



# Northern & Western Regional Assembly



## CORPORATE PLAN 2015 - 2019



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# Foreword

## by Cathaoirleach

As Cathaoirleach of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, I welcome the publication of this Corporate Plan covering the period 2015-2019. This is the first such plan and has come about as a result of the reconfiguration of the Regional Authorities and Regional Assemblies and the Local Government Reform in 2014.

The preparation of the plan has involved consultation with Staff and members of the Assembly and is structured around our core responsibilities of managing and monitoring European Union funded projects and our new role of overseeing the preparation of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and the making of submissions to local authorities in relation to the making, adoption and variation of County Development Plans, as provided for in the Planning and Development Regulations together with reviewing Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) prepared by the Local Authorities in the NWRA region. We have to acknowledge that the Plan is being prepared for a period where Local Government faces difficult and unprecedented challenges. Therefore, the plan has to focus on our core objectives and to provide a template which we can use to enhance the socio-economic development of the Northern and Western Region of Ireland, supported by Regional Spatial and Economic Plans, by the implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds and the coordinated execution of targeted regional programmes and initiatives in collaboration with our stakeholders.

The publication of the Plan represents the completion of the first step in a process. The next phase will include the production and implementation of individual Annual Work Programmes through which the Corporate Plan can be implemented. We are anxious to ensure that the Corporate Plan is seen as a living document capable of change in response to changing priorities.

I wish to express my appreciation to the elected members and staff for their input into this process. I see this Plan as an invaluable road map for the Assembly to achieve our objectives.

***Cllr. Jimmy McClearn***  
***Cathaoirleach***



# Introduction

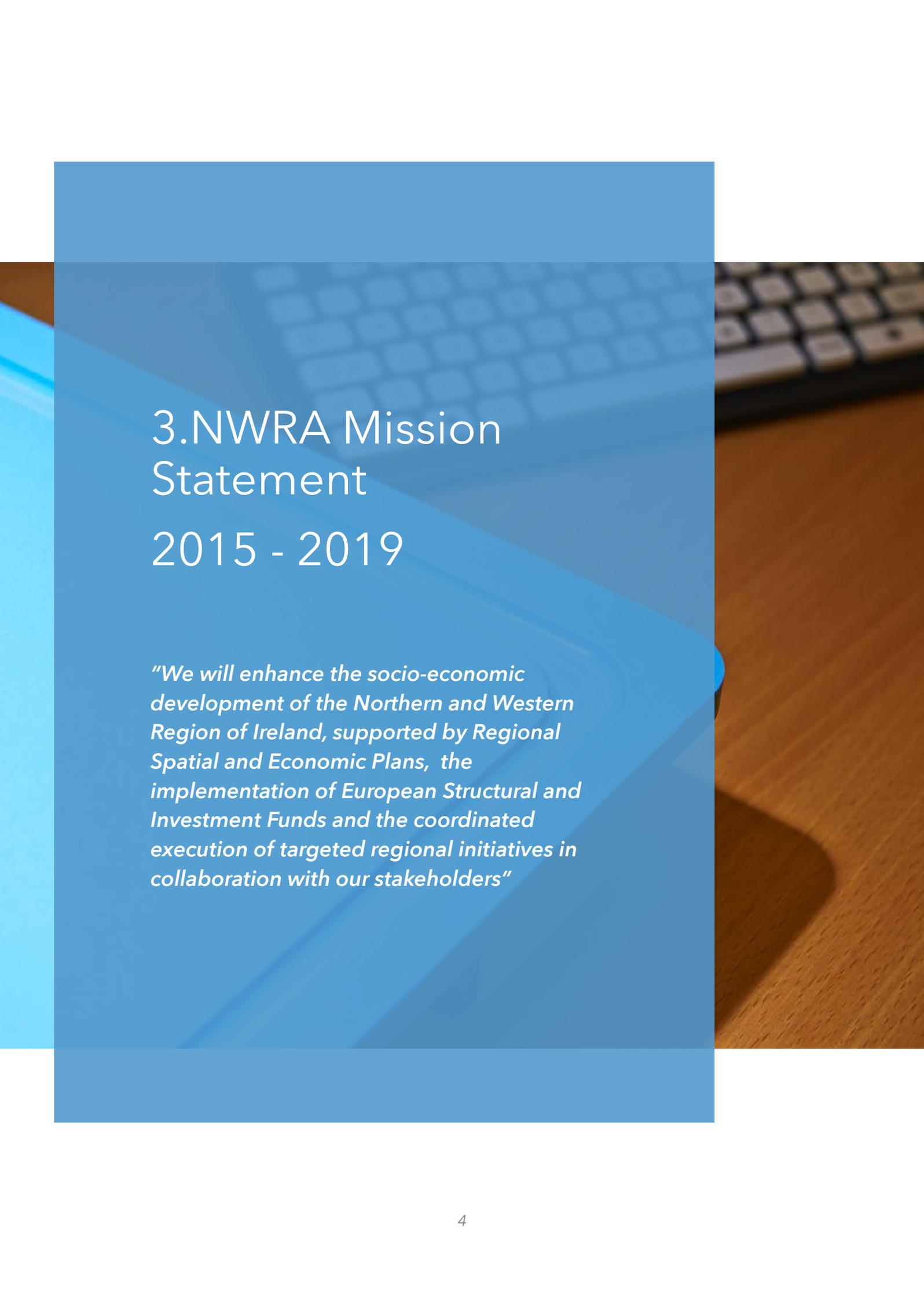
## From the Director

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the first Corporate Plan for the new Northern and Western Regional Assembly. As part of overall Local Government reform, the regional tier in Ireland has been significantly reconfigured and the NWRA, while it continues its role as Managing Authority for EU Structural Funds, now takes on a new role in regional economic and spatial planning. This will involve the adoption of Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies, which will replace the current Regional Planning guidelines, The Assemblies will also have a new role in linking local economic planning with regional and national planning through oversight of Local Economic and Community Plans. The Assembly will also continue its active involvement in projects of strategic relevance to the region particularly through co-operating with other European regions in Interreg funded projects.

This Corporate Plan serves as the Northern and Western Assembly's (NWRA) strategic framework for action in the future. The Corporate Plan represents a strategy to attain high-level organisation goals and it presents the Assembly's vision over a five year period. In legislative terms, Section 55 of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1991 (REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES) (ESTABLISHMENT) ORDER 2014 requires the Assembly to adopt a Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan identifies objectives for the timeframe of the plan within the context of the operating environment for the Assembly. The strategic planning process has had regard to the resources and constraints impacting on the delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives. The Assembly has also established reporting arrangements to monitor progress in the implementation of the identified actions, which will be directly linked to our annual work programme.

The Corporate Plan has been formally adopted by the Assembly in September 2015 as a strategic framework, the Corporate Plan will steer the operations of the NWRA over the lifetime of the plan.

**Gerry Finn**  
**Director**

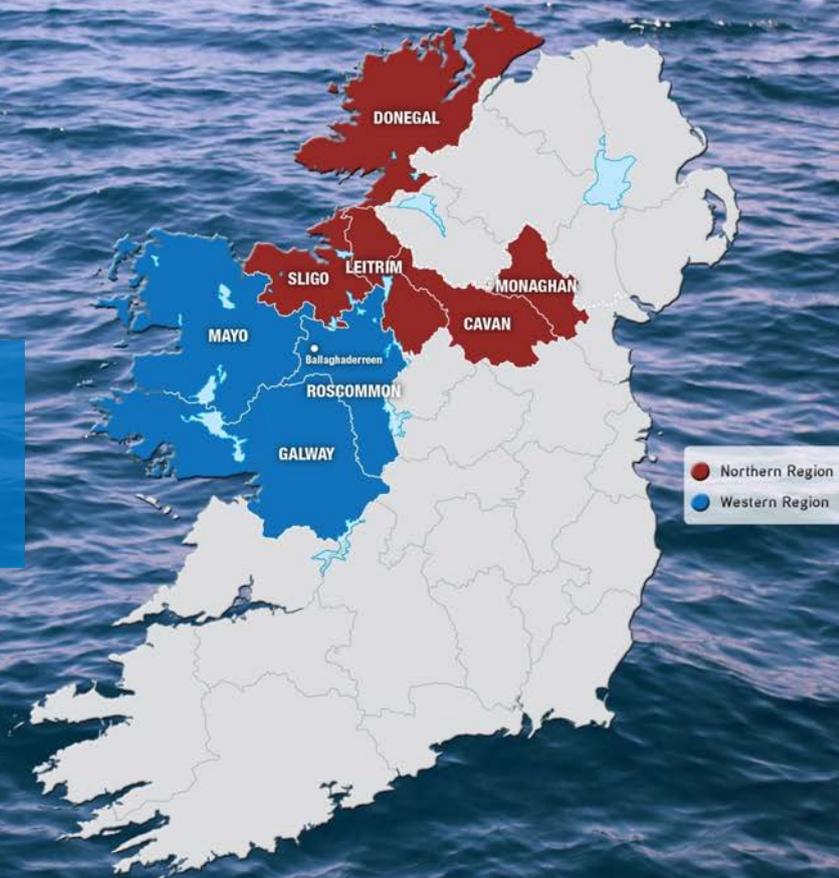


## 3.NWRA Mission Statement 2015 - 2019

*“We will enhance the socio-economic development of the Northern and Western Region of Ireland, supported by Regional Spatial and Economic Plans, the implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds and the coordinated execution of targeted regional initiatives in collaboration with our stakeholders”*

# 4. Background to the NWRA

## Map of the Northern & Western Region



The Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) was established on 1st January 2015 covering the 8 county region of Cavan, Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon and Sligo. The NWRA office is located in Ballaghaderreen, County Roscommon.

The NWRA is responsible for:

- regional economic and spatial planning;
- the management of European Regional Development Funding;
- developing, implementing and promoting regional development policy and activities;
- acting as the national contact point for EU-funded transnational programmes; and
- promoting coordinated action to promote effectiveness in Local Government and public services along with promoting transparency

between the plans, policies and proposals of these organisations.

The NWRA emerged from the 2012 Government's "Putting People First" policy paper and the Local Government Reform Act which set out that the then two Regional Assemblies and the eight Regional Authorities were to be reconfigured into three new Regional Assemblies. The NWRA continues the work of the Border, Midland and Western (BMW) Regional Assembly, which existed from 1999-2014.

The functions of regional economic and spatial planning transferred from the Regional Authorities to the new Regional Assemblies and these additional functions reflect an enhanced role for regional administration in Ireland, in addition to the Assembly's role in managing EU programmes on behalf of the Government.

Since 1999, the BMW Regional Assembly has been involved in the management and monitoring of EU programmes in the BMW Region along with promoting regional policy in Ireland. The Assembly oversaw the €4bn Regional Operational programme 2000-2006 and the €458m programme for the 2007-2013 period. Over the past 15 years the Assembly has engaged with Taoisigh, Ministers, Ministers of State and Senior EU Commission Officials to raise issues of concern to the BMW Region and has undertaken research and regional initiatives to promote socio-economic development and investment in the Region.

The European Structural and Investment Funds are concentrated on implementing community policies, and in particular the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. The specific focus for the 2007-2013 period has been on innovation and the knowledge economy, environment and renewable energy, urban development and accessibility to services of general interest e.g. (broadband and transport infrastructure). The €320m 2014-2020 investment programme co-financed by the European Regional Development fund, will include strengthening of the regions' research capacity, broadband infrastructure, SME development, energy efficiency measures and an integrated urban development initiative, targeted at the region's gateways.

# 5. Legislative & Operating Environment

In examining our organisational context we acknowledge that we operate in a multidimensional environment. There are a number of legislative and policy frameworks that dictate how we will implement this plan and realise our core objectives.

## Legislative Context

### 1. Local Government (Reform) Act 2014

This Act was enacted to make further and better provision in relation to local government and, in particular, to provide for the position of chief executive in relation to each local authority, to dissolve town councils, to make provision for municipal districts, to assign additional reserved functions to local authority members, to dissolve County Development Boards and City Development Boards and make provision for the establishment of Local Community Development Committees, for planning and oversight of Local and Community Development Programmes, to provide for an increased role for local authorities in economic development and enterprise support, to amend the Local Government Act 1991 and provide for the reconfiguration of the Regional Assemblies.

### 2. Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014

This Order provides for the establishment of 3 Regional Assemblies with a broad range of functions including in relation to assistance from the EU, functions under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (No. 30 of 2000) and in relation to the National Oversight and Audit Commission. The Order provides for the constitution, membership, meeting procedures, administration, finance, staffing and other matters relating to the operation of the new assemblies. It also provides for the dissolution of the Southern and Eastern and Border, Midland and Western Regional Assemblies, established by the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Authorities) (Establishment) Order 1999 (S.I. No. 226 of 1999), and the appointment of the 3 new regional assemblies as their successors. The Order makes a number of provisions to facilitate the transfer of

staff, assets, and liabilities to the successor assemblies as well as addressing other matters related to the dissolution of the regional assemblies.

### 3. Europe 2020

Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten-year growth strategy. It involves integrating EU efforts related to development through greater coordination of national and European policies and creating the conditions for a growth model at EU, national and regional levels that is smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive.

Europe 2020 puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities for the decade:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation;
- Sustainable growth: developing a more resource-efficient, greener and more competitive economy;
- Inclusive growth in fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

### 4. EU Cohesion Policy

EU Cohesion Policy for the period 2014-2020 has a key role in delivering on the European 2020 objectives and is designed to ensure that the strategy is implemented according to territorial cohesion principles.

### 5. Partnership Agreement and Regional Operational Programme

Ireland submitted its Partnership Agreement for the European Structural and Investment Funds to the European Commission in April 2014. The Partnership Agreement sets out arrangements to ensure alignment with the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; an analysis of disparities, development needs and growth potentials; selected thematic objectives and a summary of the results expected; indicative allocations at national level; arrangements to ensure the effective implementation and co-

ordination between of the funds; a summary of the assessment of ex ante conditionalities; and, a summary of the integrated approaches to territorial development.

The €320m BMW Regional Operational Programme 2014 - 2020 co-financed by the European Regional Development fund, will include strengthening of the regions' research capacity, broadband infrastructure, SME development, energy efficiency measures and an integrated urban development initiative, targeted at the region's gateways.

## 6. Common Provisions Regulation 2014 - 2020

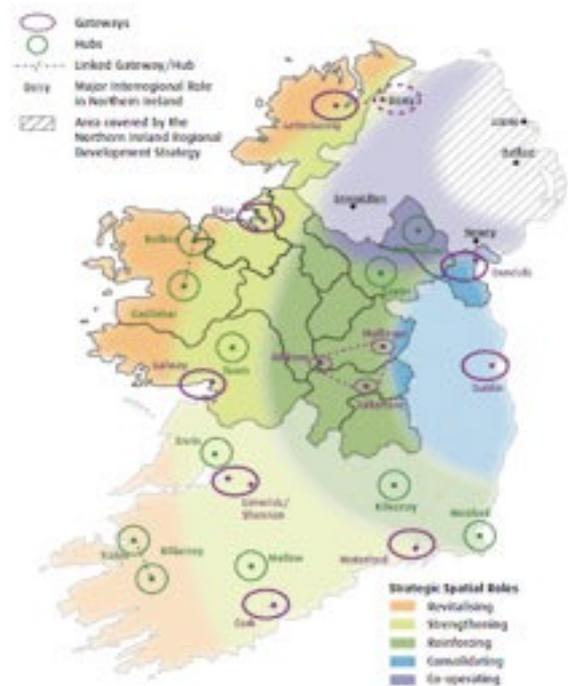
REGULATION (EU) No 1303/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 17 December 2013 is known as the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) and it lays down common provisions and guidelines on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The (CPR) establishes the key areas of support, territorial challenges to be addressed, policy objectives, priority areas for cooperation activities and mechanisms for coherence and consistency with the economic policies of Member States and the Union. It also defines the thematic objectives for the Common Strategic Framework Funds that contribute to the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

## 7. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002-2020

The NSS provides a twenty-year planning framework aimed at achieving a better balance of social, economic and physical development and population growth across the regions. The NSS represents an important territorial development framework and defines a long-term spatial development strategy, to which other national policies should adhere. In particular, the NSS focused on developing a network of nine competitive Gateways, supported by an additional nine Hub towns as well as other large towns in order to drive the development of their wider regions. There are three designated Gateways in the NWRA Region: Galway,

Letterkenny, Sligo. In addition a number of support hubs towns are identified in the region - Castlebar/Ballina, Cavan, Monaghan and Tuam.



Map 1: National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 Gateways & Hubs Map

Department of Source: the Environment & Local Government (2002) The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

## 8. Regional Planning Guidelines

Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) are a key implementation mechanism of the Government's overall framework for achieving more balanced regional development and more strategic physical and spatial planning. The principal function for RPGs is to support the implementation of the NSS and to provide a long term strategic planning framework for the region.

## 9. County and City Development Plans

Members of City and County Councils are entrusted by law to make a development plan every six years. The development plan sets the overall strategy for the sustainable development of the local authority's area over its six-year lifespan. Development, whether it be residential,

industrial, commercial or amenity, must generally have regard to the provision of the development plan. The plan has to take into account the strategic obligations of the council and the relevant policies and objectives of the government. The Development Plan consists of a written statement and a plan containing clear objectives, together with a core strategy. It shall be consistent with the regional and national strategies.

### **10. Local Economic Community Plans (LECP)**

These plans aim to improve the well-being of the people, create and sustain jobs, promote the interests of communities and improve the economy of each county through enhanced strategic planning, better targeting of resources and more meaningful impacts for local communities. The plans will provide the strategic framework for all publicly funded economic, local and community development programmes and for the development of the social, cultural and economic capital of each county. The Plan will include measures to tackle poverty and exclusion and to develop opportunities for enterprise and employment, training and education, community wellbeing, rural and community development, local infrastructure and services, tourism, cultural services, innovation/R&D, natural resources and agriculture.

### **11. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies**

The Regional Assemblies will formulate Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, incorporating spatial planning guidelines, in collaboration with the various enterprise/economic development agencies such as Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland and IDA. The Strategy will align with, or reflect and provide for the implementation of, strategic objectives identified by these agencies. The Strategy will also have regard to the policy document. Our Sustainable Future which outlines a series of measures to support sustainable development and also provides a platform for the development of the green economy that recognises the opportunities for investment and employment creation in emerging sectors such as renewable

energy, energy efficiency and waste and water management.

### **12. The Towards 2016 Agreement**

The Towards 2016 Agreement outlines key national and sectoral policy instruments and strategies in place to meet the economic and social challenges ahead. It considers the wider policy framework, including macroeconomic policy, and building a new social policy perspective, founded on the lifecycle approach. It also outlines the role of social partnership, and the implementation arrangements for the Agreement, including an agreed protocol for engagement between Government and the Social Partners. The NWRA has a commitment to engage in a spirit of partnership to put in place the reforms outlined in that agreement.

### **13. Regional Action Plans for Jobs**

The Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation has led the process of preparing Regional Action Plans for Jobs for the 8 NUTS III Regions. These plans set out specific objectives and actions for each region and identify the key stakeholders to deliver these. The NWRA is currently cooperating with the preparation and implementation and will participate in the monitoring of these plans.

# 6. Relationships with Local Authorities & Other Bodies

The Regional Assembly interacts with a wide variety of Government Departments and Agencies. In particular, it has an important relationship with the Local Government sector through the development of RSES, review of Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP) and the implementation of co-funded schemes. The Assembly's functions and roles have now been enhanced.

The Assembly will provide a stronger role in economic development through the adoption of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, which will replace the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) with participation by relevant agencies including the national economic development agencies in the formulation of and adherence to the regional strategies. The strategies will be developed primarily at the level of sub regional Strategic Planning Area.

The Assembly will also have a new role in linking local economic development with local regional and national spatial planning through oversight of Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) and involvement in regional economic fora in conjunction with relevant interests.

In addition, the Assembly will play an important role in promoting and supporting balanced regional development through management of EU structural funds programmes (ERDF) and securing EU funding for specific regional projects in association with the relevant local authorities and also linkage between these functions and spatial and economic strategy.

The following sets out the key stakeholders with whom the Regional Assembly cooperates in carrying out its policies.

## 1. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies Units Functions

- a) Department of the Environment Community & Local Government
- b) Local Authorities
- c) Statutory Bodies responsible for planning & the environment
- d) Government Departments

- e) State Agencies
- f) Higher Education Institutions and Regional Organisations
- g) Prescribed Bodies
- h) Representatives of the private sector e.g., Chambers of Commerce

## 2. European Union Activities Unit Functions

- a) European Commission
- b) Structural Funds Policy, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- c) Implementing Departments and Agencies
- d) Local Authorities
- e) Local Enterprise Offices
- f) Higher Education Institutions
- g) Interreg Programme Secretariats
- h) BMW Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee 2014-2020
- i) Special EU Programmes Body

## 3. Corporate Governance Unit's Functions

- a) Local Authorities
- b) Local Government Audit Services
- c) European Union Committee of the Regions
- d) North South Bodies
- e) Department of the Environment Community and Local Government
- f) Southern and Eastern & Midland Regional Assemblies
- g) Local Government Management Agency

# 7. Internal Capacity & Resources

The NWRA has identified and are committed to providing the financial and human resources required to realise the objectives and strategies outlined in this plan. The Assembly has a committed and highly qualified workforce of eighteen staff and manages its human resource function through a suite of HR policies including workforce planning, recruitment and induction, training and development, performance management through the Performance Management Development Systems process and diversity and equality. The Assembly has delivered on its functions to date in line with the challenges arising from the national public service agreements and through the commitment and flexibility of our staff, a wide range of efficiencies.

The Assembly publishes an annual Programme of Work in accordance with Article 21 of the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014. This programme of work sets out the key areas of work for the NWRA. The Assembly also adopts a budget in line with the objectives as set out in the programme of work. The framing of the annual budget will be carried out within the context of available resources from local authority sources, central government and receipts from the European Union. The amount of budget available will therefore impact on the capacity of the Assembly to deliver on its objectives. The Programme of Work will also take into account agreed priorities as well as legislative and statutory requirements that must be complied with by the Assembly such as Health and Safety. Notwithstanding this, the Assembly will endeavour to meet the challenges of the constantly changing external environment in which it operates.

## **Financial**

The Financial resources of the Assembly are sourced primarily through three streams, Local Authority contributions, EU Technical Assistance and funding from INTERREG support role and projects. Our capacity to fully realise these sources of income will be fundamental to the realisation of the corporate objectives. The management of our assets is an on-going activity, which will enable the organisation to progress the

objectives in the plan. Future budgets will be prepared having regard to the objectives of this plan. Value for money considerations will underpin this process.

There will be regular assessments of expenditure programmes particularly in the preparation of our annual estimates to provide a more rational and informed basis on which to make decisions for allocating available scarce resources in the light of the priority objectives identified.

## **Human Resources**

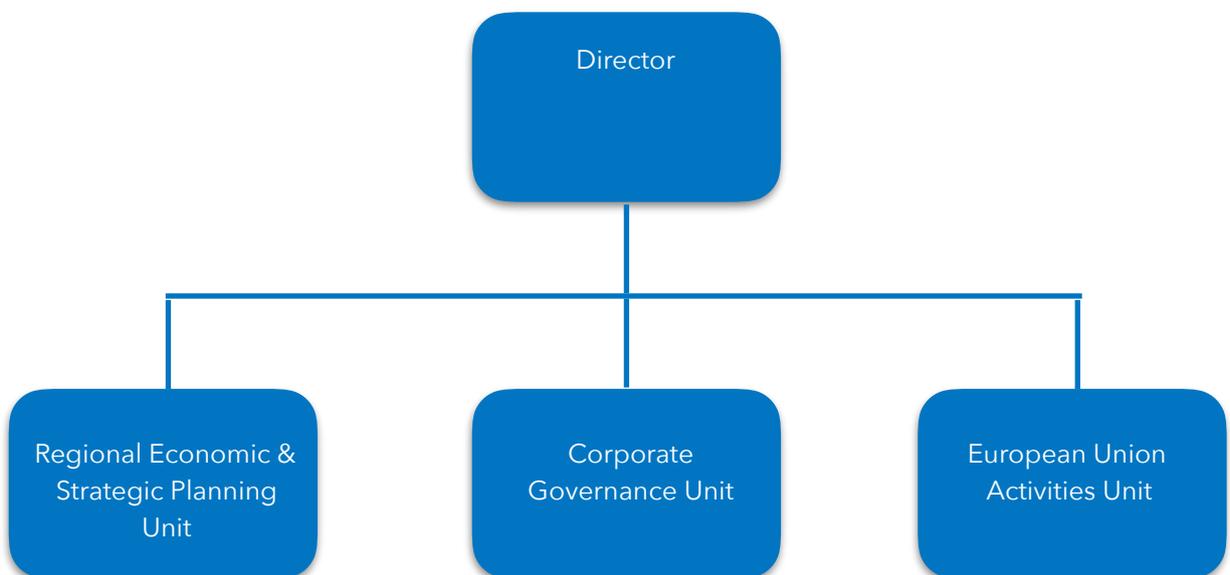
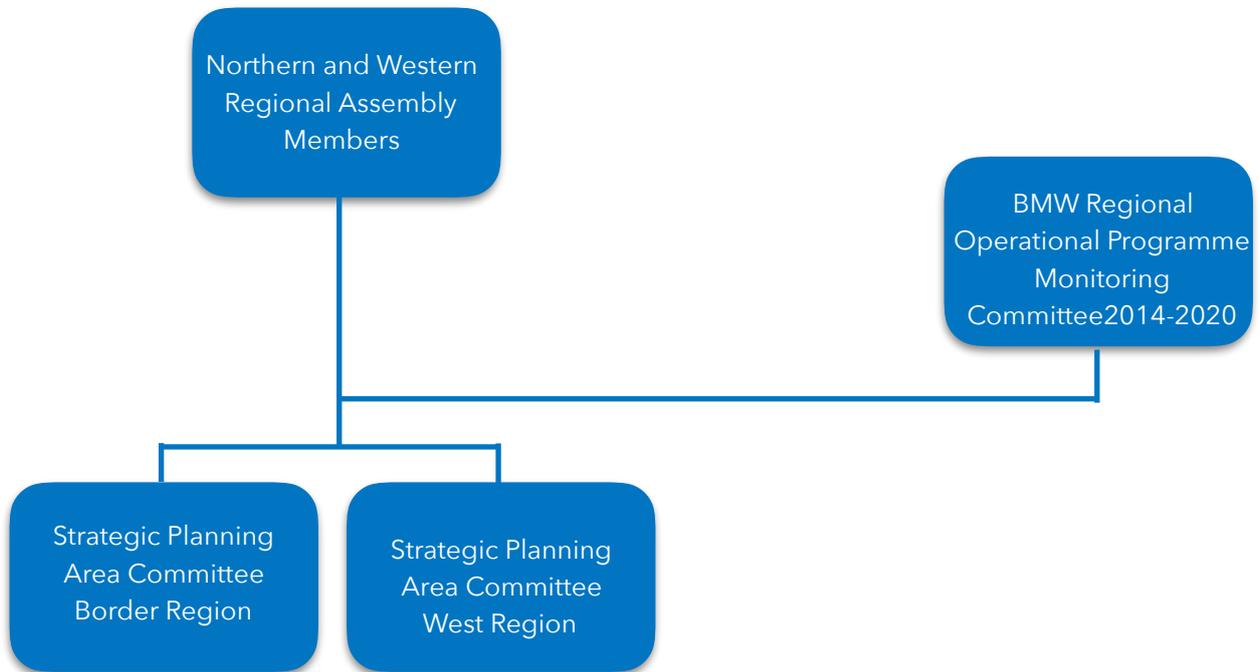
The Assembly will adopt a flexible approach to the deployment of staff and the alignment of qualifications and capabilities to meet the needs of the new Assembly functions so that adequate resources are available to meet necessary requirements. The current embargo on recruitment is especially challenging in the context of the Assembly's enhanced role and functions, and it is critical that the Assembly has the capacity to meet these challenges in the development of its policies.

Notwithstanding current constraints, the aspirations, training and career development needs of the staff must be adequately addressed so that the attainment of skills and knowledge are in line with our corporate plan. Development of our human resources will focus on the enhancement of employee capacity to take on future tasks and responsibilities. There will be a provision in the annual budgets towards the ongoing development and training of staff, including the necessary Health and Safety requirements set down in legislation.

## **Operating Structure**

The Assembly operates through its Members and in relation to overseeing, the European Union Regional Development Funds, the Monitoring Committee, set up under the European Union Structural Funds regulations, works in partnership with the staff, to carry out its functions

## Governance Structure



# 8. Strategic Objective & Supporting Strategies

<b>Corporate Goal 1: To promote sustainable economic development and planning in the Northern and Western Region</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1.1	To prepare a Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy for the Northern and Western Region	Participate in National Steering Committee to oversee the RSES and National Planning Framework processes in line with Ministerial Directions	2015-2016
		Establish and support the activities of the Strategic Planning Area Committees with key stakeholder involvement and Technical Working Groups for each Strategic Planning Area	2015-2019
		Oversee preparation of issue papers in line with population targets and analysis of development needs, infrastructure deficits and potentials	2015-2016
		Undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (and Appropriate Assessments, if required) and integration of Flood Risk Assessments, as part of RSES processes	2015-2016
		Engage with economic agencies to define regional economic strategy and identify investment priorities	2015-2016
		Prepare draft RSES strategy for public consultation and review by the SPA Committees and by the Regional Assembly	2016
		Finalise and launch Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	2016
		Put in place an implementation and monitoring framework for the RSES	2016-2019
1.2	To ensure the effective implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines	Put in place arrangements for ongoing statutory reviews of pre-draft and draft County Development Plans and variations	2015-2016
		Make submissions/observations on Local Area Plans, SDZs, other significant development proposals and draft Ministerial Directions	2015-2019
		Engage with the Regional Planners Network (RPN) on preparation and delivery of Annual Work Plans and monitoring of activities and outputs	2015-2019
1.3	To support the development of Local Economic and Community Plans by Local Authorities	Establish agreed arrangements for review of draft LECPs with DECLG and Regional Assemblies and Local Authorities	2015
		Oversee reviews of draft socio-economic statements, and draft LECPs prepared by the 9 Local Authorities in the NWRA region	2015

**Corporate Goal 1: To promote sustainable economic development and planning in the Northern and Western Region**

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
1.4	To establish Regional Economic Fora for the Northern and Western Region	Liaise with constituent local authorities to establish Regional Economic Fora for the Northern and Western Region	2015/2016
		Agree a work programme for each Economic Forum to feed into the LECP and RSES processes	2016
1.5	Draft, commission and manage the Publication of Policy and Research Papers to meet the needs of the NWRA Area	Prepare policy submissions on behalf of the Assembly in response to relevant public consultations by Government Departments and Agencies and policy briefings for meetings with Ministers and Departmental Officials	2015-2019
		Monitor the development and implementation of national policies and regional policy and their impact upon the NWRA Region	2015-2019
		Develop appropriate responses to highlight issues impacting the Region	2015-2019
		Represent the Assembly on the Plenary Steering Committee of the Enterprise Ireland funded MetricIreland initiative, this partnership is comprised of NUIG, UL, Athlone IT, GMIT and IT Sligo	2015 - 2019
		Foster and promote the development of a Regional Identity.	2015-2019
		Make presentations on behalf of the Regional Assembly on relevant policy bodies and at appropriate meetings of regional stakeholders	2015 - 2019
		Support the work of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and provide a regional input into policy positions and opinions of the CoR on regionally relevant issues	2015-2019
1.6	To make submissions on regionally relevant spatial planning issues	Make submissions, where appropriate, to national strategic planning processes and policy reviews, to align with RPG/ RSES objectives	2015-2019
		Make submissions to local and regional strategies, including Regional Enterprise Strategies and Regional skills fora	2015-2019
1.7	To participate in EU INTERREG Projects	Explore potential funding opportunities for the Regional Assembly and the region based on the Assembly's European Project's Strategy, which has identified relevant sectors to focus upon	2015-2019

**Corporate Goal 2: To Effectively Manage European Union Regional and Interregional Programmes and Projects**

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
2.1	To manage the closure of the BMW Regional Operational Programme 2007-13	Complete Impact Evaluation of Research Measures in the Regional Operational Programme 2007-13	December 2015
		Complete all verifications and declarations for co-funded measures	June 2016
		Complete an analysis of all revenue-generating projects	October 2016
		Facilitate final audits of the Regional Operational Programme 2007-13 and make final adjustments	December 2016
		Complete and submit Final Implementation Report and project lists	March 2017
		Co-operate with ex ante evaluations commissioned by DG REGIO	2015-2017
2.2	To oversee the Monitoring and Evaluation of the BMW Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	Put in place an IT system to record and store in computerised form data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit	December 2016
		Prepare an Evaluation Plan for the BMW Regional OP 2014-2020	December 2015
		Provide training and guidance to Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries on the use of the IT system	2016-2019
		Host at least one Monitoring Committee Meeting per annum and provide all required reports and support documents	2015-2019
		Prepare and submit an Annual Implementation Report by end May each year on the BMW Regional OP 2014-2020	2015-2019
		Undertake a mid-term evaluation of the BMW Regional OP 2014-2020	2018
		Provide information to evaluations commissioned by DG REGIO on the implementation and effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy	2015-2019
		Participate in annual review meetings with DG REGIO	2016 onwards
		Participate in the annual meeting of the National Co-ordinating Committee for European Structural and Investment Funds	2015-2019

**Corporate Goal 2: To Effectively Manage European Union Regional and Interregional Programmes and Projects**

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
2.2	To oversee the Monitoring and Evaluation of the BMW Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	Provide progress reports to the Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee	2015-2019
		Update the Gateways and Hubs Index	2017
2.3	To ensure the effective financial management and control of the BMW Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	Put in place a system to ensure that all exchanges of information between Beneficiaries and other programme authorities can take place by means of electronic data exchange	December 2015
		Undertake a fraud risk with Intermediary Bodies for all co-funded schemes and put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures based on the risks identified, and review bi-annually	December 2015 onwards
		Prepare a standard verification checklist to be used by all Intermediary Bodies	December 2015
		Prepare a description of the systems in place for the management and control of co-funded schemes in co-operation with Intermediate Bodies	December 2015
		Complete an Administrative Agreement with each Intermediate Body	December 2015
		Support the work of the Independent Audit Authority in the assessment of the management and control system and the designation of the authorities	March 2016
		Provide training and guidance to all Intermediate Bodies on financial management and control, verification, public procurement, information and communications and eligibility	April 2016 onwards
		Submit declarations of expenditure to the European Regional Development Funds Certifying Authority	October 2016 onwards
		Facilitate systems and operations audits conducted by the ERDF Audit Authority and collate responses in conjunction with Intermediate Bodies	January 2017 onwards
Draw up the management declaration and annual summary for the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	February 2017 onwards		

**Corporate Goal 2: To Effectively Manage European Union Regional and Interregional Programmes and Projects**

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
2.3	To ensure the effective financial management and control of the BMW Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	Participate on the Implementation Group for ESIF Funds, chaired by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	2015-2019
		Provide annual forecasts of ERDF draw downs to the ERDF Certifying Authority	2016-2019
		Manage the Technical Assistance priority in relation to preparation, appraisal and monitoring of operations, co-ordination OP publicity, financial control, evaluation and audits.	2015-2019
2.4	To increase the public awareness and transparency of the Operational Programme	Prepare and seek approval for the Communications Strategy for the BMW Regional OP 2014-2020	September 2015
		Provide up to date information on the OP and on all relevant regulations and guidelines on the NWRA web-site	2015-2019
		Organise a major annual information activity to disseminate the achievements of the OP	2015-2019
		Provide information and communication guidance and training to Intermediate and Beneficiary Bodies	2015-2019
		Publish a list of operations on the NWRA web-site, every 6 months	2016-2019
		Oversee compliance by Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries with the Information and Communications Guidelines and correct use of logos	2015-2019
		Commission a public awareness survey, jointly with The Southern Regional Assembly, on the awareness of the OP among the general public	2018
		Provide an annual update on information and communications activities and on planned activities to the OP Monitoring Committee	2015-2019
		Facilitate study visits to the region from other states	2015-2019
Participate on the EU INFORM Network to exchange best practises in the promotion of EU Cohesion Policy	2015-2019		

**Corporate Goal 2: To Effectively Manage European Union Regional and Interregional Programmes and Projects**

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
2.5	To Manage the ERDF Gateway Fund 2014-2020	Prepare and launch a call for proposals in co-operation with the Steering Committee for the Scheme	September 2015
		Assess all proposals received and issue grant agreements for the selected projects	November 2015
		Undertake management verifications on all expenditure declarations and submit to the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government	2016-2019
		Prepare progress reports for the OP Monitoring Committee on the ERDF Gateway Fund Scheme	2016-2019
		Publicise the achievements of the ERDF Gateway Fund Scheme	2016-2019
2.6	To Monitor the Impact of European Union programmes in the Region	<p>Represent the region by participating on the following Monitoring Committee for European Union Funded Programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership Agreement</li> <li>• Rural Development programme</li> <li>• ESF programme</li> <li>• European Fisheries Fund</li> <li>• PEACE Programme</li> <li>• INTERREG Cross-Border Programme</li> <li>• Northern Periphery and Arctic programme</li> <li>• Atlantic Area Programme</li> <li>• Interreg Europe Programme</li> </ul>	2015-2019
2.7	To fulfil National Contact Point and First Level Control functions for INTERREG Programmes	Promote the Interreg V Atlantic Area programme and provide support to Irish project partners in applying to the programme	2015-2019
		Promote the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme and provide support to Irish project partners in applying to the programme	2015-2019
		Carry out first level control checks on all expenditure declarations by Irish partners and lead partners in the Atlantic Area Programme, Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme and Interreg Europe	2015-2019
2.8	To contribute to European Union Cohesion Policy Development	Contribute to European Union Cohesion Policy review processes, including the post 2020 policy framework	2015-2019
		Participate in relevant activities of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) and its Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC)	2015-2019

**Corporate Goal 2: To Effectively Manage European Union Regional and Interregional Programmes and Projects**

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
2.9	To support the work of the Irish Regions Office in Brussels	Agree strategic objectives and priorities for the Irish Regions Office (IRO) in Brussels	2015
		Liaise with the region's representative in the Irish Regions Office (IRO) Brussels on an ongoing basis	2015-2019

**Corporate Goal 3: To effectively manage the operational and governance functions of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
3.1	Co-ordinate the Delivery of Public Services	Communicate the role of the NW Regional Assembly and the needs of the NW Region to Government Departments, Regional Bodies, Local Authorities and State Agencies	2015-2019
		Address relevant conferences and workshops on the role and work of the Assembly	2015-2019
		Examine in consultation with the Western Development Commission, the scope for continued co-operation and co-ordination of activities	2015-2019
		Continue formal links with the Committee of the Regions and enhance links with other EU regional networks	2015-2019
		Provide assistance and policy support to the NWRA Committee of the Regions	2015-2019
3.2	Develop North-South Co-operation	Liaise with and support cross-border bodies and institutions including the Northern Ireland Assembly, North-South Ministerial Council, and other cross border bodies	2015-2019
		Continue to work with and develop new initiatives and projects with existing cross border networks	2015-2019
		Continue the close links with the Special EU Programmes Body in relation to managing authority functions, financial management and major projects	2015-2019
		Promote North South co-operation in the implementation of the BMW Regional OP 2014 - 2020	2015-2019
3.3	Implement Operational Issues and statutory functions	Liaise with the Dept of Environment, Community and Local Government on the implementation of the regional reform process	2015-2019
		Oversee the recruitment process to fill all vacant posts arising from the regional reconfiguration	2015-2019

**Corporate Goal 3: To effectively manage the operational and governance functions of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly**

No.	Strategic Objectives	Actions	Timeframe
3.3	Implement Operational Issues and statutory functions	Develop new corporate identity , headed paper, signage etc	2015 - 2019
		Prepare and publish an Annual Report on the activities of the Regional Assembly	2015-2019
		Develop and implement the Assembly's Communications Strategy by holding regular meetings of the Communications Steering Group	2015-2019
		Continue to update the NW Assembly's web-site to make it more attractive and user-friendly	2015-2019
		Implement the Official Languages Act 2003 as it relates to the Assembly	2015-2019
		Update the work place Safety Statement and keep it under review	2015-2019
		Compile a Training Needs Analysis based on Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and provide staff specific training in relation to areas that are necessary	2015-2019
		Participate in the EU Commission Open Days	2015-2019
		Implement the Public Service Agreement (Haddington Road Agreement) as it relates to the NW Regional Assembly	2015-2019
		Commence engagement with the National Oversight and Audit Commission	2015-2019
		The Northern and Western Regional Assembly will make an assessment of the equality and human rights issues that may be relevant to the functions and purposes of our organisation and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues	2015-2016
		Develop a public procurement strategy	2016

# 9. Implementation & Monitoring

**Progress on achieving objectives will be reviewed and reported on in a variety of ways including:-**

- Northern & Western Regional Assembly Annual Reports & review of Corporate Plan (annual)
- BMW Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee Implementation Reports (annual)
- Annual Financial Statements and Budgets (annual )
- External Local Government Audit Reports (annual )
- Monitoring of the implementation of the RSES plans every two years
- Regular review of staff performance (annual)
- European Union awareness surveys (once over the lifetime of the plan)
- Evaluation of the BMW Regional Operational Programme (once over the lifetime of the plan)
- Evaluation and review of NWRA's Communications Strategy (ongoing)
- Evaluation and review of NWRA's EU Project strategy (ongoing)

# 10. List of Members & Staff

## Membership of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly 2015-2019

Local Authority	No.	Name	Party
Cavan	2	Cllr. Paddy Smith	Fine Gael
		Cllr. Sean Smith	Fianna Fáil
Donegal	3	Cllr. Seamus O'Domhnaill	Fianna Fáil
		Cllr. Jack Murray	Sinn Féin
		Cllr. Frank McBrearty	Non Party
Galway	3	Cllr. Jimmy McClearn (Cathaoirleach)	Fine Gael
		Cllr. Martina Kinane	Fianna Fáil
		Cllr. Tomás Ó Currain	Non Party
Galway City	2	Cllr. Pearce Flannery	Fine Gael
		Cllr. Declan McDonnell	Non Party
Leitrim	2	Cllr. Frank Dolan	Fine Gael
		Cllr. Justin Warnock	Fianna Fáil
Mayo	3	Cllr. John Caulfield	Fianna Fáil
		Cllr. Patsy O'Brien	Fine Gael
		Cllr. Christy Hyland	Non Party
Monaghan	2	Cllr. Jackie Crowe	Sinn Féin
		Cllr. Séamus Coyle	Fianna Fáil
Roscommon	2	Cllr. Nigel Dineen	Non Party
		Cllr. Eugene Murphy	Fianna Fáil
Sligo	2	Cllr. Eamon Scanlon	Fianna Fáil
		Cllr. Seamus Kilgallon	Fianna Fáil
EU Committee of the Regions	4	Cllr. Enda Stenson	Non Party
		Cllr. Jerry Lundy	Fianna Fáil
		Cllr. Rose Conway	Sinn Féin
		Cllr. Niall Mc Nelis	Labour

## EXECUTIVE STAFF OF THE NORTHERN & WESTERN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Mr. Gerry Finn	Director
Dr. Kieran Moylan	Assistant Director
Vacant	Senior Planner
Mr. Frank Flanagan	Regional Planning Officer
Vacant	Regional Planning Officer
Mr. Michael McCauley	Programme Executive
Mr. Gerry Lavelle	Programme Executive
Mr. Barry Guckian	Programme Executive
Mr. Adrian O'Donoghue	Policy and Research Officer
Mr. Brendan Mooney	Auditor
Mr. Michael O'Brien	Programme Liaison Officer
Ms. Eiméar Dowd	Staff Officer
Vacant	First Level Controller
Ms. Catherine Burke	Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Gerardine Lafferty	Assistant Staff Officer
Vacant	Assistant Staff Officer
Ms. Pauline Grennan	Clerical Officer
Ms. Marie Moriarty	Clerical Officer





# Northern & Western Regional Assembly

## Northern & Western Regional Assembly

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Ireland's European Structural and  
Investment Funds Programmes  
2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government  
and the European Union



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund