to come under pressure, especially from Member States that want to reduce the

overall size of the budget and want Cohesion Policy to focus only on the poorest regions and countries.

The Connecting Europe Facility is also regarded as controversial, with many seeing it as giving too much influence to the Commission and undermining existing programmes and the 'place-based' approach of Cohesion Policy.

It is worth underlining at this stage that these are just proposals from the European Commission and will now be subject to extensive debate and intense negotiations in the coming months.

### What Happens Now?

The Polish Presidency is expected to organise a conference on the EU Budget towards the end of the year, with participation from Member States and EU Institutions. Poland is hoping that a consensus on the EU's long-term budget will emerge during the Danish EU Presidency in the first half of 2012. However, on previous experience, negotiations are likely to be protracted and may well drag on into the Presidency of Cyprus (2<sup>nd</sup> half 2012) or even Ireland (1<sup>st</sup> half 2013).

In terms of Cohesion Policy, the points expected to be contentious are the new category of regions in transition and the new Connecting Europe infrastructure fund. However, the Territorial Cooperation strand (INTERREG) has in the past been a victim of negotiations between the Member States and its proposed €11.7 billion budget will also come under pressure, as some states seek reductions. Should a more radical approach be taken, then the €53.1 billion Competitiveness strand may be vulnerable.

The treaties stipulate that the Council adopts the regulation laying down the MFF unanimously after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament. Concerning the own resources proposal, the Parliament can only express a non-binding opinion. However, the Lisbon Treaty gives it a greater say in the decisions on the regulations of the

various programmes and this new dimension adds a certain unknown quantity into the negotiation process over the next two years.

On 28-29 July the Polish Presidency held an initial exchange of views on the MFF with Ministers for European Affairs.

Some of the key next steps include:

#### End September:

Commission to unveil the legislative package on Cohesion Policy including general regulation and individual regulations on the Social Fund, Cohesion Fund, Regional Development Fund and Territorial Cooperation.

#### Before end 2011:

Other legislative proposals for the various programmes should be published.

#### End 2011:

Commission to propose a Common Strategic Framework for all EU funds.

#### 2011-2012:

Member States and European Parliament to discuss and amend Commission's budget proposals.

#### By end 2012:

Desired deadline for approving EU's long-term budget for 2014-2020, in order to allow sufficient time to prepare programmes for implementation to commence in January 2014.

## FUNDING, NETWORKING & PROJECTS

### FP7: €7 billion available

On 19-20 July, DG Research & Innovation published the largest annual set of Calls for Proposals yet across 47 sub-programmes of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7). €7 billion is being made available on this occasion to support efforts to tackle major European and global societal challenges.

While the bulk of this funding is intended for the use of higher education institutions, research organisations and industry (with a particular focus on SMEs), Irish regional and local interests may see opportunities for involvement alongside these actors (e.g. as operational environments for the practical testing of new technologies and approaches) in the selection of Calls and specific objectives carried below. Background detail on each Call can be found in the relevant 'Work Programme 2012' (or 2011 in some cases) of each sub-programme.

**Call: Regional Clusters (public-business-research collaboration)**

The most readily apparent opportunity for local and regional authorities to involve themselves in FP7 is via the 'Regions of Knowledge' sub-programme. This supports the development of and transnational networking of sustainable regional partnerships of 'research-driven clusters' (RDC) bringing together these levels of public authority with the business and the research communities (triple-helix approach). The clusters are to be established on a place-based long-term collaborative basis in relation to themes of high potential for the region in question (the concept of a "region" is loosely defined as any identifiable territorial unit including across formal administrative borders).

The objectives are to create synergies between ongoing research activities within the region and the socio-economic circumstances on the ground. This is intended to produce tailor-made strategies and solutions to contribute to regional economic development by facilitating knowledge transfer and new business opportunities while reinforcing longer-term capacity to invest in this field.

Activities such as regional analysis and integration of research agendas, definition of Joint Action Plans, and international cooperation among the

clusters will be financed, rather than any specific research activities.

This year's Call (FP7-REGIONS-2012-2013-1) applies to two domains:

**Digital Agenda:**

- Reinforcement of e-Infrastructures, cloud computing applications for government and science; next generation web-based applications and services including multilingual content; 'Internet of Things'; and key enabling technologies in ICT.
- Initiatives for open innovation through ongoing business-academia cooperation in order to develop new marketable ICT-based products and services.
- Establishing 'regional digital agendas' to both support competitiveness and foster digital literacy, skills and inclusion in order to overcome regional disparities.

**Resource Efficiency:**

- Underpinning the shift towards a low-carbon economy to achieve sustainable growth.
- Addressing technologies to increase the efficiency of materials, water and energy usage (e.g. in fields of renewables, recycling, waste management, smart grids, clean tech, water treatment, eco-design...).

Transnational cooperation among different RDCs (e.g. in terms of technology development or effects of globalisation) is intended to further aspects of the Europe 2020 Strategy and its flagship initiatives – 'Digital Agenda for Europe', 'Resource-efficient Europe' and 'Innovation Union' – as appropriate. Links with the emerging concept of 'smart specialisation' in R&D and innovation (see June's *Bulletin*) and the development of appropriate regional strategies in that vein should be also drawn while synergies with the Structural Funds should be devised.

Budget: €18 million with a planned EU contribution of €1-3m per project (up to 100 % of total eligible costs).

**Deadline: 31 January 2012**

[Further details](#)

**Call: Smart Cities & Communities: Energy Plans and Systems**

The Call for Proposals (FP7-ENERGY-SMARTCITIES-2012) to launch the new 'Smart Cities & Communities Initiative' (see June's *Bulletin* for an overview) has a distinct focus on energy, specifically:

- Strategic sustainable planning and screening of city plans (reference: Energy.2012.8.8-1)
- Heating and cooling technologies for large-scale systems for urban areas (reference: Energy.2012.8.8-2)

Projects based on innovation in technology or systems integration to tackle common challenges through the added value brought by a transnational partnership of at least 3 cities may be considered for funding. Their individual elements should be based on comprehensive and integrated City Plans, adequate risk assessment and solid business plans in order to deliver a high degree of impact and wider replicability.

A Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) as submitted to the Covenant of Mayors is considered an ideal foundation for the detailed action plans that have to be developed by the applicants.

€40 million is available for this initial Call.

**Deadline: 1 December**

[Further details](#)

**Call: Low-energy building renovations**

Confusingly, the other expected element of this 'Smarter Cities' Call – 'Demonstration of nearly zero energy building renovation for cities and districts' – with an additional budget of €35 million, is to be found within another Call entitled 'Energy-efficient Buildings PPP' (FP7-2012-NMP-ENV-ENERGY-ICT-EeB) under the reference EeB.Energy.2012.8.8.3.

The objective is to renovate the energy performance of a number of districts of existing buildings.

**Deadline: 1 December**

[Further details](#)

**Call: ICT for energy-positive neighbourhoods**

Another objective (reference: EeB-ICT-2011.6.5) of the 'Energy-efficient Buildings' Call addresses the dynamics of energy supply and demand in neighbourhoods, including spaces surrounding buildings, and extended urban/rural communities by reference to ICT management and control systems and decision support systems. Among the key expected deliverables are the development of appropriate business models which commit public authorities, engage users, and split incentives. Interoperation with other (current) ICT systems (e.g. GIS, traffic management) may be considered.

Cities which have taken steps to comply with the EU Green Digital Charter to significantly decrease their ICT direct carbon footprint (e.g. through increased use of renewables; improved measurability, transparency and visibility of emissions and energy use; improved transport and urban mobility; or deploying smart grids) are likely to be best placed to access funding.

Budget: €30 million

**Deadline: 1 December**

[Information Day: 12 September, Brussels](#)

[Call](#)

[Further details](#)

**Call: Energy in Older Buildings**

This element (reference: EeB-ENV-2012.6.6.2) of the 'Energy-efficient Buildings PPP' Call will support concepts and solutions for improving energy efficiency of groupings of buildings, in particular at urban district scale, dating

from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and earlier.

Budget: €5 million.

**Deadline: 1 December**

[Call](#)

[Further details \(p33\)](#)

**Call: Energy-efficient Buildings (other aspects)**

Other 'Energy-efficient Buildings' Calls relating to Nanotechnologies, Materials & New Production Technologies cover:

- Interaction and integration between buildings, grids, heating and cooling networks, and energy storage and generation systems (EeB.NMP.2012-1)
- Systemic Approach for retrofitting existing buildings (EeB.NMP.2012-2)
- Development and validation of new 'processes and business models' for the next generation of performance based energy-efficient buildings integrating new Services (EeB.NMP.2012-3)
- Novel materials for smart windows (EeB.NMP.2012-5)

[Further details](#)

**Call: Energy (general)**

The general FP7 Energy Call (FP7-ENERGY-2012-1-1STAGE) is providing €141 million towards research with a long-term horizon. Among the areas instanced for support are:

- Innovative wind conversion systems (10-20MW) for offshore applications;
- Biofuels from microalgae or macroalgae;
- Enhancing electricity networks through use of distributed intelligence;
- Empowering smart customers to participate in active demand and energy system efficiency;

- Networking of national R&D and demonstration projects on smart metering infrastructure and data processing;
- Support to the coordination of stakeholders activities in the field of Smart Grids;
- Planning for European Electricity Highways to ensure the reliable delivery of renewable electricity and market integration.

**Deadline: 3 May 2012**

[Further details](#)

**Call: ICT for Efficient Water Resources Management**

Within 'ICT Call 8', support (reference: ICT 2011.6.3) of €15 million is being directed towards ICT-enabled solutions to integrate real-time knowledge on demand and supply across water distribution networks and water sources for improved Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) based on:

- Innovative demand management systems,
- Decision support systems,
- Data management technologies.

A holistic approach to the deployment of robust and proven technologies should be taken by partnerships of ICT equipment providers, software companies and water authorities. Demand forecasting, advanced metering, real-time consumption, and combined energy-water actions may also be included as elements of projects.

**Deadline: 17 January 2012**

[Information Day: 12 September, Brussels](#)

[Further details](#)

**Calls: Environment & Sustainable Development**

Two sets of Calls on climate/environmental changes and sustainable development in urban and

coastal areas were launched under the FP7 COOPERATION Environment sub-programme: a “one-stage” evaluation process (reference: FP7-ENV-2012-one-stage) and a “two-stage”(FP7-ENV-2012-two-stage).

One-stage topics include:

- Exploiting the full potential of economic instruments to contribute to achieving the EU's greenhouse gas emissions reduction objectives;
- Exploring opportunities, risks, feasibility and policy implications associated with key geo-engineering options;
- Improving the scientific knowledge base to support the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive;
- Advanced technologies and tools for mapping, diagnosing, excavating, and securing underwater and coastal archaeological sites;
- Policy options for a resource-efficient economy;
- Development of resource efficiency indicators;
- Environmental standardisation;
- Exploring opportunities for open access to primary environmental data;
- Integrated assessment of air pollution supporting the revision of EU air quality legislation.

Budget: €38 million

**Deadline: 20 October**

[Further details](#)

Two-stage topics include:

- Advanced modelling tools for assessing costs and impacts of mitigation policies;
- Strategies, costs and impacts of adaptation to climate change;
- Exploration of the operational potential of the concepts of ecosystem services and natural capital to systematically inform sustainable land, water and urban management;

- Innovative tools for understanding and integrated assessment of Good Environmental Status (GES) of marine waters;
- Management and potential impacts of litter in the marine and coastal environment;
- Innovative resource-efficient technologies, processes and services;
- Improving the resilience of society to catastrophic natural hazards through new risk-management partnerships;
- Integrating environmental and health data to advance knowledge of the role of environment in human health and well-being;
- Developing community-based environmental monitoring and information systems using innovative and novel earth observation applications;
- Demonstration and exploitation of most promising prototypes and tools derived from European research activities.

Budget: €217 million.

**Deadline: 15 February 2012**

[Further details](#)

### **Call: Sustainable Surface Transport**

€114 million is being provided towards actions in the field of sustainable surface transport relating to the challenges of eco-innovation, safe and seamless mobility, assuring competitiveness through innovation, and developing green cars. Among the many topics which this Call (FP7-SST-2012-RTD-1) may support are:

- Take-up of transport innovation in urban and regional transport;
- Research actions regarding the accessibility of transport systems;
- Innovative design and operation of new or upgraded efficient urban transport interchanges;
- Coordinating innovation for efficient bus systems in the urban environment;

- Green hubs enabling co-modal network design.
- Road safety;
- Next generation tools for optimised infrastructure asset management;
- Innovative fleet for efficient logistics chains;
- Development of standardised and modular solutions for freight transport vehicles, loading units and transshipment equipment;
- Improved capturing and sharing of transport data in support of innovative freight transport schemes;
- Automated urban vehicles;
- Smart infrastructures and innovative services for electric vehicles in the urban grid and road environment;
- Modelling and testing for improved safety of alternatively-powered vehicles;
- Integration and optimisation of range extenders on Electric Vehicles;
- Advanced energy simulation and testing for Fully Electric Vehicles (FEV);

Some of these topics address aspects which are relevant for the ‘Smart Cities and Communities’ Initiative. Various other themes relating to rail systems (including freight) and maritime transport (including safety) are also included.

**Deadline: 1 December**

[Further details](#)

### **Call: Mobility**

This Call (FP7-TRANSPORT-2012-MOVE-1) is providing €26 million in support of mobility projects. Topics include:

- Inland waterway transport (implementation of the NAIADES Action Programme);
- Impacts of Intelligent Transport Systems on vulnerable road users;
- E-Maritime in support of compliance management;
- Demonstration of Urban freight

Electric Vehicles for clean city logistics;

- Demonstration of heavy duty vehicles running with liquefied methane.

**Deadline: 1 March 2012**

[Further details](#)

### **Call: Transport (general)**

The FP7 Transport Call (FP7-TPT-2012-RTD-1) will support innovating projects in the field of new technologies and energies concerning cross-cutting activities and the greening of air transport with a budget of €10 million. Eligible topics include:

- Reduction of the vulnerability of the transport System to extreme weather events;
- Fostering innovation for transnational cooperation in research and promoting active participation of stakeholders in Calls and projects;
- Bringing innovative products and services to the market:

**Deadline: 1 December**

[Further details](#)

### **Call: 'Science in Society'**

This Call (FP7-SCIENCE-IN-SOCIETY-2012-1) aims to fund projects supporting a better integration of scientific and technological endeavour and associated research policies into society with a view to building an effective and democratic European knowledge-based society.

Topics to be addressed are:

- Better understanding of the place of science and technology (S & T) in society – including relationships between science, democracy and law (€3.5 million)
- Broader engagement to anticipate and clarify political, societal and ethical issues (€14.5 million);
- Strengthening and improving the

European science system (€1.5 million);

- Gender and research (€5.9 million);
- Young people and science – including formal and informal science education in schools as well as through science centres, museums and other relevant means. (€12 million).

Budget: €37.4 million

**Deadline: 22 February 2012**

[Further details](#)

### **Call: Small Businesses**

The 'Research for the benefit of SMES' Call (FP7-SME-2012) will support small groups of innovative SMEs' collaborative research efforts in solving common or complementary technological problems; research for SME associations and SME groupings in developing solutions to problems common to large numbers of small firms in specific sectors; and demonstration projects.

Budget: €214.7 million

**Deadline: 6 December**

[Further details](#)

### **Call: Socio-Economic Sciences & Humanities**

Collaborative large-scale integrating projects relating to the following topics will be considered for support under this Call (FP7-SSH-2012):

- Growth, employment and competitiveness in a knowledge society;
- Combining economic, social and environmental objectives towards sustainable development;
- Major trends in society and their implications;
- Europe in the world;
- The Citizen in the EU.

Budget: €39 million

**Deadline: 2 February 2012**

### **Further details**

### **OTHER CALLS:**

### **Call: Non-technological, user-centred innovation and design**

DG Enterprise & Industry have launched a Call for Proposals to improve the impact of innovation policies by speeding up the take up of design as a user-centered innovation tool in national, regional and EU policies. The main issues to be addressed are:

- to develop a joint vision, priorities and actions relating to the topic;
- to raise the awareness of the use of design for economic, environmental and social purposes;
- to mainstream design into innovation approaches and policy;
- to improve the circulation of experiences and good practices.

By allowing mutual policy-learning through transnational transferability of best practices between experienced design innovation actors and others, the Call is intended to widen support provision in this field and contribute to benchmarking different approaches and methodologies.

**Deadline: 10 October**

[Further details](#)

### **Call: Youth Partnerships**

On 27 July a Call for Proposals to the value of €2.3 million was launched under Measure 4.6 (Youth Support Systems – Partnerships) of the Youth in Action programme. This will support partnerships with regions, municipalities, civil society actors and bodies active in corporate social responsibility in order to build capacity and develop long-term networking and projects relating to youth and providing informal education activities opportunities to young people and youth workers.

An emphasis is placed on addressing the following topics through transnational youth exchanges, national or transnational youth initiatives, European Voluntary Service activities or training and networking:

- Participation of young people;
- Cultural diversity;
- European citizenship;
- Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities;
- European Year of Volunteering;
- Youth unemployment;
- inclusive growth;
- Global environmental challenges;
- Creativity and entrepreneurship.

Financed actions should commence between March and August 2012 for a maximum duration of 2 years. Up to €100,000 is intended per project at a 50% rate.

**Deadline: 3 November**

[Further details](#)

Catch up on other recent calls for proposals through previous issues of this Bulletin: [March](#), [April](#), [May](#) & [June](#).

### **Upcoming Call: ESPON**

The next ESPON Call for Proposals will be launched on 24 August and close on 20 October. All elements of the programme – Applied Research Projects, Targeted Analysis and Scientific Tools projects – remain available. An Information Day in Brussels is scheduled for 13 September.

<http://espon-ireland.ie>

### **Interreg NWE: extra funding for environmental challenges?**

At its meeting in Spa on 28 & 29 June, the Interreg IVB North West Europe (NWE) Programme Steering Committee conditionally approved the allocation of €40.7 million in support among a further

13 projects, out of 22 submitted. This brings the total amount of allocated funds to date to 75% of the overall ERDF available for 2007-2013. NWE's 9th Call for Proposals will open on 16 September and close on 7 October.

Looking to the future, the Programme is likely to propose to the European Commission that a shift should take place in the budgetary allocation from Priorities 1 (Innovation) and 3 (Connectivity) to Priority 2 (Environment) which has already reached its limit. Whether or not this change would apply to the impending Call is not yet clear.

Irish organisations with an interest in pursuing involvement in NWE should note a change in the national Contact Point personnel. Until further notice, please contact Sonja Maurus ([smaurus@seregassembly.ie](mailto:smaurus@seregassembly.ie), 051 860700) at the Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly.

[www.nweurope.eu](http://www.nweurope.eu)

### **Arklow and Limerick firms secure eco-funding**

Two Irish firms have been announced among 42 recently approved beneficiaries of funding under the eco-innovation strand of the Competitiveness & Innovation Programme (CIP) which supports new products, services and processes that use fewer natural resources and produce less waste, emissions and pollutants. Both applications were made as part of the 'Food and Drink' section of the 2010 Call for Proposals.

Arklow-based Holfeld Plastics Ltd. will use the RPET-FOAM project to upscale production of a foamed recycled PET product for food packaging. The SUPPER project from Biomass Heating Solutions Ltd, Ballagh, Co. Limerick will deal with on-site transforming of poultry litter waste into fertilizer and energy using innovative combustion and combined heat and power techniques. Previously approved Irish involvement in this programme has been secured by Cygnum

in Macroom (a low-cost recyclable materials insulation process for timber-frame housing) and by Electrical & Pump Services Ltd., Mallow (small-scale anaerobic digestion to turn meat processing waste into agricultural fertiliser, potable water and renewable energy).

The programme's 2011 Call is ongoing until 8 September and is prioritising actions in the field of water conservation, in addition to material recycling, sustainable buildings, the food and drink industry and green business. See [April's Bulletin](#).

[Further details](#)

### **LIFE +: Cork SME bucks trend as Ireland underperforms again**

There was similar good news for a Co. Cork SME on 19 July as it was announced as the sole Irish beneficiary among 183 approvals under the LIFE+ programme's 2010 Call for Proposals supporting environmental and nature conservation projects. Erne Engineering based in Lissarda has been awarded funding to design, plan and construct a demonstration 'ZeroWaste' plant to add value to end-of-life tyres (ELT) by recycling them as substitute materials in the rubber manufacturing process for new products – thereby reducing the incidents of stockpiling or burning to produce tyre-derived fuel.

Their DEPOTEC project availed of over €1.5 million from an indicative €3.83 million which had been pre-allocated for quality Irish applications for this year. This solitary success means that more than half of this ring-fenced Irish amount has ultimately been redirected for the use of higher quality applications from other Member States.

In all, this is only the fifth approval from LIFE+ for an Irish project since 2007 – the other projects relate to aquatic invasive species in Lough Corrib, the Grand Canal and the Barrow; restoration of water-based SACs and their biodiversity (Lower Shannon and Upper Munster

Blackwater); and raised bogs in the Midlands and Mid-East.

Collectively, €5.38m has been secured by Ireland over this four-year period - but worryingly, this means that in excess of €8.6 million has not been availed of. For the 2011 Call, where €4.071 million was set aside with Irish involvement in mind, the deadline to send proposals to the Department of the Environment, Communities & Local Government for first stage screening passed on 18 July.

[Further details](#)

Meanwhile, all presentations as well as footage from the major LIFE+ Conference held in Brussels on 25-26 May are now available [online](#).

**NEWS & POLICY**

**European Week of Cities and Regions (OPEN DAYS) - registrations open**

Registration to attend the seminars and workshops of OPEN DAYS 2011 in Brussels from Monday 10 until Thursday 13 October is now open. This year, a total of 111 events are being organised by 206 Brussels-based regional offices and their officials back home according to three broad themes:

- The contribution of Cohesion Policy and the Structural Funds to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth ('Europe 2020 Strategy');
- Improving on the delivery of Cohesion Policy now and beyond 2013; and
- Good practice in the field of urban development and territorial cooperation.

**...Irish Regions' Atlantic Strategy event:**

Among the events planned, the Irish Regions are collaborating with partner regions in Portugal, Spain, France and UK to organise an 11 October seminar entitled *'the Atlantic: a source of opportunities for sustainable growth'*. Discussion will centre on the European Commission's forthcoming integrated European Strategy for the Atlantic Region (expected to be published in September)

and will include high-level contributions from the Directorates-General for both Regional and Maritime Policy. This will be balanced by observations and reactions from national and regional representatives on how the ambitions as set out in the strategy stack up against ongoing activities and potential for cooperation. Among the issues to be discussed are transport, marine renewable energies, coastal environmental protection, innovation, as well as what forms of governance arrangements are required in order that the strategy should deliver.

The Association of Irish Regions (AIR) formally responded to the original Commission draft on the Atlantic Strategy in October 2010 and held a stakeholder conference on marine spatial planning in Wexford at the end of that month to highlight areas of potential direct significance for the local and regional levels. As a follow-up, and in association with Open Days, this year's AIR conference will be on the theme *'Maximising the Value of our Maritime Resource'* and will deal with the evolving policy framework at EU and national levels and best practices examples at local/regional level. Further details will be carried in September's *Bulletin*.

[Registration](#) for OPEN DAYS will remain open until 28 September.

**Air quality consultation**

As part of a comprehensive review of Europe's air policies intended to set new long-term objectives beyond 2020, the European Commission has launched an online public consultation on its current policy in this area. Views are being sought on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing legislative framework and progress on its implementation. This is part of a broader process of reflection that will feed into a review due no later than 2013. A recent survey determined that almost half of Europeans are living in, mainly urban, areas where EU air quality objectives are not being met -

making air pollution one of the main environmental worries facing EU citizens.

The consultation is divided into two parts – a short questionnaire for the general public and a longer section for experts and practitioners from national administrations, regional or local authorities, researchers, businesses, health interests, environmental groups and other stakeholders involved in the implementation of EU air quality legislation.

**Deadline: 30 September**

[Further details](#)

**Commission strongly backs local role in integration of migrants**

On 20 July the European Commission adopted a 'European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals', intended as a contribution to the debate on how to understand and better support integration in European countries.

The Agenda puts the emphasis on migrants' full participation in all aspects of collective life – principally employment, education, better social inclusion, and active citizenship – and highlights the importance of close cooperation between national governments, responsible for integration policies, and local or regional authorities and non-state actors, who are responsible for a wide range of services and activities and are implementing integration measures on the ground.

According to this paper, future integration policies should be formulated and implemented with the active involvement of local authorities who would then roll-out specifically designed strategies. It goes on to propose that the next version of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals should focus primarily on promoting integration in a bottom-up and more targeted manner at local level.

The Commission is also developing a set of adaptable coordination and knowledge

exchange tools to support Member State policies and practices.

[Further details](#)

### **Cashel at heart of European rural communities**

The first week of July saw Cashel, Co. Tipperary welcome the 2011 conference of the 'Charter of European Rural Communities'. Some 300 delegates, representing 26 other small towns or districts, one for each of the other EU Member States, attended the duration of the 5-day socio-economic event which was launched by Minister for European Affairs, Lucinda Creighton TD. The objective of the Charter, under the motto 'people meet people', is to make the concept of European integration relevant at the level of the smallest territorial units by facilitating a deep and practical sense of exchange and understanding among citizens and families from the different countries.

By signing the Charter through their local authorities, the communities affirm the principle of unity and commit to work together on different projects of shared interest. Cashel, through its (then) Urban District Council, in response to an open invitation from the Department of Foreign Affairs, was designated as Ireland's representative and a founding member of the Charter when it was established as a pan-European venture in 1989. The town previously played host to this conference in 1995.

This year's core theme for formal discussion was 'the effects of Demographic Development on the Rural Economy', including different approaches to combating business closures, job losses and outward migration of local young people to cities. A separate theme – 'What is needed to keep you connected to your Village in terms of Education and Housing?' – was applied to the very sizeable youth delegation. Additionally an extensive programme of hospitality, activities and site visits was put in place to showcase civic, community and cultural aspects of South Tipperary.

[Further details](#)

## PUBLICATIONS

### **Creating Creative Districts**

'Creating knowledge hotspots in the city: A handbook' is a practical collection of guidelines for developing campuses, science quarters, centres of innovation, creative districts and other knowledge hotspots in an urban setting. It arises from the REDIS project of URBACT where 8 cities collaborated to understand how best to formulate policies allowing for the development of special locations, zones, quarters and parks, where knowledge-based companies and institutes can be co-located.

[Further details](#)

## EVENTS

### **Digital role of Public Libraries 6-7 September, Brussels**

The third 'European Congress on E-Inclusion: Transforming Access to Digital Europe in Public Libraries' will examine the transformative role and impact of libraries in Europe, as key tools of transition and access in a digital age. A key aim will be to shine a spotlight on the links between EU policies on e-inclusion and public libraries - highlighting where and how the latter can contribute to wider EU policy, strategy and outcomes as well as being linked to investment. Key outcomes will be put forward for discussion at the EU Presidency event on E-Inclusion in Gdansk in October.

The agenda builds on the outcomes of last year's 'Delivering a digital Europe in public libraries' event which was shaped by both the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion and by the new Digital Agenda for Europe policy.

[Further details](#)

### **Smart regional economies 12 September, Maynooth**

How do the prospects for balanced regional development square up against the context of the 'Building Ireland's Smart Economy' action plan for renewal and structural reform based on an upskilled, high-value employment market? What can regions with varying levels of economic activity, connectivity and potential contribute to growing the knowledge economy? How can the EU concept of 'smart specialisation' be translated at an Irish regional level? 'Irish Regions in the Smart Economy' will debate these questions with high-level contributions from OECD experts in regional development and various national agencies. The event is hosted by NIRSA – the National Institute for regional and Spatial Analysis at NUI Maynooth.

[Register](#)

### **Green Urban Transport solutions 13 September, Brussels**

The CIVITAS urban transport Initiative will hold a showcase event offering local authority transport experts a unique opportunity to learn about the achievements of and challenges faced by its various member cities in testing ambitious, innovative and sustainable, measures to improve collective passenger transport and safety and security. The aim will be on facilitating wider replicability of successful approaches. Three further workshops are planned to follow over subsequent months.

[Further details](#)

### **Regional governments against the digital divide 29 September, Brussels**

This seminar – part of the DIEGO (Digital

Inclusive e-Government) project on electronic services for citizens, which includes the Mid-West Regional Authority as a partner – will be focused on the regional and local aspects of the new EU Digital Agenda as well as on the implementation of the ‘European eGovernment Plan 2011-2015’. A particular emphasis will be placed on the challenges and opportunities for Public Administrations to deliver services to their citizens in a more innovative, inclusive and accessible way. The event will also deal with some EU financial instruments and strategies for e-government solutions as well as the option to collaborate with SMEs through the PPP approach in order to guarantee the sustainability of e-government platforms.

[Further details](#)

### **European SME Week 2011 October, Mid-West Region & Kerry**

European SME week is a Europe-wide campaign aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and therefore boosting competitiveness and innovation in Europe. In the Mid-West, October has been badged as ‘Regional Business Month’ with each of the three County and City Enterprise Boards in the Region (and Kerry), in turn, organising a business week to promote awareness of their enterprise, entrepreneurship, Start your own business and networking supports. Events to be formally associated with European SME Week 2011 can take place until December.

[Further details](#)

### **Interreg Ireland-Wales 6 October, Dublin**

The annual event of the Ireland-Wales is scheduled to take place in the Guinness Storehouse. Full details will be available in early August.

[www.irelandwales.ie](http://www.irelandwales.ie)

### **Smart, Sustainable & Innovative Cities 13-14 October, Leuven, Belgium**

The 5th EuroIndia Summit on ‘Smart, Sustainable and Innovative Cities’ will provide an opportunity to learn and share best urban practice on governance, economic revival, inclusive growth and the role of knowledge in accelerating economic development. Leaders of Indian and European Cities, Regions and States will join influential corporate, civil society and scientific representatives to discuss their visions for cities as knowledge hubs and in terms of energy and water management, cultural heritage preservation and affordable housing among other matters.

[www.euroindia-leuven.org/](http://www.euroindia-leuven.org/)

### **Research for local sustainability 26-27 October, Naples**

Informed Cities is an FP7 project which aims to enhance the connection between research and local policy-making in sustainable development, with a focus on tools for urban management. Its 2011 Forum will take stock of local governments’ achievements to date on sustainability (including the effect of schemes such as the Covenant of Mayors energy policy pledge) and outline a new vision of what research can add to existing tools, schemes and frameworks in order that such commitments can be realised. The experience and data gathered during a European-wide explorative application of two sustainability management tools will inform the discussion.

[Further details](#)

### **Atlantic Area: Marine Economy 29 November, Malahide**

As part of Ireland’s current Presidency of the Atlantic Area (AA) Interreg programme, the Border, Midlands & Western Regional Assembly are

organising a transnational conference entitled ‘the Marine Economy – a key component of the Atlantic Strategy’.

Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D. will deliver the key note address and a high-ranking representative of the Commission’s DG Maritime & Fisheries will discuss the policy framework in question. Other speakers examining prospects for collaboration in Europe’s Atlantic marine sector will include representatives from the Conference of Peripheral & Maritime Regions (CPMR), the Marine Institute, the AA Programme authorities and a selection of their approved marine projects.

[www.bmwassembly.ie](http://www.bmwassembly.ie)

Contact: [mobrien@bmwassembly.ie](mailto:mobrien@bmwassembly.ie)

**The staff of this office can be requested to attend events or provide representation at meetings in Brussels on behalf of local and regional authorities.**



**Irish Regions**  
Brussels Office  
*Oifig Réigiún na hÉireann, An Bhrúiséal*

*Working for Ireland's  
local and regional levels in Europe*

Rond-Point Schuman, 11  
B-1040 Brussels  
[www.iro.ie](http://www.iro.ie)

Robert Collins      Ronan Gingles  
Head of Office      EU Policy, Research  
                                         & Communications

[robert.collins@iro.ie](mailto:robert.collins@iro.ie)    [ronan.gingles@iro.ie](mailto:ronan.gingles@iro.ie)

Tel: +3222331122    Tel: +3222331120  
GSM: +32498120821    GSM: +32493203666

**This office will reopen after holidays on 16 August.**

**The next issue of the EU News Bulletin will be circulated at the end of September.**