



Northern & Western
Regional Assembly

ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENT

2016



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





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CATHAOIRLEACH'S STATEMENT

I am delighted as Cathaoirleach of the Northern & Western Regional Assembly to present the Assembly's Annual Report for 2016. The Northern & Western Regional Assembly is responsible for regional economic and spatial planning, along with existing responsibilities for the preparation and management of the European Union Operational Programme which has an investment of €320 million. The investment which includes €160 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is outlined in more detail throughout this report.

2016 was an active and busy year for the Assembly. In February, the Northern & Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) hosted the regional launch of public consultations for "Ireland 2040 Our Plan," the New National Planning Framework. It was my privilege as Cathaoirleach to welcome Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government Simon Coveney to the Model Theatre in Sligo to participate in a town hall style meeting regarding the National Planning Framework and the government's key priorities in this area. The launch was attended by a large number of TDs, Senators, Councillors and Public Officials.

BREXIT and its impact are critical for Ireland as a whole but have a significant impact on the border Region because of its close association with the North. During my initial few months I invited Dr. Edgar Morganroth, Associate Research Professor, Economic and Social Research

Institute (ESRI) to deliver a presentation on BREXIT. This was attended by a large section of public agencies and was both informative and useful. We also hosted further presentations on Brexit throughout the year to inform the Assembly in its work

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to Mr. David Minton, Director and the Assembly Staff Members for their support and assistance to me during the past year. I also wish to acknowledge the important contribution of my fellow Assembly Members.

Le gach dea-ghuí

Councillor Seamus Kilgannon

Cathaoirleach

DIRECTOR'S VIEW

The NWRA is crafting a vision for our region that is vibrant, connected, natural, inclusive and smart. Simply we have three clear objectives. The NWRA is working to create BETTER PLACES by adopting best practice in international spatial and economic development. Achieving COMPETITIVENESS by optimising EU and exchequer funding for regional priorities, and harnessing the strengths of our 'place' through COLLABORATION.

Our region is made up of many parts. Some administrative, some functional and others economic but all our communities illustrate unyielding optimism. Driven by a sense that 'we still have not reached our potential in industry, arts & culture, community, enterprise and lifestyle'.

It is clear from our consultation and engagement throughout 2016 that this potential is not hidden, but latent. It is simply waiting on the necessary intervention, investment or new technology.

In attempting to address this, the members of NWRA, hosted the 'One Region; One Vision' conference in December 2016. This conference aimed to challenge the consensus and was crucial in the formation of our Strategy, Objectives and Methodology. The conference was also

the catalyst in formulating our Smart Cities project 'SMARTPLACES'. A partnership between NWRA, NUIG and WDC.

Finally, I must give particular acknowledgement to the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Seamus Kilgannon who carefully navigated the Assembly through a considerable transition in 2016 with great skill and expertise

The Regional Assembly simply wants to enable effective regional development that allows our towns, counties and cities reach their potential.

"Regional development for us is not about bringing a region together; it is connecting the strengths of a region, driving convergence and reaching our potential".

2016 was a year of significant transition within the Assembly. With the appointment of new staff and new management team. In continuing to deliver our Corporate Plan the annual report for 2016 highlights some of our achievements.

David Minton

Director

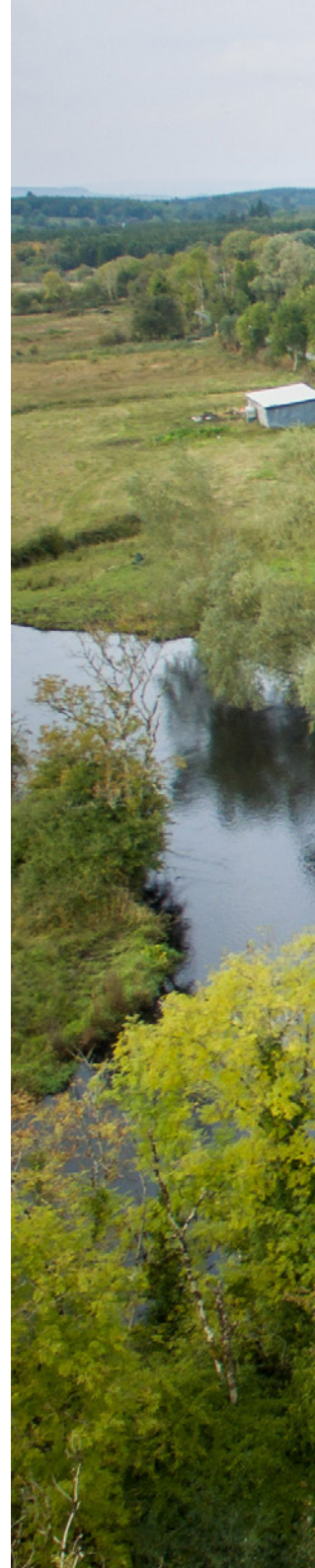
A YEAR IN REVIEW

The central purpose of the Regional Assembly is to: Create Better Places and a more Competitive Region. Your Region. Our Core responsibilities now include:



Minister Mary Mitchell O'Connor TD, Minister of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, with NWRA staff and local representatives

- 1 Regional economic development and spatial planning
- 2 Management of European Regional Development Funding (€320 million regional Operation Programme)
- 3 Developing, implementing and promotion regional development policy and activities
- 4 National contact point for EU-funded programmes; and regional contact point on all EU funding
- 5 Promoting coordinated action to promote effectiveness in Local Government and public services
- 6 A new role in linking local economic development with regional and national planning through oversight of Local Economic and Community Plans



Better Places



Create better places by ensuring our region adopts effective planning and economic development policies centred on sustainable and resilient growth.

Acting as a lead agent in regional collaboration on strategic objectives that improve our streets, towns, amenities, services and public areas.

Enhance Competitiveness



Enhance our competitiveness by optimising all exchequer and EU funding (with local and regional partners) to ensure appropriate levels of investment and infrastructure are secured for our region.

Management of European Regional Development Funding. The €320m six year programme up until 2020 strengthening the regions research capacity, broadband infrastructure, SME development, energy efficiency and integrated development is a clear priority.

Act as a Platform for Collaboration



Act as a platform for collaboration, knowledge transfer and ultimately regional economic development.

Managing the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies; developing sustainable local economies and communities, while being alert and responsive to global trends.

Picture: Cycling in Leitrim

CREATE BETTER PLACES

Planning and Economic Development

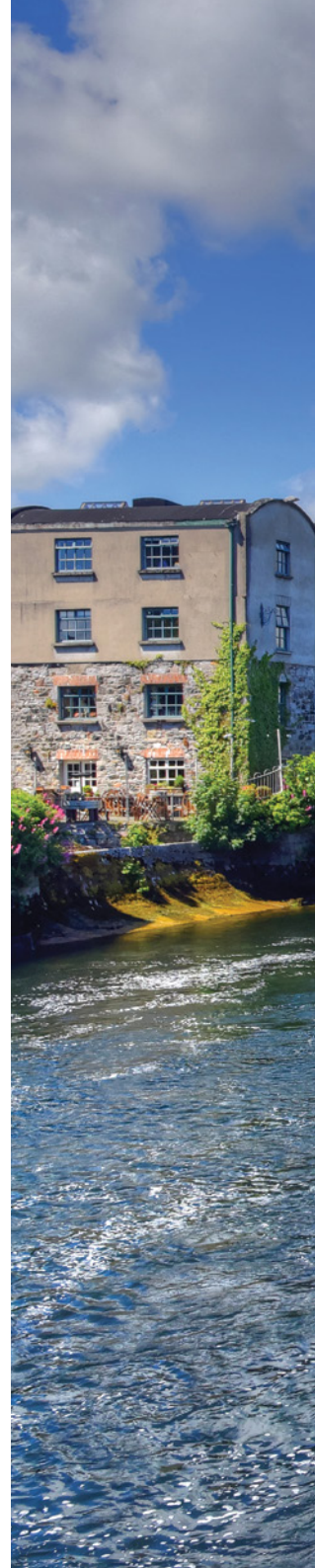
The Regional Assembly has continued to influence and shape national, regional and local policy strategies and frameworks through participation in workshops, conferences, seminars and training events and has provided a platform to connect people and places. Examples include:

- + Provided a platform for Irish water to consult with Local Authorities in NWRA Chamber Jan 2016
- + Submission to Consultation on the department of Transport tourism and sport's Strategy Statement 2017-2019
- + Variety of submissions on Development Plans
- + Certification of LECP's
- + Consideration of various Strategic Projects e.g. Submission on the proposed Data Centre and Associated works at Athenry Co Galway and the North South Interconnector

The Regional Assembly has also worked with the Department of Housing, Planning Community and Local Government in the preparation of the National Planning Framework through the workings of the two Strategic Planning Area Committees, whereby assessment of LECP's, Regional Planning Guidelines, Development Plans, Action Plans for Jobs and the Irish cross Border Area Networks Regional Strategic Framework. The Assembly has also provided support through participation on the Technical Working Groups and Steering Group.

Planning and Economic Development

The Action Plan for Jobs presented a new approach to upgrading the attractiveness and competitiveness of all our regions, through the development of Regional Action Plans for Jobs. The objective was for each region to achieve its economic potential and raise employment levels through the implementation of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs.



Designated Urban Centres

Under the Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme the Assembly granted over €14m to 7 urban centres in 2015:



€2,000,000

directed towards Sligo for enhancements to O'Connell Street and community centre at Cranmore



€2,000,000

dedicated to Letterkenny improving transport connectivity, road linkage and supporting local social enterprise centre



€3,500,000

in Galway towards a City Library and Cultural Centre



€1,500,000

in Athlone for Church Street improvement works



€2,000,000

for Clanbrasil Street & rejuvenation of St Nicholas Quarter in Dundalk enterprise centre



€1,500,000

Mullingar Town Centre €1.5 million for enhancement of town civic areas and linkages between them



€1,500,000

Tullamore: €1.5 million for Street Enhancement Project

The projects under this priority were approved in early 2016 and are still at the design stage.

'ONE Region: ONE Vision' Conference

'Rural Ireland' is far from dead – and has the potential to become an economically powerful Region. The 'ONE Region: ONE Vision' conference was held at The Model in Sligo on December 8th, and brought together key players in Rural Ireland to plot how the region can kick-on and build a lasting recovery. It explored the unique possibilities on offer to innovators and job creators in rural communities to discuss how changing conditions could enhance what's already one of the most sensational places to live on the continent of Europe.

Speakers included RTÉ broadcaster **Richard Curran**, who hosted TV's 'Battle for Rural Ireland's, the ESRI's Chief economist **Dr. Edgar Morgenroth**, and broadcaster and environmentalist **Duncan Stewart** and **Oliver Daniels** of the Insight Centre.

Picture: Galway, Ireland and the River Corrib

ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly enhances the competitiveness of our region by optimising all exchequer and EU funding (with local and regional partners) to ensure appropriate levels of investment and infrastructure are secured for our region.

Management of European Regional Development Funding. The €320m six year programme up until 2020 strengthening the regions research capacity, broadband infrastructure, SME development, energy efficiency and integrated development is a clear priority.

By the end of 2016 the Regional Operational Programme (2014-2020) will have supported nearly 500 projects in the region. The programme concentrates on:

- + Research, Technological Development and Innovation
- + ICT Infrastructure
- + SME Competitiveness
- + Low carbon economy

The Digital Economy is rapidly becoming 'the economy'. Throughout 2016 the programme continued to invest in the National Broadband Plan supporting our towns and villages. The Operational Programme will invest over €45m in the lifetime of the Plan.

SPARA 2020

- Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports

SPARA 2020 is a Trans-European 3 year project worth €2.4m. It is designed to optimise non-aeronautical activities in 4 regional airports, including Donegal and Ireland West Airport Knock.

The NWRA is the leading a project called Non-Aeronautical Services, which reviews current non-aeronautical revenue generating activities and sets out to identify additional commercial opportunities which will help maintain the activities of these regional airports into the future.

Other significant Progress under the Operational Programme in 2016 included;

- + The Local Enterprise Offices recently delivered the third Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur Competition (IBYE). The IBYE Programme is a 2016 Action Plan for Jobs (APJ) action. The programme targets the development of young entrepreneurs between the ages of 18-35 across three categories: Best Business Idea, Best Start-Up Business and Best Established Business. The 2016 competition saw a 32% rise in entries to IBYE nationally, with 1,842 entrepreneurs competing in the three categories.
- + By the end of 2016, a total of 10,713 micro-enterprises received support (*financial & non-financial*), including an employment increase of 931 FTEs (*full time equivalents*) in the BMW Region.
- + 24 applications for Commercial Case Feasibility Support were approved for funding in 2016 from BMW region institutions Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund.
- + Seven applications for Commercialisation Fund Project support were approved for funding from BMW region institutions of which two were submitted under the invited rolling application process.
- + For the period ending 31st December 2016 there were 54 enterprises receiving Research and Development supports with projects amounting to €10.02 million approved for funding.
- + The Local Enterprise Offices act as a "first-stop-shop" for entrepreneurs and deliver a very wide range of relevant supports and services. By the end of 2016 the number of participants of enterprise training programmes was 16,478 and the number of enterprises receiving support was 10,713

- + By the end of 2016 the number of participants of the Enterprise Ireland New Frontiers enterprise training programmes was 156.
- + Enterprise Ireland - SME Competitiveness – Enterprise Ireland supported 114 companies through its capacity building support.
- + Energy efficiency works were carried out on 489 Local Authority units in 2016.
- + The number of vacant units retrofitted with energy efficiency works in 2016 at a cost of €2,063,572 was 597.
- + The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme continued in 2016 with 7,670 of households registered with improved energy consumption ratings.

TRadition and INNOvation (TRINNO)

The NWRA continues to participate in the Business ecosystem for TRadition and INNOvation (TRINNO). In areas suffering from effects of the economic crisis, traditional industrial models cannot compete. This project helps business to apply the benefits of digital innovation (digital manufacturing, Internet of thing, big data, etc.) to traditional sectors.

Two Science Foundation Ireland Research Centres INSIGHT and CURAM are now based in the Northern & Western Region and the success rate of the region will hopefully increase in the coming years.

As at December 2016 ten awards were made under the Science Foundation Ireland Investigators Programme which are based in the Northern & Western Region (NUIG and the Marine Institute)

Picture: Sligo Airport [Aerial View]

ACT AS A PLATFORM FOR COLLABORATION

Supporting EU Collaboration

In 2016 the Assembly worked closely with the Irish Maritime Affairs Attaché, Marcella Smyth, Chair of the Atlantic Strategy Group in 2016 in aligning Interreg Atlantic Area Projects with the Priorities of the Atlantic Action Plan.

Over 300 delegates attended the Third Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference in Croke Park in September which brought together key marine players from across the Atlantic Area involved in Marine technology Development, Marine Renewable Energies, Marine Leisure & nautical sports as well as Marine Researchers and Local Authorities. The NWRA participated in the conference event alongside the Atlantic Area Programme Authorities from PORTO.

Postgraduate Diploma in European Funding

In association with the European Institute for Communications and the Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe, The Northern & Western Regional Assembly piloted the first Postgraduate Diploma Programme in European Funding in November 2016. Eleven staff from the Region's Local Authorities and Institutes of Technology participated in Programme 1 which included a study trip to Brussels, the European Institutions including the European Parliament and the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU. Participants included Directors of Services, Senior Planners, Architects, Administrative Officers as well as Senior Executive Officers and Institute of Technology Lectures. The Postgraduate Diploma in European Studies is part of a wider EU Engagement exercise aimed at up-skilling Local Authority officials in European Funding Application preparation with a view to increasing the level of EU Funding into the Region as well as EU networks. The NWRA has a target of over sixty participants by the end of 2017.

INTERREG Atlantic Area Programme

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly hosted the Presidency of the INTERREG Atlantic Area Programme on behalf IRELAND in 2016. Councillor Jimmy McClearn, Cathaoirleach performed the official launch of the Atlantic Area Programme at an EU Conference in PORTO in May which was attended by over 350 delegates from across the EU. Councillor McClearn delivered the keynote address which highlighted the importance of the Atlantic Area Programme to supporting our Local Authorities, Higher Education Institutes as well as Business sector across the country. The event also included high level contributions from the Director General of DG Maritime Affairs of the EU Commission, Mr. Joao Aguiar Machado as well as Marcella Smyth, Maritime Affairs Attaché with the Irish Permanent Representation in Brussels and Chair of the Atlantic Maritime Strategy Group in 2016.

NWRA Presides on First Decisions on Atlantic Area Projects

In September 2016 Mr. David Minton, Director welcomed Atlantic Member State delegates to Dublin Castle as President of the Atlantic Area Programme. Under the Irish Chair, a total of 425 applications for funding were decided upon over two days at the Programme Monitoring Committee at Dublin Castle on September 7th and 8th, an unprecedented level of interest in the programme. 102 applications were sent forward to stage 2 of the application process with significant levels of participation from our Irish regional stakeholders including our Local Authorities, Institutes of Technology, NUI Galway and the Marine Institute across a diverse range of thematic areas including Marine Innovation, Maritime Heritage, the development of European Cycleways & the Eurovelho 1 Route and Atlantic Food trails.

Slow Adventure in Northern Territories (SAINT)

The Northern & Western Assembly continues to participate in the Slow Adventure in Northern Territories (SAINT). This three-year Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (NPA) project is exploring the development of the slow adventure. The project seeks to extend the marketing reach of businesses in the slow adventure tourism sector, in order to encourage more tourists to come to remote areas, experience the outdoors and engage with wild and nature-rich places.

Douglas Hyde Conference 2016 'Telling Tales of Revolution'

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly was the venue for the Douglas Hyde Conference which took place on July 21st in Ballaghaderreen. 'Telling Tales of Revolution', looked at different ways the stories have been told including 1916 and other revolutions and rebellions. Literature, song, art, story-telling and film featured over the course of the day. It put the telling of these tales into the broader context of communication through art in all its manifestations; the power and the richness that these modes of expression confer on events that have helped to mould our present.



STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2016

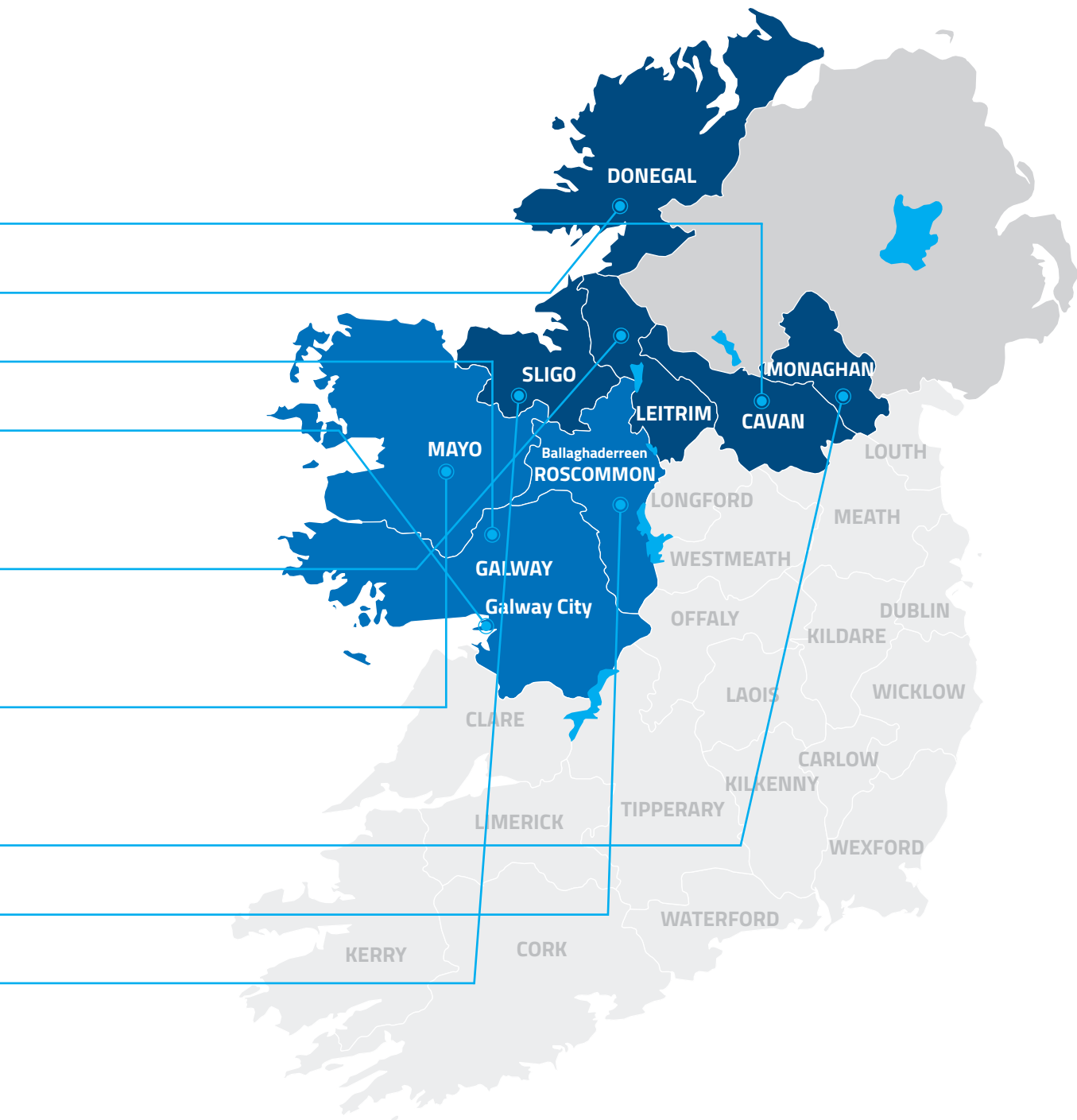
	€	€
	2016	2015
INCOME		
Contributions from Local Authorities	699,712.02	739,089.00
Technical Assistance Receipts	300,043.58	440,699.03
Interreg Technical Assistance Support Costs	62,763.94	61,520.07
European Project receipts	182,815.62	337,608.50
First Level Control Receipts	8,000.00	29,750.00
Miscellaneous Receipts	12,363.94	6,474.77
Bank Interest Receivable	1,183.22	3,747.49
Superannuation Contributions	39,934.87	41,706.97
Post Grad Diploma Receipts	10,450.00	0.00
Technical Assistance Grants	300,043.58	440,200.07
Gateway Grant Scheme Receipts	2,097,598.76	917,543.07
TESLA NW Europe Project Receipts	600,778.20	328,603.63
Marnet Atlantic Area Project Receipts	138,783.27	230,733.82
TOTAL INCOME	4,454,471.00	3,577,676.42
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries	830,489.98	923,109.84
Retirement Lump Sum	141,115.24	92,127.00
Lease & Rates, etc	90,660.44	90,690.45
Postage & Phones, etc,	10,183.47	10,795.52
Equipment & Supplies, etc	38,382.11	43,267.39

EXPENDITURE	2016	2015
Annual Allowance – Elected Members	45,774.15	34,737.10
Annual Allowance – Chairman (Taxable)	5,016.00	6,383.25
Annual Allowance – Chairman (Non-Taxable)	6,000.00	6,000.00
Travel & Subsistence – Article 35 2 (a)	11,221.57	13,310.72
Travel & Subsistence – Article 35 2 (b)	0.00	0.00
Staff Travel Cumulative	106,955.18	99,717.13
Subscriptions & Donations	35,610.19	24,524.79
Maintenance & Repairs	17,053.04	8,475.78
Energy Costs	12,046.51	9,719.68
Conference Fees	5,399.74	3,310.00
Miscellaneous	204,213.29	131,765.85
Insurance	14,964.05	11,842.73
Staff Training	24,944.04	6,832.48
Bank Charges	806.61	695.03
Regional Planning Guidelines	0.00	0.00
EU Project Costs	0.00	0.00
Depreciation Charge	1,262.71	2,506.68
Technical Assistance Expenditure	300,043.58	440,699.05
TESLA NW Europe Project Expenditure	600,778.20	328,603.63
Marnet Atlantic Area Project Expenditure	138,783.27	230,733.82
Gateway Grant Scheme Expenditure	2,097,598.76	917,543.07
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4,739,302.17	3,437,390.99
EXCESS EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME	-284,831.17	140,285.43
CUMULATIVE OPENING BALANCE AS AT 1ST JANUARY 2016	835,622.75	695,337.32
CLOSING BALANCE AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2016	550,791.58	835,622.75

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

CoR = Committee of the Regions Member

2	CAVAN	»»»	Cllr Paddy Smith	Cllr Sean Smith
3	DONEGAL	»»»	Cllr Seamus O'Domhnaill Cllr Jack Murray	Cllr Frank McBrearty
3	GALWAY	»»»	Cllr Jimmy McClearn Cllr Martina Kinane	Cllr Dermott Connolly (Member since February 2017) Cllr Tomás Ó Curraoin (Member until December 2016)
3	GALWAY CITY	»»»	Cllr Pearce Flannery	Cllr Declan McDonnell
	CoR	»»»	Cllr Niall McNelis	
3	LEITRIM	»»»	Cllr Frank Dolan	Cllr Justin Warnock
	CoR	»»»	Cllr Enda Stenson	
4	MAYO	»»»	Cllr John Caulfield Cllr Patsy O'Brien	Cllr Christy Hyland
	CoR	»»»	Cllr Gerry Murray	
2	MONAGHAN	»»»	Cllr Jackie Crowe	Cllr Séamus Coyle
2	ROSCOMMON	»»»	Cllr Nigel Dineen	Cllr Joe Murphy
3	SLIGO	»»»	Cllr Keith Henry	Cllr Seamus Kilgannon
	CoR	»»»	Cllr Jerry Lundy	



ASSEMBLY TEAM



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Ms Maeve Doyle
Clerical Officer
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STAKEHOLDERS



Comhairle Chontae An Cabháin
Cavan County Council



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council



Comhairle Contae Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



Comhairle Contae Ros Comáin
Roscommon County Council



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



Comhairle Contae Mhuineacháin
Monaghan County Council



Comhairle Chontae Shligigh
Sligo County Council



**An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála,
Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing, Planning,
Community and Local Government



**An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí
agus Athchóirithe**
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

Picture: Galway Cathedral lit up blue at night and car lights trails



OVERVIEW OF ENERGY USAGE IN 2016

The Northern & Western Regional Assembly occupies one building which it has leased, containing an area of 760 m². The electrical energy consumption in our office buildings is for heating, air conditioning, hot water, lighting and office equipment.

The electrical energy consumption in 2016 for the Northern & Western Regional Assembly was 81,818 kWh. This represents a reduction in energy consumption of 7.3% and an improvement of 24.7% above the baseline.

ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN IN 2016

The Regional Assembly leases its premises and is therefore limited in its capacity to make radical changes. The Regional Assembly registered with the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland as part of their Energy Advice and Mentoring Programme and continues to monitor the situation. We are continuing with the planned phase of replacing older light fittings with new energy efficient lights. Staff awareness relating to energy consumption is important as we strive to improve our energy efficiency.



Top Picture: NWRA School Competition


Middle Picture: Roscommon Food Fair, Mr Gerry Lavelle and Ms Mary Gleeson


Bottom Picture: Sligo Airport




Northern & Western Regional Assembly

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2014-2020

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European Union
European Regional
Development Fund