

The Future of European Regional Policy
- A Place for Ireland and its Regions -

Up-date on the Policy Debate (No. 7)

Prepared by:
Irish Regions Office, Brussels
and
NASC Brussels Office

July 2006

1. Introduction

Since the last Regional Policy Up-date (No.6, Dec 2005) considerable progress has been made, with an agreement on the EU budget and the allocations to each programme heading and finalisation of the negotiations on the Structural Funds Regulations for 2007-2013. The purpose of this Regional Policy Up-date is to provide a short overview on these developments, but with particular reference to the programming framework, processes and priorities, and pointers towards where submissions might usefully be made.

Last year (2005) was substantially taken up with debate within the institutions/Member States on the overall financial framework for the EU for the period 2007-2013, a process that resulted in a political agreement at the European Council in December 2005, which included indicative allocations to each Member State for regional and rural development programmes. This was slightly modified under the Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) on the budget in April. The IIA removed a major obstacle to progress on the legislative package and the programming processes. Significant progress has been made during the first half of 2006 in finalising the Regulations. Work on programming has also advanced and the second half of the year is likely to see significant progress in this area in view of the January 2007 deadline for programme start-up.

Some Key Events

December:

Dec 16th: Member States reach an agreement on the future EU budget for 2007-2013 at the European Council

January:

Jan 23rd: Commission writes to all Member States outlining their financial breakdown from the Structural Funds following the agreement reached at the December European Council. The figure for Ireland was €811 m.

February:

Feb 20th: Agriculture Council adopts Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development for 2007-2013

March

Mar 1st: Commission announced details of a new Globalisation Adjustment fund, with an annual budget of EUR500m

April

April 4th: European Parliament, European Commission and the Austrian EU Presidency reach a compromise on the EU budget – the Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA)

May

May 4th: Finance Ministers officially adopt the new Structural Fund Regulations for the next programming period.

May 24th: Commission adopts package of proposals for EU programmes under the 2007-2013 financial framework.

June:

June 12th: Commission publishes the 4th Progress Report on Cohesion

June 16th: Member States agree a new European Fisheries Fund (EFF)

June 28th: EU stakeholders conference on Territorial Cohesion and the Lisbon Strategy in Amsterdam.

July:

July 4th: European Parliament adopts the Structural Fund Regulations

July 5th: Strategic Guidelines for the Structural Funds, adopted in draft form by the European Commission

July 5th: European Commission also adopts the Communication on 'The Role of Cities in Cohesion Policy'.

July 20th: Scheduled publication of the Structural Funds Regulations in the Official Journal

2. Overview of the Legislative Process

The conclusion of the Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA) on the Financial Perspective in April 2006 cleared the way for adoption of the package of five Structural Funds Regulations – General Regulation, ERDF Regulation, ESF Regulation, Cohesion Fund Regulation and European Territorial Cooperation Regulation. The draft regulations had to be amended to make legal provision for certain matters that were decided at a political level at the European Council in December 2005. For example, the European Council agreed continuing funding for the PEACE Programme, which was not provided for in the Commission's proposals.

The legislative process is now complete and the Structural Funds Regulations were due to be published in the Official Journal on July 20th. Member States have three months following the date of formal adoption of the Regulations to submit their National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRFs) and they may submit related Operational Programmes at the same time.

The Strategic Guidelines for the Structural Funds, adopted in draft form by the European Commission on July 5, 2005, will form the framework for programming at national and regional levels. The Council is expected to formally adopt the Strategic Guidelines in the autumn.

The Three Objectives of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Convergence objective <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Successor to current Objective 1- Aimed at the development of the least developed regions and Member States- 81.7% of the total funding for cohesion policy (€251.3 billion)- All three funds - ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund - will contribute
Regional competitiveness and employment objective <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Aims to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of, and promote the creation of employment in, all regions that are not beneficiaries of the Convergence objective (including Ireland)- 15.8% of the resources for cohesion policy (€48.8 billion)- Separate financial envelope of €10.4 billion for "phasing-in regions" i.e. current Objective 1 regions that have a per capita GDP per head in excess of 75% of the EU15 average. These "growth-effect" regions include the BMW region.- ERDF and ESF will contribute in an indicative ratio of 50:50
Territorial cooperation objective <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Aims to promote territorial cooperation at cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional levels building on the experience with INTERREG- 2.4% of the overall funding for cohesion policy (€7.6 billion)- 77% of funds allocated to cross-border co-operation, 19% to trans-national co-operation, 4% to inter-regional co-operation and networks- ERDF funding

The Council formally adopted the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) Regulation on September 20, 2005, subject to confirmation of funding as part of an agreement on the Financial Perspective. The Agriculture Council meeting on February 20, 2006 formally adopted the Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development for the 2007-2013 programming period.

3. Overall Funding Framework

The final agreement on the Financial Perspective provides total funding of €308.041 billion for Cohesion Policy for 2007-2013 (the Structural Funds - ERDF and ESF - and the Cohesion Fund.) This represents 35.6% of the EU's total budget. (For a more detailed breakdown of expenditure on Cohesion Policy see Appendix 3)..

In addition, the Financial Perspective allocates €67.75 billion for rural development, which will be topped up by an amount of €8.40 billion, representing the proceeds of compulsory modulation under the agriculture pillar of the CAP¹.

Financial Allocations to Ireland

Ireland has received an indicative Structural Funds allocation of €815 million for 2007-2013, broken down as indicated in the following table.

Structural Funds 2007-2013	
Indicative Allocations to Ireland (€ million approx)	
Phasing-in	420
Regional Competitiveness & Employment	261
Territorial Cooperation	134
<i>Cross-border</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Trans-national</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Special allocation for PEACE Programme</i>	<i>58</i>
TOTAL	815

Note: Total ERDF allocation for the PEACE programme is €200 million, of which €58 million comes from Ireland's allocation and €142 million from the UK allocation.

Because of its transitional status, the funding allocation for 'phasing-in' is heavily loaded towards the earlier years (e.g. nearly four-fifths is allocated to the first three years, 2007-2009). The annual breakdown for the other headings is split evenly across the programming period.

The EU funding is indicatively split 50:50 as between ERDF and ESF. The funding allocated to 'Phasing-in' and 'Regional Competitiveness and Employment' will be used to co-finance two Regional Operational Programmes (ERDF) and one national ESF Programme.

Rates of co-finance will generally be 50%. However, in the case of Territorial Cooperation and the PEACE programme, the co-finance rate may be up to 75%. Assuming that the maximum rates of co-finance apply, 'Phasing-in' will have total funding of €840 million, with €522 for Regional Co-competitiveness and Employment. For the European Territorial Cooperation objective, a Member State has the possibility of transferring up to 10% of the budget for the Cross-border component to the Trans-national component. There is also a requirement that the allocation of resources under the Cross-border component should ensure a proper balance among eligible border regions.

Ireland's allocation for Territorial Cooperation will be used for participation in three cross-border and three transnational programmes (see table).

¹ The Financial Perspective also provides €3,849 million for the European Fisheries Fund, for allocation to Member States for the implementation of structural measures in the fisheries and related sectors. This element is not covered in this policy update.

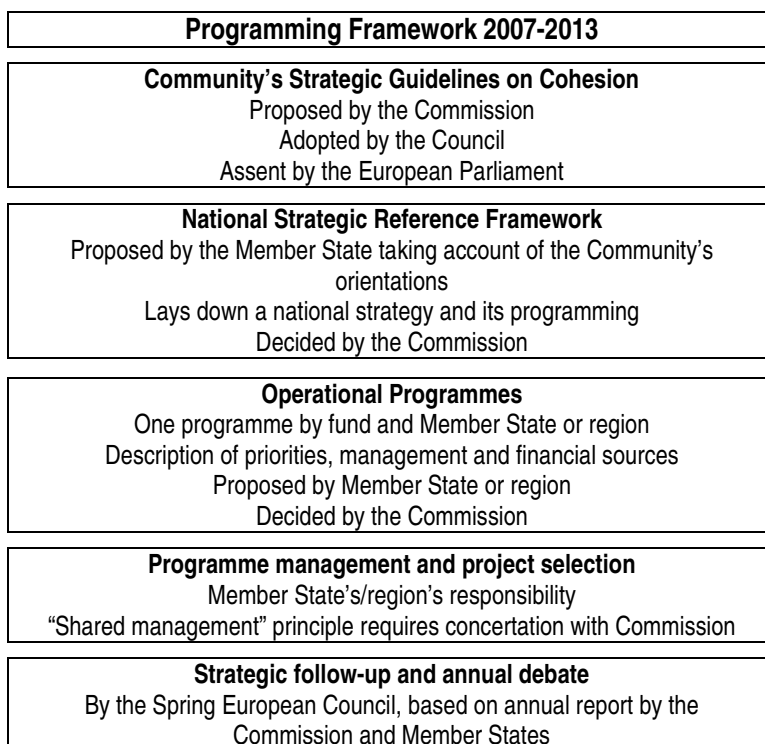
Cross-Border Co-operation	Trans-National Co-operation
Ireland – N. Ireland Programme <i>(which will include parts of Scotland as a maritime border)</i>	Atlantic Area Programme
PEACE Programme <i>(considered as a cross-border programme within the Regulations)</i>	North West Europe Programme
Ireland-Wales Programme	Northern Periphery Programme

In addition to the Structural Funds, Ireland will receive €1,900 million in rural development funding for 2007-2013 (European Agricultural Rural Development Fund - EARDF), which will co-finance a national rural development programme. The co-finance rate will generally be 50%, implying a programme worth around €3,750 million.

Overall this EU funding to Ireland for Cohesion Policy and rural development will co-finance programmes worth an estimated €5.3 billion over the seven years, 2007-2013.

4. The Programming Framework

The programming framework for 2007-2013 foresees three steps in the programming process: (1) Community Strategic Guidelines, (2) a National Strategic Reference Framework and (3) Operational Programmes.



The Community Strategic Guidelines guide the process of drawing up national strategies and Operational Programmes. A specific objective is to strengthen the linkage between the Structural/Cohesion Funds and the Lisbon Agenda, as the Funds are seen as a significant funding source for the achievement of the Lisbon objectives.

The National Strategic Reference Framework outlines the strategy to be adopted for the different objectives and provides a list of Operational Programmes and indicative financial allocations. This strategic document should create the link at national level between the Community Strategic Guidelines and the National Reform Programme of the Lisbon Strategy.

The new Operational Programmes will be more strategic, focused more strongly than in the past on the priority level. There is no longer a requirement for a Programme Complement, which is an important change. This means that measures, and monitoring indicators at measure level, will no longer be the subject of negotiation with, and decision by, the Commission.

Preparation of the next round of programmes is taking place in a context of significantly reduced levels of Structural Funds for Ireland. Therefore, co-financed programmes are not expected to be as broad-ranging in scope as programmes of previous periods. A significant change is that for the next period programmes co-financed by the Structural Funds will run in parallel with the National Development Plan (NDP) rather than forming constituent parts of the NDP. Thus, for example, there will be an ESF co-financed human

resource programme, which will complement a much bigger employment and human resource development chapter of the NDP, which will be the principal means through which Ireland's overall labour market requirements will be met.

Programming at National, Regional, Cross-border and Trans-national Levels

At national level in Ireland, overall co-ordination of the programming process (National Development Plan, National Strategic Reference Framework, Operational Programmes, etc) is being administered by the Department of Finance. For the EU co-financed programmes, the main lead departments are Enterprise, Trade & Employment, Agriculture & Food, and Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, although other departments and agencies will be involved in aspects of programme delivery. Programmes will be delivered by a range of designated agencies and bodies.

Programming for the North/South Programme and the Ireland/Wales programmes is being co-ordinated by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and S&E Regional Assembly, respectively, working closely with the relevant government departments.

The transnational programmes are being co-ordinated by working groups and drafting committees representative of the participating Member States and regions. In the case of Ireland, a representative of the Department of Finance and of either the BMW or S&E Regional Assembly participates in these working groups and committees.

The following sections outline the main features of these programmes, in so far as they are known at the present time. As these programmes are currently at various stages of development, many details remain to be clarified and the information presented is likely to change as the programming process evolves. In particular, funding for cross-border and trans-national programmes is not yet known in most cases, as the final outcome will depend on how Member States divide their allocated funding across the various programmes and also on decisions regarding co-finance rates.

For purposes of presentation, the programmes are classified by objective and fund, as follows:

POLICY	OBJECTIVE		FUND	PROGRAMME
Cohesion (Structural Funds)	Regional Competitiveness & Employment		ERDF Phasing-in	BMW Regional Programme
			ERDF	S+E Regional Programme
			ESF	National Human Capital Programme
	Territorial Cooperation	Cross-border	ERDF	Ireland/Northern Ireland/Scotland Programme
			ERDF	Ireland/Wales Programme
			ERDF	PEACE III Programme
		Trans-national	ERDF	North West Europe Programme
			ERDF	Atlantic Area Programme
			ERDF	Northern Periphery Programme
	Rural Development			EAFRD

Border Midlands and Western (BMW) Regional Operational Programme

Introduction

This programme will be implemented under the 'Regional Competitiveness and Employment' objective of the Structural Funds. However, as the region is one of a number of regions emerging from Objective 1, a 'phasing-in' region, it will receive an additional budget for the first four years of the programme period.

Eligible Areas

The eligible area is the BMW Region, which constitutes the NUTS III regions of the Border, West and Midlands

Programme Priorities

The context and structure of the Operational Programme will be largely dictated by the requirements of the Structural Fund regulations but also the challenges that the region faces and the opportunities that exist for further development. Based on the analysis of the region, the BMW Operational Programme will have the following broad objectives:

1. To enhance the research and innovation infrastructure in the region;
2. To contribute to sustainable development;
3. To strengthen the spatial structuring of the region;
4. To invest in modern infrastructure.

The Structural Fund regulations essentially establish four priority axes under the 'Regional Competitiveness and Employment' objective. The BMW Operational Programme will address all four priorities as follows:

Priority 1 - Innovation and the Knowledge Economy: the objective will be to: (a) raise the region's research and innovation capacity and absorb new technologies; (b) increase levels of entrepreneurship and promoting technological adaptation of SMEs; (c) increase interaction between firms and higher education institutes; (d) strengthen interaction between R+D, education and entrepreneurship at regional level. Some possible measures under this priority will be:

An Applied Research, Commercialisation and Innovation measure
A Regional Research Infrastructure Fund
A County Enterprise Entrepreneurship and Innovation measure
A Seed/Venture Capital Fund, for SMEs with high growth potential.

Priority 2 - Environment and Risk Prevention: the objective will be to: (a) contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas; (b) enhance the rural environment by protecting surface and groundwater pollution; (c) stimulate energy efficiency, renewable energy production and promote clean and sustainable urban transport. Some of the possible measures under this priority are:

A Rural Water Source Protection and pilot Village Sewerage scheme
A Renewable Energy measure

Priority 3 - Access to Transport and Telecommunication Services: the objective will be to: (a) develop efficient, flexible and safe transport infrastructure as a driver of regional growth; (b) support a limited number of National Secondary Roads, particularly between gateways and hubs; (c) support the completion of broadband provision in rural areas and the MANS network. Some possible measures under this priority are:

A National Secondary Roads measure
A Public Transport measure
A Broadband Provision measure

Priority 4 – Sustainable Urban Development: the objective will be to: (a) concentrate investment resources effectively; (b) enhance the potential of Gateways and Hubs as regional growth drivers; (c) develop a collaborative approach between local planning and national investments; (d) develop attractive and dynamic Gateways and Hubs.

Programme Budget

A total of **€420 million** will be available under the programme from 2007-2013, including approximately €210 million ERDF funding.

As the BMW Region is designated a 'phasing-in' region, the additional budgetary resources it has received from the ERDF will be frontloaded in the early years of the programme, with approximately 79% of its ERDF allocation committed to the first 3 years of the programme period.

Consultation Process

In drawing up the draft Operational Programme, the BMW Regional Assembly has already held consultations with Government Departments, national regional agencies, local authorities and others.

The draft Operational Programme will be subject to public consultation during autumn, see the BMW website for details of this at: www.bmwassembly.ie. There will also be a range of consultations within the region with local authorities, agencies and other stakeholders, such as social partners, horizontal interests and NGOs as well as cross-border consultation. The draft programme will also be subject to an independent ex ante evaluation and a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Following this process the Regional Assembly will be asked to endorse the Operational Programme before it is submitted to the Government and subsequently to the European Commission for approval.

Managing Authority

The BMW Regional Assembly will be the Managing Authority for this programme.

Contact Persons

The main contact for this programme is:

Mr. Gerry FINN
Director
BMW Regional Assembly
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon
E: gfinn@BMWASSEMBLY.ie
T: 094-986 2970
F: 094-986 2973

Southern and Eastern (S+E) Regional Operational Programme

Introduction

This programme will be implemented under the 'Regional Competitiveness and Employment' objective of the Structural Funds.

Eligible Areas

The eligible area for the programme is the S+E Assembly area, comprising the five NUTS III regions of Dublin, Mid-East, Mid-West, South-East and South-West.

Programme Priorities

The content and structure of the Operational Programme will be largely dictated by the requirements of the Structural Fund regulations. These requirements provide limited room for manoeuvre with a resultant need to prioritise investment. The overall objectives of the S+E Operational Programme will be to address:

1. The key developmental needs of the region;
2. The Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas;
3. A carefully weighted package of interventions, with a good spatial and thematic balance;
4. Make the best use of the limited resources available.

The S+E Operational Programme will address the priorities of the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective as follows;

Priority 1 - Innovation and the Knowledge Economy: the objectives will be to: (a) develop the knowledge, R+D, Innovation and entrepreneurial base of the region to boost competitiveness; (b) integrate and develop fully regional assets (education, R+D/innovation, entrepreneurial) to contribute to boosting regional growth and competitiveness.

Priority 2 - Environment and Accessibility: the objective will be to improve the attractiveness of the region by investment in the environment and risk prevention, broadband accessibility, aid provision of renewable energy and energy conservation initiatives within a sustainable development framework.

Priority 3 – Sustainable Urban Development: the objective will be to: (a) enhance the attractiveness of Gateways and Hubs as places to live, work and invest in; (b) complement Priorities 1 and 2 and other investment strategies supporting the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy; (c) assist Gateways/Hubs to maximise their growth potential to gain critical mass.

Programme Budget

A total of **€260 million** will be available under the programming from 2007-2013, including approximately €130 million ERDF funding. There may be the possibility of topping up this amount through financial engineering instruments from the European Investment Bank/Fund.

Consultation Process

The Regional Assembly has completed the first phase of consultations for the preparation of the Programme. This included detailed consultations with potential implementing Departments and Agencies and key regional stakeholders, as well as, a public consultation process in March and April which was advertised in the national media.

It is intended that there will be further public consultations in the autumn. This will be publicised in the national media at the appropriate time. In addition the draft Operational Programme will also be subject to an independent ex-ante evaluation and a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Following this process the Regional Assembly will be asked to

endorse the Operational Programme before it is submitted to the Government and subsequently to the European Commission for approval.

Managing Authority

The Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly will be the Managing Authority for this Programme.

Contact Persons

The key contact for this programme is:

Mr. Stephen BLAIR

Director

Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly

Assembly House

O'Connell Street

Waterford

E: SBlair@seregassembly.ie

T: 051-860700

F: 051-879887

European Social Fund (ESF) - National Programme

Introduction

The Human Capital Investment Programme will be co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF). The ESF co-financed human resource programme will complement a much bigger employment and human resource development chapter of the National Development Plan (NDP), which will be the principal means through which Ireland's overall labour market requirements will be met.

Eligible Areas

There will be a single national programme. However, the funding allocations for the BMW and S&E regions will be identified separately although, in principle, there will no difference in co-finance rates for these regions.

Programme Priorities

The significantly reduced levels of ESF funding that are available will require a more focussed approach to how these funds are utilised. Two priority areas for ESF support have been identified: Participation and Activation of Labour Force, and Education and Training to Improve the Adaptability of the Workforce.

Priority 1: Participation and Activation of Labour Force

This will focus on measures to improve participation and to activate inactive elements of the workforce, building on the success of similar measures in earlier periods. The focus will include an emphasis on women, older workers, part-time workers and the unemployed. There will be a particular emphasis on providing opportunities and access to jobs for the long-term unemployed and those most distant from the labour market and at most risk of social exclusion.

Priority 2: Education and Training to Improve the Adaptability of the Workforce

This will focus on four areas – life-long learning, industrial re-structuring, upskilling and productivity, and education.

Theme 1 - Life-long Learning: Upgrading the competencies and qualifications of the workforce, particularly those with low skill levels and in low-level occupations, by providing targeted training programmes incorporating gender-sensitive approaches.

Theme 2 - Industrial Re-structuring: Addressing specific industrial re-structuring challenges associated with globalisation and competition from lower-cost economies. This will include, in particular, measures to assist workers in traditional, low-technology manufacturing sectors industries that are under threat to obtain the necessary skills and qualifications to enable them to become re-employed as quickly as possible. As in the case of Priority 1, it is recognised that there are areas of geographical disadvantage that are particularly hard hit by industrial re-structuring or re-location decisions that would benefit from ESF-supported interventions under this Priority.

Theme 3 - Up-skilling and Productivity: Increasing the productivity of the workforce in order to sustain growth in the face of a decline in the flow of young people into the workforce and limitations on the scope to increase participation rates. A broad range of measures will be considered for support under this priority.

Theme 4 - Education: Improving access and literacy and general tackling barriers to employment. Central to this priority will be training for those in employment and also for those involved in policy-making and in delivery agencies, who will have to be practically-focused in designing and delivering relevant measures.

A more flexible approach is possible with the next round of ESF funding with a 7-year commitment of funds at the measure level not required.

Programme Budget

A total of €340 million in ESF will be available, to be matched by €340 in national resources, giving a total funding envelope of **€680 million**. The ESF funding will be allocated to the regions (BMW and S&E) in accordance with the overall profile indicated by the European Commission

Consultation Process

The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment organised an initial consultation in March 2006 as part of the process of drafting the Operational Programme. A further paper will be circulated to the ESF Monitoring Committee in late July, which will initiate a second phase of consultation. This paper will set out the Department's proposals for the use of the ESF funding and will be the basis for the draft Operational Programme to be considered by Government.

Managing Authority

The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment will be the Managing Authority and the Paying Authority for the programme.

As with previous ESF co-financed programmes, FÁS and the Department of Education will be two of the main implementing agencies. Other bodies will also be involved, as social inclusion is to be an important element of the programme.

Contact Persons

The key contact for preparation of this programme is:

Mr. Vincent LANDERS
Head of ESF Mission in Ireland
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment
Davitt House
65A Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 631 2121
Fax: 01 631 3262
E-mail: Vincent_landers@entemp.ie

PEACE III Programme

Introduction

This programme is a successor to the current PEACE II Programme. The regulatory basis for the new programme is contained in the General Regulation on the Structural Funds, with the programme being implemented under the 'European Territorial Cooperation' objective. The general aims of the programme are to promote social and economic stability in the eligible area and cohesion between communities.

Eligible Areas

The eligible area for the PEACE III Programme will be the same as for the PEACE II Programme, which is all of Northern Ireland and the Border counties of Ireland.

Programme Priorities

The list of eligible activities to be included in the Programme includes those set for the cross-border programme, specifically:

Enterprise	By encouraging entrepreneurship, in particular the development of SMEs, tourism, culture, and cross-border trade;
Environment	By encouraging the protection and joint management of the environment;
Linkages	By supporting links between urban and rural areas;
Access	By reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services, and cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities;
Collaboration	By developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education.
Cooperation	In addition, the ERDF may contribute to promoting legal and administrative cooperation, the integration of cross-border labour markets, local employment initiatives, gender equality and equal opportunities, training and social inclusion, and sharing of human resources and facilities for RTD.

The PEACE III Programme may also include activities under the following headings:

Building positive relationships - Including actions on: tackling sectarianism and racism; shared communities; good relations and community development.

Acknowledging and dealing with the past - Acknowledging the hurt, truths and suffering of the past as an important part of reconciliation.

Supporting socio-economic change - Including actions that contribute to reclaiming shared space; reducing tension at interface areas; developing shared workspaces; shared services; shared education.

Programme Budget

A total of €200 million is allocated to the PEACE III Programme from the ERDF. Approximately €58 million of this comes from the Structural Funds allocated to Ireland, with €142 million coming from the UK allocation.

Consultation Process

As the managing authority for the current PEACE programme the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) is managing the consultation process on the new programme. As part of this consultation process, the SEUPB published a discussion document on the two new cross-border programmes (both the PEACE and Territorial Cooperation programmes) at the end of May. This discussion document outlined the regulatory conditions and other provisions governing the preparation of these new programmes, the eligible areas for both and an indicative list of possible activities that could be assisted under the programmes. The discussion document sets out a number of questions for consideration as part of the development of the programmes. The deadline for making submissions on this element of the consultation process was June 26th.

Also as part of this process, the SEUPB organised eight public meetings to discuss the new programmes. To date, the SEUPB has received approximately 80 submissions and responses. These submissions and other additional information are available on the SEUPB website at: <http://www.seupb.org/newprogrammesconsultation.htm>

The results of this consultation process will inform the development of the PEACE Operational Programme. A draft of the programme should be available in the autumn and there will be a further period of public consultation on this draft programme,, with a view to having an agreed programme submitted to the European Commission for approval in November.

Managing Authority

The Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB), as the managing authority for the current PEACE programme, is managing the consultation process and the preparation of the next PEACE Programme.

Contact Persons

There are two key contacts within the SEUPB for preparation of this programme:

Ms. Mabel STEVENSON
New Programmes Consultation
SEUPB
6 Cromac Place
Belfast BT7 2JB
Northern Ireland
E: mabel.stevenson@seupb.org
T: +44-28-9026 6682
F: +44-28-9026 6692

Ms. Eileen McGLOIN
Director of Programme Development
SEUPB
6 Cromac Place
Belfast BT7 2JB
Northern Ireland
E: eileen.mcgloin@seupb.org
T: +44-28-9026 6668
F: +44-28-9026 6692

Ireland – Northern Ireland - Scotland Cross Border Cooperation Programme

Introduction

This programme is a successor to the current INTERREG IIIA programme but has been extended to now cover parts of the west coast of Scotland forming a maritime border with Ireland. Therefore, the programme will now be the EU Programme for Cross Border Territorial Cooperation Ireland / Northern Ireland / Scotland 2007-2013.

Eligible Areas

The eligible area for the Programme will be those areas of Northern Ireland and the Border counties of Ireland that are eligible under the current INTERREG IIIA programme and parts of the west coast of Scotland (See Appendix 1). A provision under the Structural Fund regulations provides that up to 20% of the programme funding can be used in adjoining NUTS III areas.

Programme Priorities

The list of eligible activities to be included in the Programme includes the development of cross-border economic, social and environmental activities through joint strategies for sustainable territorial development. The programme may include activities under all or some of the following headings:

Enterprise – By encouraging entrepreneurship, in particular the development of SMEs, tourism, culture, and cross-border trade;

Environment – By encouraging the protection and joint management of the environment;

Linkages – By supporting links between urban and rural areas;

Access – By reducing isolation through improved access to transport, information and communication networks and services, and cross-border water, waste and energy systems and facilities;

Collaboration – By developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education.

Cooperation – In addition, the ERDF may contribute to promoting legal and administrative cooperation, the integration of cross-border labour markets, local employment initiatives, gender equality and equal opportunities, training and social inclusion, and sharing of human resources and facilities for RTD.

Programme Budget

The total budget available for this programme in 2007-2013 has not yet been finally determined by the Irish and UK Governments.

Consultation Process

As the managing authority for the current Ireland – Northern Ireland programme the Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) is managing the consultation process on the new cross-border programme. As part of this consultation process, the SEUPB published a discussion document on the two new cross-border programmes (both the PEACE and Territorial Cooperation programmes) at the end of May. This discussion document outlined the regulatory conditions and other provisions governing the preparation of these new programmes, the eligible areas for both and an indicative list of possible activities that could be assisted under the programmes. Finally, this discussion document sets out a number of questions for consideration as part of the development of the programmes. The deadline for making submissions on this element of the consultation process was June 26th.

Also as part of this process, the SEUPB organised eight public meetings to discuss the new programmes. To date, the SEUPB has received approximately 80 submissions and responses. These submissions and other additional information are available on the SEUPB website at: <http://www.seupb.org/newprogrammesconsultation.htm>

The results of this consultation process will inform the development of the Operational Programme. A draft of the programme should be available by... and there will be a further period of public consultation on this draft programme in

the autumn, with a view to having an agreed programme submitted to the European Commission for approval in November.

Managing Authority

The Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) as the managing authority for the current Ireland – Northern Ireland programme is managing the consultation process and the preparation of the Operational Programme.

Contact Persons

There are two key contacts within the SEUPB for preparation of this programme:

Ms. Mabel STEVENSON
New Programmes Consultation
SEUPB
6 Cromac Place
Belfast BT7 2JB
Northern Ireland
E: mabel.stevenson@seupb.org
T: +44-28-9026 6682
F: +44-28-9026 6692

Ms. Eileen McGLOIN
Director of Programme Development
SEUPB
6 Cromac Place
Belfast BT7 2JB
Northern Ireland
E: eileen.mcglain@seupb.org
T: +44-28-9026 6668
F: +44-28-9026 6692

Ireland – Wales Cross Border Cooperation Programme

Introduction

This programme is a successor to the current INTERREG IIIA programme. One key change for the next programme is that the functions of Managing and Paying Authority will transfer from the Welsh European Funding Office to the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly in Ireland.

Eligible Areas

The eligible area for the Programme will continue to be the NUTS III regions of Dublin, Mid-East and South East in Ireland and the western parts of Wales (See Appendix 1). A provision under the Structural Fund regulations provides that up to 20% of the programme funding can be used in adjoining NUTS III areas.

Programme Priorities

The Ireland-Wales programme will operation under two priorities. These are:

Priority 1 – **Knowledge, Innovation and skills for growth.** The objectives of this priority will be:

- (a) To develop further, in accordance with the Lisbon Agenda objectives, the knowledge, R&D/innovation and entrepreneurial base of the Cross Border Region's economy with a view to boosting growth and competitiveness.
- (b) To enhance the capacity of the region to provide targeted interventions to allow people constantly enhance their education and training which will ultimately lead to greater levels of employment and foster competitiveness in the industry and services sectors.

This Priority is divided into two separate but related Themes as follows:

Theme 1 - Innovation and competitiveness

Theme 2 - Skills and competitiveness for employment integration

The choice of themes reflects their importance to the Cross Border Region's continued development as it seeks to deal with the critical issues of providing the conditions to allow enterprises to prosper internally and become more competitive externally, while at the same time improving the skills and knowledge base of the population of the area. The two themes should work in tandem making a real difference to the cross border region.

Priority 2 - **Climate Change and Sustainable Regeneration.** The objectives of this priority will be to try and ensure that people and communities can develop and grow stronger in harmony with the environment. It will seek to devise innovative and targeted interventions that can make a real difference to the environmental performance of the cross border region and try to manage the impact of climate change on local communities.

This will be developed through two themes.

Theme 1 – Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

Theme 2 – Sustainable Regeneration of Communities

Programme Budget

The total budget available for this programme in 2007-2013 has not yet been finally determined by both the Irish and UK Governments.

Consultation Process

The Regional Assembly and the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) have completed the first phase of consultations for the preparation of the Programme. This included detailed consultations with potential implementing Departments and Agencies on both sides of the Irish Sea.

It is intended that there will be a public consultation in the autumn. This will be publicised in the national media at the appropriate time and advertised on the websites of both the Regional Assembly and WEFO. In addition the draft Programme will also be subject to an independent ex-ante evaluation and a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Managing Authority

The Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly will be the Managing and Paying Authority for the Ireland-Wales programme 2007-2013.

Contact Persons

The key contacts within the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly for this programme are:

Mr. Stephen BLAIR

Director

Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly

Assembly House

O'Connell Street

Waterford

E: SBlair@seregassembly.ie

T: 051-860700

F: 051-879887

North West Europe – Transnational Cooperation Programme

Introduction

This programme is essentially the continuation of a previously successful INTERREG transnational co-operation programme. During the 2000-2006 the NWE programme supported 100 projects, with a total of 750 partners, worth about €318 million from the ERDF.

Eligible Areas

The eligible area for this programme remains the same as for the current NWE INTERREG programme. It includes Ireland, the UK, Belgium, Luxembourg and parts of The Netherlands, France and Germany. It also includes parts of Switzerland (see Appendix 2).

Programme Priorities

The NWE Operational Programme builds on the experience of the previous programmes but also on a number of studies and evaluations, which have been commissioned by the NWE. These include: (a) a statistical analyses of the NWE cooperation area to identify major trends; (b) a SWOT analysis of the region; and (c) an Ex-Ante evaluation of the achievements of the current programming period.

The Operational Programme will support transnational cooperation in line with the relevant EU Regulations, the main focus is on priorities concerned with **innovation**, the **environment**, **accessibility** and **sustainable urban development** in pursuit of the objectives of the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy. The overall aim of the new Programme (2007-2013) is as follows: to achieve a more cohesive, balanced and sustainable development of the NWE area, and thus to contribute to the overall competitiveness of the Community territory in a globalised world.

To achieve this aim the Operational Programme will have four priorities. These are as follows:

Priority 1 – Developing the knowledge-based economy, capitalising on a capacity for innovation in all sectors: with the objective to (a) promote the application of knowledge by facilitating the transfer of innovations and knowledge from the scientific/academic community to businesses and other actors; (b) develop new, and strengthen existing, growth clusters and networks by building on endogenous potentials; (c) improve the 'innovation climate' by addressing institutional barriers and to appropriately respond to the spatial implications from the 'knowledge economy'.

Priority 2 – Managing its natural resources effectively: with the objective to (a) promote an innovative and sustainable approach to natural resource management, including water, biodiversity and energy, and to minimise greenhouse gas emissions; (b) promote an innovative approach to risk management, in particular water management (impacts of sea level rise and flood risk; the marine environment) in the context of climate change; (c) promote a transnational and spatial approach to improving the quality of soil, water and air.

Priority 3 – Improving connectivity by promoting intelligent and sustainable transport solutions: with the objective to (a) manage transport growth through optimisation of the capacity of existing transport infrastructure for both passenger and freight transport; (b) support innovative multi-modal strategies and efficient inter-operable systems on land and water; (c) develop innovative approaches to the use of ICT and/or ITS aimed at reducing the need to travel and replacing physical mobility through virtual activity for both passenger mobility and freight transport.

Priority 4 – Promoting sustainable and dynamic communities: the objective being to (a) strengthen urban nodes and networks at transnational level by promoting social and economic development through cooperation between cities and towns; (b) improve the transnational performance of natural environment and cultural heritage and to strengthen urban-rural relationships that contribute to a balanced and competitive development of the NWE territory; (c) promote a transnational response to the spatial impacts of demographic change and migration on the NWE territory, and the implications for education and the labour market (supply and demand of skills across the territory).

Strategic Initiatives – Transnational Development Corridors: the objective being to develop a number of strategic initiatives for transnational action primarily to align economic potential along existing and planned transport axes.

Programme Budget

The Member States involved in the NWE Programme have not yet finalised their ERDF contributions to the Programme. However, it is anticipated that **between €200-€250 million** will be available to the programme in 2007-2013.

Programming Process

In terms of preparation, the NWE Programme is the most advanced transnational programme that involves Ireland. In January 2006, an International Working Party, made up of one national and one regional representative from each of the 7 participating Member States, but also representatives from the Swiss Confederation, the European Commission (EC) and the NWE Joint Technical Secretariat, was established. Since then the IWP worked on both content and implementation aspects for the new programme. The IWP will continue to hold regular meetings between now and November 2006 when the final version of the Operational Programme is scheduled to be formally submitted to the European Commission.

Consultation Process

The consultation on the NWE Programme will effectively run from the end of July to the end of September and will be in two steps: The **first step** commenced on July 24th with the publication of the draft Operational Programme on the NWE website www.nweurope.org (this is available in English, but will be translated into the other languages by August 22nd). All stakeholders (potential project partners, local and regional authorities, universities, associations, interested parties) are invited to make submissions until **September 22nd**. To assist this process the NWE Secretariat has prepared a short questionnaire, which is also available on the website.

The **second step** is the publication of the draft Environmental Report on the Operational Programme on the NWE website from July 31st. This is the first time that transnational programmes are undergoing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and environmental authorities and the general public are invited to express their opinions on the Environmental Report and the draft programme. These comments will be taken into account during the further preparation of the programme. This consultation will, as a general rule, be open until **September 30th**.

On the basis of these consultations the countries represented on the IWP and Programme Secretariat will develop a consolidated Operational Programme for submission to the European Commission for approval in November 2006.

Managing Authority

The Nord Pas-de-Calais Region in France has been re-appointed as the NWE Managing Authority. The Secretariat for the programme is based in Lille, France.

Contact Persons

The contacts for this programme include the NWE Secretariat based in France but also the national contact person in Ireland. Any submissions or comments on the draft Operational Programme or the SEA should be sent to the national contact person. These are:

NWE Programme Secretariat

Mr. Friedhelm BUDDE
Director - NWE Secretariat,
"Les Caryatides",
5th Floor,
24 Boulevard Carnot,
59800 Lille,
France
Tel: +33-3-20 78 55 00
Fax : +33-3-20 55 65 95
E-mail: friedhelm@nweurope.org
General E-mail: nwe@nweurope.org

NWE National Contact - Ireland

Mr. Stephen BLAIR
Director
Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly
Assembly House
O'Connell Street
Waterford
Ireland
Tel: 051- 860711
Fax: 051- 879887
E-mail: sblair@seregassembly.ie

Atlantic Area – Transnational Cooperation Programme

Introduction

This is a continuation of the current INTERREG IIB programme but with some notable changes, including a reduced programme area and a new Managing Authority. Drafting of the Operational Programme is under way. However, many aspects are still being discussed by the participating Member States' representatives, including questions relating to the content and organisation of the programme.

Eligible Areas

The programme area is reduced somewhat by comparison with that for the 2000-2006 programme, as some more inland regions in France and Spain have been excluded. The eligible area will comprise all of Ireland and Portugal, parts of the UK, France and Spain (see Appendix 2).

Programme Priorities

The drafting committee for the programme has not yet discussed the question of programme priorities. Priorities will have to be selected from within the more focused menu that the Commission has proposed for the new round of Territorial Cooperation programs, namely:

- Innovation, RTD and enterprise
- Environment, water management, risk prevention, including maritime safety
- Improved accessibility, transport and ICT
- Urban development

Indications are that the new Atlantic Area programme will be more tightly focused than the current programme, perhaps prioritizing environment, innovation, accessibility, sustainable urban development, and with particular emphasis on maritime issues (including maritime safety).

Programme Budget

The programme budget is not yet known as the five Member States involved in the programme have not yet decided their allocations. The budget for the 2000-2006 Atlantic Area programme is €120 million and it seems unlikely that the budget for the next programme will be larger, particularly as some regions'/Member States' matching contributions will be reduced from 50% to 25%.

Consultation Process

A drafting committee for the new programme has been established, comprising two representatives per country, one representing the Member State and one representing the eligible regions. It is chaired by a representative of the Norte Regional Council in Portugal, as Managing Authority for the new programme. The work, which is being assisted by a consultant, is at an early stage. Once completed, the draft Operational Programme will be open for public consultation.

Further information on the development of the programme, emerging priorities and details of the consultation process will be available on the following website: <http://www.atlantique-2007-2013.org/index.php?id=14&L=1>

Managing Authority

The new Managing Authority for the Atlantic Area Programme will be the Norte Regional Council in Portugal (the Managing Authority for the current programme is the Regional Council for Poitou-Charentes in France).

Contact Persons

The following are some of the key contacts for the Atlantic Area programme, including the national contact point for Ireland:

Ms. Teresa LAMEIRAS
Comissão de Coordenação da Região Norte
Rua Rainha D. Estefânia, n° 251
4150-304 PORTO
Tel : +351 22 608 63 25
Fax : +351 22 608 63 05
Email : teresa.lameiras@ccdr-n.pt

Mr. Ronan McADAM
Regional Council of Poitou Charentes
15, Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie
86021 POITIERS
Tel: +33 5 49 55 82 90
Fax : +33 5 49 55 82 55
E-mail : r.mcadam@cr-poitou-charentes.fr

Mr. Gerry FINN
Director
BMW Regional Assembly
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon
Tel: 094-986 2970
Fax: 094-986 2973
E-mail: gfinn@bmwassembly.ie

Mr. Michael O'BRIEN
Programme Liaison Officer,
BMW Regional Assembly
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon
Tel: 094-986 2970
Fax: 094-986 2973
E-mail: mobrien@bmwassembly.ie

Northern Periphery – Transnational Cooperation Programme

Introduction

The Northern Periphery programme existed under previous and current programme periods but this will be the first time that areas in Ireland will participate in this programme.

Eligible Areas

The Northern Periphery programme covers a large geographical area, including the northern parts of Finland, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, the whole of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The area has been extended for the 2007-2013 period to include other parts of Scotland, Northern Ireland and the western seaboard of Ireland., to include counties; Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Cork. (see Appendix 2 for the eligible area).

Programming Process

Preparations for the new Northern Periphery Programme, which will run from 2007 – 2013, are now underway. The development process is fairly complex and in order to ensure that the new programme takes into account a broad range of opinions from all the regions involved a number of programming groups have been established:

Content Drafting Team: to develop the priorities and objectives of the new programme from a needs assessment of the co-operating regions. This team mainly consists of regional representatives.

Administrative & Management Drafting Team: composed of key actors from the national and programme implementation level that will provide expertise and knowledge on setting up transnational co-operation programmes.

Joint Programming Committee (JPC): the main forum for reaching agreement between partner countries and the 'driving force' for ensuring that a new programme is produced and delivered on time.

Programme Monitoring Committee Plus (PMC+): an umbrella body consisting of INTERREG IIIB NPP PMC members and new members from Ireland and Northern Ireland. It will provide the basis for local, regional and national level participation and make strategic decisions.

Programme Priorities

The new programme will build on the success of the previous programmes under INTERREG IIIB and Article 10, but now extended over the wider eligible area. Given the nature of the operational area it is likely that the Northern Periphery programme will focus on rural and peripherality issues and will support activities under two core priorities.

These are:

Priority 1 - **Communications, Innovation and Business Development**

Priority 2 - **Natural and Cultural Resources and Sustainable Local Development**

Northern Periphery Programme – Call for Preparatory Projects

To assist in the development of the programme and to ensure that the new programme can begin implementation as quickly as possible, the INTERREG IIIB Northern Periphery programme has issued a call for preparatory projects, which will allow potential project partners to meet and draft project applications for the new programme. A minimum of 2 partners from 2 countries is required to apply for preparatory projects. The themes under which preparatory projects could be submitted include:

- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Environment
- Accessibility
- Sustainable Rural and Urban Relationships

While all activities in the preparatory projects must be carried out in the current programme area, invitations to new programme area partners (from Ireland and Northern Ireland) are encouraged and project bids must outline how they plan to include partners from the new areas. Further information on this call, which has a deadline of October 9th, is available at: <http://www.northernperiphery.net/managers/Library/Prep%20Project%20Call%20Announcement%20.pdf>

Programme Budget

The total budget available for this programme has yet to be determined by the Member States participating in the programme.

Consultation Process

A number of development and preparation meetings have already taken place and the draft programme will be available for consultation in early autumn.

Managing Authority

The Managing Authority and Paying Authority for the current Northern Periphery programme is the County Administration of Vasterbotten in Sweden. The Programme Secretariat will remain in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Contact Persons

The contacts for this programme include the existing Northern Periphery programme secretariat based in Denmark but also the national contact points in Ireland. These are:

Mr. Niclas FORSLING
Head - Joint Programme Secretariat
Northern Periphery Programme
Strandgade 91, 4 sal
DK-1401 Copenhagen
Tel: +45-32 83 37 86
Fax: +45-32 83 37 75
E-mail: niclas.forsling@npp2.net
Website: www.northernperiphery.net/

Mr. Gerry FINN
Director
BMW Regional Assembly
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon
Tel: 094-986 2970
Fax: 094-986 2973
E-mail: gfinn@bmwassembly.ie

Mr. Michael O'BRIEN
Programme Liaison Officer,
BMW Regional Assembly
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon
Tel: 094-986 2970
Fax: 094-986 2973
E-mail: mobrien@bmwassembly.ie

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) - National Programme

Introduction

The Rural Development Programme will be co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). While strictly speaking the EAFRD does not fall within the ambit of the Structural Funds, to all intents and purposes it is subject to the same governance regime and management disciplines. These require the submission, for approval by the European Commission, of a national rural development strategy that has regard to strategic guidelines at European level, and the preparation of an operational programme that gives effect to this strategy. This operational programme must also be approved by the Commission. Moreover, demonstrated complementarity with programmes co-financed by the Structural Funds is required.

Ireland has submitted a draft strategy to the European Commission, and the operational programme is expected to be forwarded before the summer break.

Eligible Areas

There will be a single national rural development programme for which, in general, the whole of the country will be eligible. However, some measures under the different axes of the EAFRD may be restricted to particular geographical areas in line with area designations particular to these measures.

Programme Priorities

Priorities will be determined by reference to the provisions concerning the four main axes of the EAFRD, as follows:

Axis 1: Improving Competitiveness of Farming and Forestry (10%)

Axis 2: Environment and Land Management (25%)

Axis 3: Improving Quality of Life and Promoting Economic Diversification (10%)

Axis 4: Mainstreaming the LEADER Approach (5%)

The figures in brackets indicate the minimum proportions of the national funding envelope for rural development that must be spent on each axis. Depending on the axis, the Community co-financing rate varies between 50 and 55%.

In setting priorities, the Community Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development must also be taken into account. These emphasise development of the agri-food sector, environment and biodiversity, job creation and economic growth in rural areas and improving local governance and endogenous potential. They also refer to the need for consistency in programming as between the various axes, and complementarity with programmes co-financed by other Community instruments, including the Structural Funds.

For Axes 1 and 2, it is expected that there will be a relatively large element of roll-over of current programmes, including continuation of support programmes for on-farm investment, early retirement, forestry, REPS and LFAs. No new measures are expected in view of the reduced levels of funding.

Ireland proposes full integration, or fusion, of Axes 3 and 4 and it is understood to be the only Member State that is taking this approach. The overall priorities are likely to be economic and social development, including promoting a better quality of life and access to services in rural areas. There are likely to be up to nine measures. Measure groups will include: (a) on-farm diversification; (b) support for rural enterprise; (c) rural tourism; (d) basic services for the rural economy and population; (e) village and countryside enhancement; (f) conservation and up-grading of local heritage; (g) training and information for rural stakeholders; (h) animation; and (i) international and regional co-operation.

It is expected that culture and leisure will be a substantial element. Environment measures will have a strong community focus, complementing Axis 2 measures. Many existing programmes, such as CLÁR, the Rural Social Scheme and measures delivered by local action (LEADER) groups, are likely to be continued, with expansion envisaged in some cases.

Programme Budget

Ireland's allocation from the EAFRD is some €1,900 million for 2007-2013. Given Community co-finance rates of 50 to 55%, the rural development programme should have an overall budget of around €3,600 million. There are no requirements at EU level relating to the regional allocation of EAFRD resources.

Consultation Process

An initial consultation on the national rural development strategy was held earlier in 2006. It is expected that there will be a further public consultation on the draft operational programme.

Managing Authority

The Department of Agriculture and Food has overall responsibility for the programme and is the lead department for Axes 1 and 2. The Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs will lead on Axes 3 and 4.

Issues

The cohesion process at national level aims to provide a more coherent framework and delivery system for rural, community and local development, in general by re-configuring delivery agencies within a county partnership structure. The process is on-going, with groups expected to submit their business plan applications in the autumn, and may have implications for delivery arrangements for measures under Axes 3 and 4.

Contact Persons

The main points of contact for the national EAFRD rural development programme are as follows:

Mr. Michael CRONIN
Department of Agriculture & Food
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

Tel: 01- 607 2000
Fax: 01- 661 6263

Mr. Donal COLEMAN
Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs
"Dún Aímhígin"
43-49 Mespil Road
Dublin 4
Tel: 01- 647 3000
Fax: 01- 647 3051
E-mail: dcoleman@pobail.ie

5. Future Developments and Events

The adoption of the Structural Fund Regulations will place renewed emphasis on the programming process that is on-going in the Member States and regions. It also provides more certainty regarding the timescales and deadlines for submitting the various programmes and supporting strategy documents. The priority task now is to finalise, submit and get approval for the next round of programmes. Any significant delay in programme start-up creates a risk of funds being lost to programmes due to the N+2 rule. However, in the circumstances it seems unlikely that all programmes will be approved before the end of the year, although this in itself should not create great difficulties unless the programming process drags on well into 2007.

Once programmes are approved, schedules of calls for proposals under transnational programmes are likely to be known and potential project promoters will need to respond quickly in view of the generally tight timeframes between publication of calls and project submission deadlines that apply to these programmes.

While the spotlight is now on the Member States, regions and other managing authorities, the EU Institutions already have their eye on the future. A particular concern for DG REGIO and the European Commission in general is the review of the EU budget that was agreed, as part of the agreement on the Financial Perspectives, by the Member States at the European Council in December 2005. This review will take place during 2008-2009, where essentially all aspects of the EU budget are for discussion. With this in mind, DG REGIO is anxious to demonstrate the added-value of EU Regional Policy, its ability to have a leverage effect in regions and its track-record in delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion. All this with a view to ensuring that Regional Policy's budget share is maintained or enhanced post 2013.

EU Regional Policy – Next Steps

September

During September, it is expected that both the Council and European Parliament will adopt the Community Strategic Guidelines. Member States will then submit their National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRFs), most likely during October.

October

The European Week of Regions and Cities - OPEN DAYS event will take place in Brussels with the general theme of Investing in Europe's Regions and Cities: Public and Private Partners for Growth and Jobs, from October 9-13th.

November

There will be an Informal Council of Regional Policy Ministers under the Finnish EU Presidency. This will take place on November 21st, but the subject matter of the meeting has yet to be confirmed.

December

It is expected that the Commission will make a number of decisions on the financial allocations and the detail on the type and number of operational programmes per Member State.

January

The Commission is expected to reach a number of decisions on and approval of the operational programmes. A ceremony is planned for this during the German EU Presidency.

Also in January, the European Parliament is expected to adopt a number of reports on the future of EU Regional Policy, including on Turkey's involvement in Regional Policy and EU Regional Policy post 2013.

Later in 2007

There will be an Informal Council of Regional Policy Ministers in Leipzig on May 24-25th, during the German EU Presidency. This meeting will focus on Territorial Co-operation and Urban Development and will be part of the on-going work on up-dating the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP).

The European Commission is expected to publish the Fourth Cohesion Report, most likely at the end of May or June.

Appendix 1 Map of Cross Border Programmes between Ireland and UK

This map illustrates the eligible areas for both the **Ireland-Wales** programme and the **Ireland-Northern Ireland-Scotland** programme.

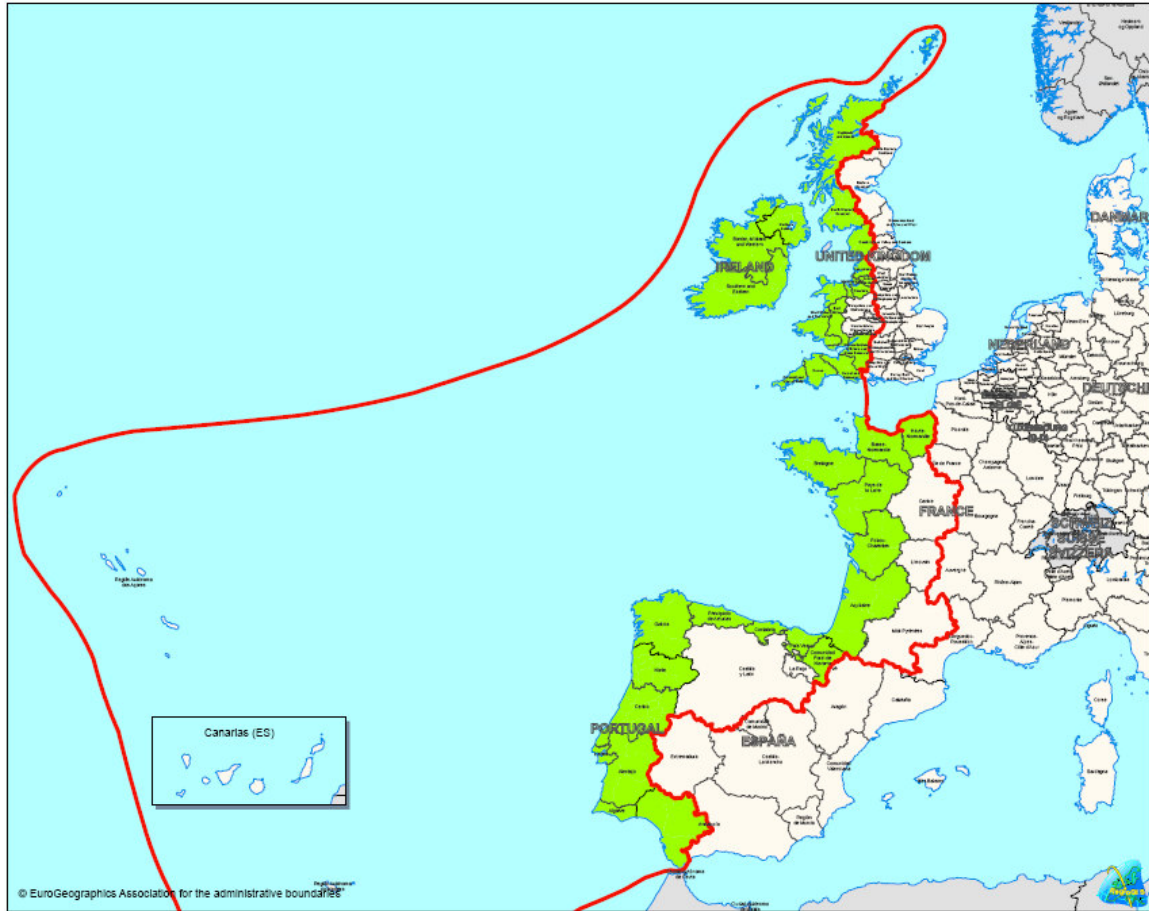


Ireland-Wales Programme area: NUTS III regions of Dublin, Mid-East and South East in Ireland and the western parts of Wales

Ireland-N.Ireland Programme area: Northern Ireland and the Border counties of Ireland that are eligible under the current INTERREG IIIA programme and parts of the west coast of Scotland

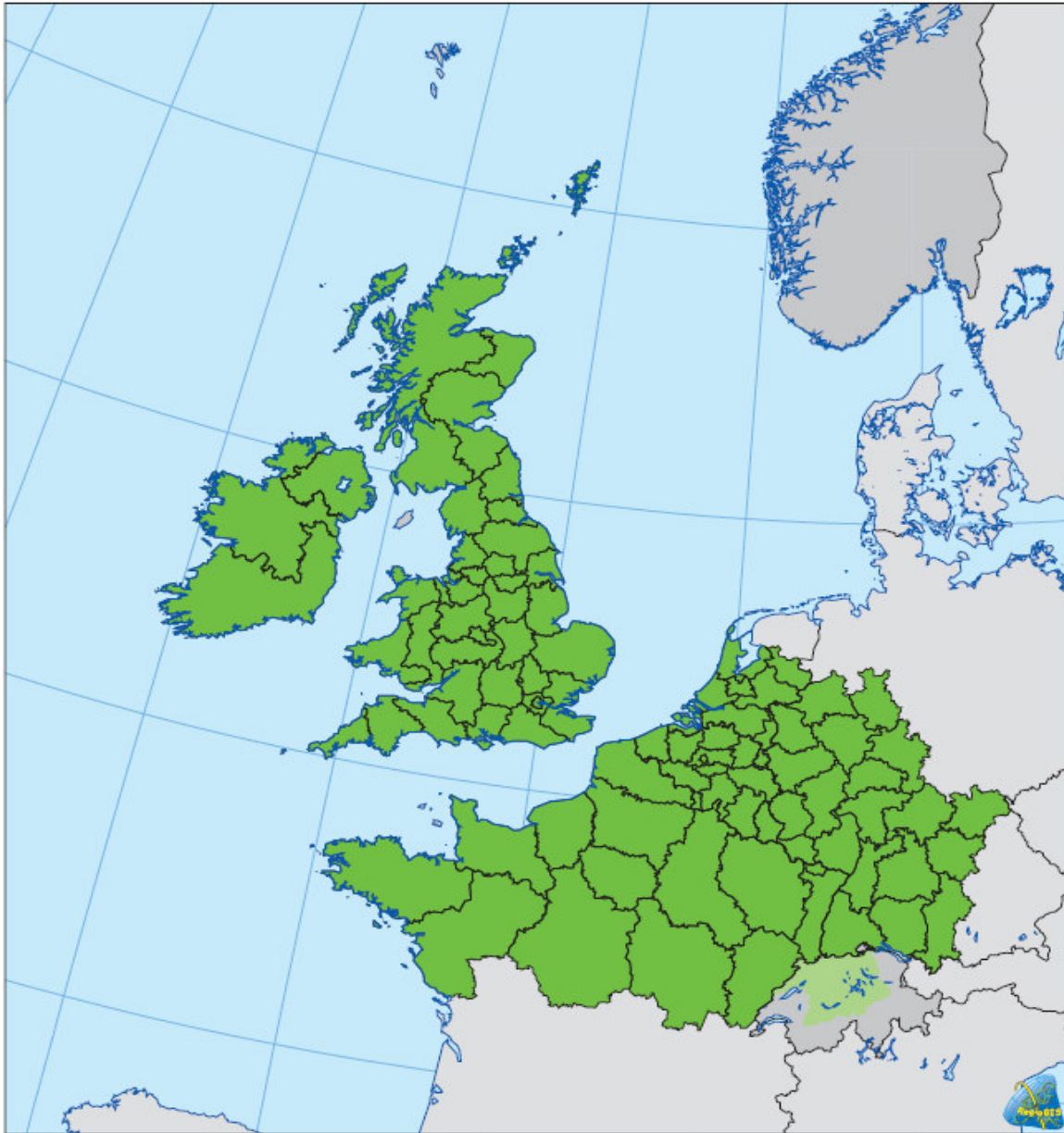
Appendix 2 Map of Transnational Cooperation Programmes



This map illustrates the eligible areas for the **Atlantic Coast programme 2007-2013**. In Ireland, all areas will be eligible under this programme.



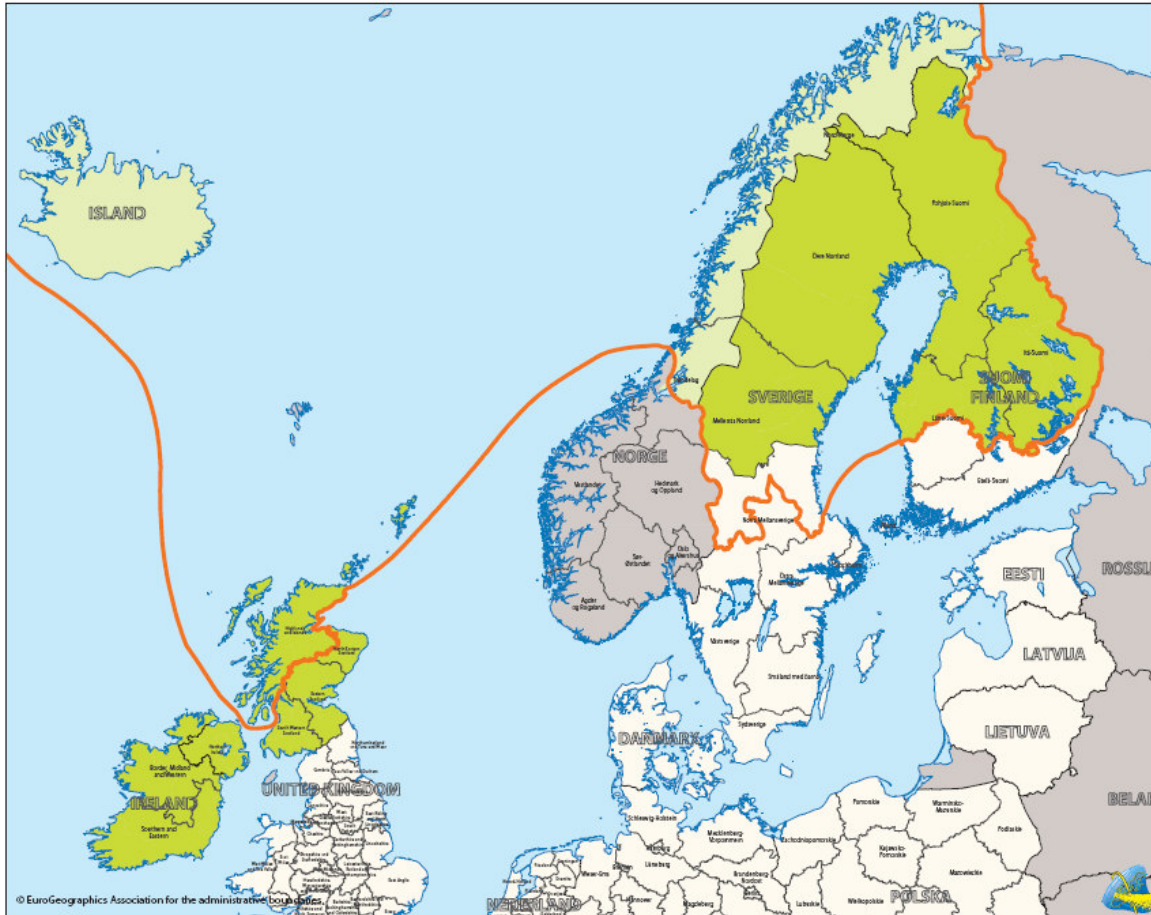
-  EU27 cooperation areas
-  Other cooperation areas
-  Atlantic Area 2004-2006




This map illustrates the eligible areas for the **North West Europe programme 2007-2013**. In Ireland, all areas will be eligible under this programme.



-  E.U. regions
-  zones outside the E.U.

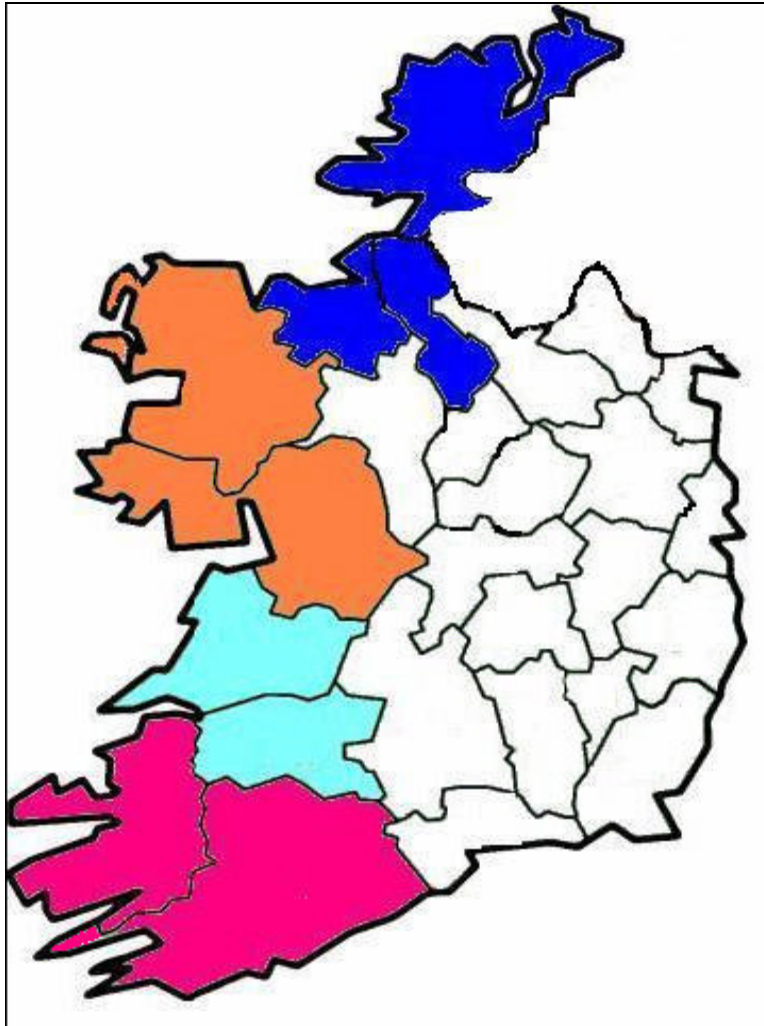
This map illustrates the eligible areas for the **Northern Periphery programme 2007-2013**. In Ireland the eligible area includes counties on the Western seaboard (see map on following page).



-  EU27 cooperation areas
-  Other cooperation areas
-  Northern Periphery 2004-2006

The eligible areas within Ireland for the **Northern Periphery programme 2007-2013** are illustrated in the following map. They include

Border: Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo; **West:** Mayo, Galway; **Mid-West:** Clare, Limerick; **South-West:** Kerry, Cork



Appendix 3 Financial Perspective 2007-2013

This table outlines the breakdown of expenditure on cohesion/regional policy objectives

Programmes & Instruments	Eligibility	Allocation	
		€'000 million	%
Convergence objective (Speeding up convergence of least-developed regions and Member States)	Regions (NUTS II) with per capita GDP < 75% EU25 average (2000-2002)	251,330	81.7
• National and regional programmes (ERDF, ESF)		177,291	57.6
• "Phasing out" regions	Regions with GDP per capita < 75% EU15 and > 75% EU25 ("statistical-effect" regions)	12,521	4.1
• Cohesion Fund	Member States with per capita GNI < 90% EU-25 average (2001-2003)	61,518	20.0
Regional competitiveness and employment objective (Strengthening regions' competitiveness and attractiveness as well as employment)	Entire territory of Community with the exception of Convergence regions	48,789	15.8
• "Phasing-in" regions	Objective 1 regions 2000-2006 not eligible for Convergence objective	10,385	3.3
• Other regions/national ESF programmes	Selection by Member States	38,404	12.5
Territorial co-operation objective (Strengthening territorial co-operation at cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional levels, establishing co-operation networks, and furthering exchange of experience at appropriate territorial levels)		7,600	2.4
• Cross-border co-operation	All NUTS III-level regions along internal land borders, certain NUTS III-level regions along external land borders, all NUTS III-level regions along maritime borders separated by a maximum of 150 kms (as a general rule)	5,775	1.9
• Trans-national co-operation	List of eligible regions to be drawn up by Commission following consultation with Member States	1,625	0.4
• Inter-regional co-operation, networks, exchange of experience	Entire territory of Community	400	0.1
TOTAL		308,041	100.0