



**Northern & Western
Regional Assembly**

Annual Report 2015



Clár Chisti Eorpacha Struchtúrtha
agus Infheistíochta na hÉireann
2014–2020

Cómhaointhe ag Rialtas na hÉireann
agus ag an Aontas Eorpach



An tAontas Eorpach
Ciste Forbartha
Réigiúnach na hEorpa





Contents

- 2 | Cathaoirleach's Statement
- 3 | Director's View
- 4 | What We Do
- 6 | Better Places
- 8 | Enhanced Spaces
- 10 | Competitiveness
- 18 | Financial Review
- 21 | Stakeholders
- 22 | Members
- 24 | Meet the Team

Cathaoirleach's Statement



I am delighted as Cathaoirleach of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly to present the Assembly's Annual Report for 2015.

Continuing to deliver the European Union Operational Programme and Inter-Regional Programmes is a clear priority for our members. However, it is a dynamic time to be part of regional development as we align resources and investment through new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.

I am acutely aware of the challenges facing the region and I have first-hand knowledge, as a rural Councillor from County Galway, of the challenges ahead.

However, I am optimistic that the targeted programme will deliver a better way of life for the people of our region.

On behalf of the Assembly I would like to acknowledge the support of EU Commission officials, Government Departments, Agencies and other stakeholders.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the Assembly staff and recognise the work of our designated Chief Executive Seamus Neely.

**Councillor Jimmy Mc Clearn
Cathaoirleach**





Director's View

As Director it is my privilege to introduce the 2015 Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.



Our region is not homogenous, static or easily defined. It boasts unique strengths and opportunities and contains success stories that celebrate the achievements of our people and the vision of our communities.

On a daily basis our team is excited by the potential of our region and the opportunities it presents us. We look forward to working with our partners in formulating an exciting vision through the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies over the next 12 months.

The Assembly is keen to utilise this new platform to enhance our regional value and ultimately our competitiveness.

Our team had a challenging year in 2015 managing our transition from the old BMW structures to the new Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

2015 saw us launch our new €320 million ERDF co funded Operational Programme. In addition, the Assembly secured substantial funding to address strategic regional priorities through the TESLA and SPARA projects.

We are committed to ensuring our region is smart, sustainable and inclusive.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of my predecessor Mr. Gerry Finn who dedicated himself to the idea of a dynamic, better region.

David Minton
Director

What We Do

Ensuring
Competitiveness



Better
Places



Accelerating Jobs
and Growth



Fáilte



Aerfort Iarthar Éireann
Chnoc Mhuire



Management of European Regional Development Funding. The €320m six-year programme up until 2020, strengthening the region's research capacity, broadband infrastructure, SME development, energy efficiency and integrated development.



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



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

Better Places

By the end of 2015 the Regional Operational Programme (2014-2020) will have supported nearly 250 projects in the region.

The programme concentrates on:

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

Digital

The ability to trade and communicate online is now the cornerstone of the economy. Throughout 2015 the OP continued to invest in the National Broadband Plan supporting our towns and villages. The OP will invest over €45m in the lifetime of the plan.

SPARA 2020 – Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports

SPARA 2020 is a three-year trans-European project. The Assembly is leading a Non-Aeronautical Services review, assessing the impact of non-aeronautical activities at four regional airports, including Donegal and Ireland West Airport Knock.



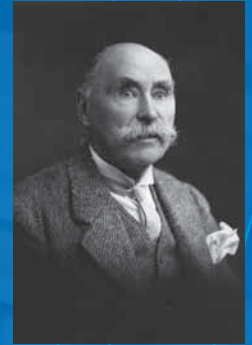
Donegal Airport



An Taoiseach Enda Kenny



Smart Peripheral and Remote Airports



We look to the future and learn from the past. The Northern and Western Regional Assembly chamber was the venue for the annual Douglas Hyde Conference which took place on July 16th in Ballaghaderreen.

Entitled 'Saving the Notes of Nationality: A celebration of the Protectors of Irish Heritage', the event was well-attended.

In 2015, under the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, two Strategic Planning Area Committees were established. Based on the NUTS III areas, our region has been sub-divided into Border and West.

Speakers at the Douglas Hyde Conference



Luke Gibbons



Niamh Parsons



Robert Ballagh



Gerald Dawe



Alan Tittley



Vincent Pierse



Enhanced Spaces

Providing attractive public spaces and better amenities for people to use and enjoy, can provide very positive impacts.

Under the Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme, the Assembly in 2015 granted over €14m in funding to seven urban centres in the region, facilitating key projects to go ahead.

- €2m directed towards Sligo for enhancements to O'Connell Street and community centre at Cranmore.
- €2m dedicated to Letterkenny, improving transport connectivity, road linkage and supporting local social enterprise centre.
- €3.5m in Galway towards a City Library and Cultural Centre.
- €1.5m in Athlone for Church Street improvement works.
- €2 million for Clanbrasil Street and rejuvenation of St Nicholas Quarter in Dundalk.
- Mullingar Town Centre: €1.5 million for enhancement of town civic areas and link between them.
- Tullamore: €1.5 million for Street Enhancement Project.

Market Square, Dundalk



Evening in Dundalk



The Model, Sligo

Competitiveness: New roles and programmes

The Local Government Act 2014 has introduced a new enhanced role for Regional Assemblies in relation to spatial planning and economic development for regions.

This move was timely as our area of operation is ranked in the bottom third of EU regions according to the European Regional Competitiveness Index. The challenge for the Assembly is substantial but one that can be successfully tackled.

Updates during 2015

- National Spatial Strategy replaced by a National Planning Framework
- Regional Planning Guidelines superseded by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs) to be developed by the Regional Assemblies
- A new role in linking local economic development with regional and national planning provided to the NWRA through oversight of Local Economic and Community Plans

Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme

The Assembly assisted twelve projects in 2015 across a wide range of sectors including Cruise Tourism, Creative Industries, Renewable Energies, Geo Tourism and Innovation in the Manufacturing sector. Local Authorities in the region continue to support EU Interreg initiatives with participation from Mayo and Donegal Co Councils as well as Sligo Local Enterprise Office, Cavan Innovation & Technology Centre, TEAGASC and the Western Development Commission.





Alzheimer's Pilot Study

Led by the Centre for Design Innovation at IT Sligo in partnership with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA), the project identified carer fatigue as a major issue. Looking to tackle this, the pilot project with the support of the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland (ASI) established a new service based in Collooney which involved the provision of a day care centre for one Saturday a month for six months and a study of its impact on stakeholders.



Competitiveness: New roles and programmes

Over 250 delegates from across Ireland gathered in Tullamore in June 2015 to hear the announcement of European Union funded Interreg Programmes which will provide opportunities to Irish organisations to develop interregional co-operation projects throughout Europe up to 2020.

Ireland is eligible to participate in eight Interreg programmes across Europe which have a combined value of €1.3bn in funding assistance from the European Regional Development Fund. Irish Organisations across all sectors are well placed to benefit from the significant funding opportunities available from these Interreg Programmes.

The Programme included contributions from the Directors of the Programmes including the Ireland/Northern Ireland/Scotland Programme, the Ireland Wales Programme, the Atlantic Area Programme and the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme.

The Interreg National Information Day was organised in co-operation with Ireland's Regional Assemblies and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Northern and Western Regional Assembly is the designated National Contact Point for the Atlantic Area and Northern Periphery and Arctic Programmes up to 2020.



*Delegates at Interreg
National Information Day*

Minister English opens Business Development Conference

Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation Damien English T.D opened the TESLA Conference on International Business Opportunities funded by the European Interreg North West Europe Programme in NUI Galway in June 2015. Led by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly TESLA supports early stage knowledge-intensive enterprises.

Under the programme over 70 companies have benefitted from specialist international mentor assistance and have been mentored on specific areas of export development, market entry to the UK, Chinese and German markets as well as Strategic Business and Financial Planning. The project also provided assistance to the clients of the Local Enterprise Offices in Longford, Monaghan and Cavan through an Innovation Outreach programme designed to facilitate easier access to the UK market.



Interreg National Information Day event organisers



Minister Damien English with NWRA staff

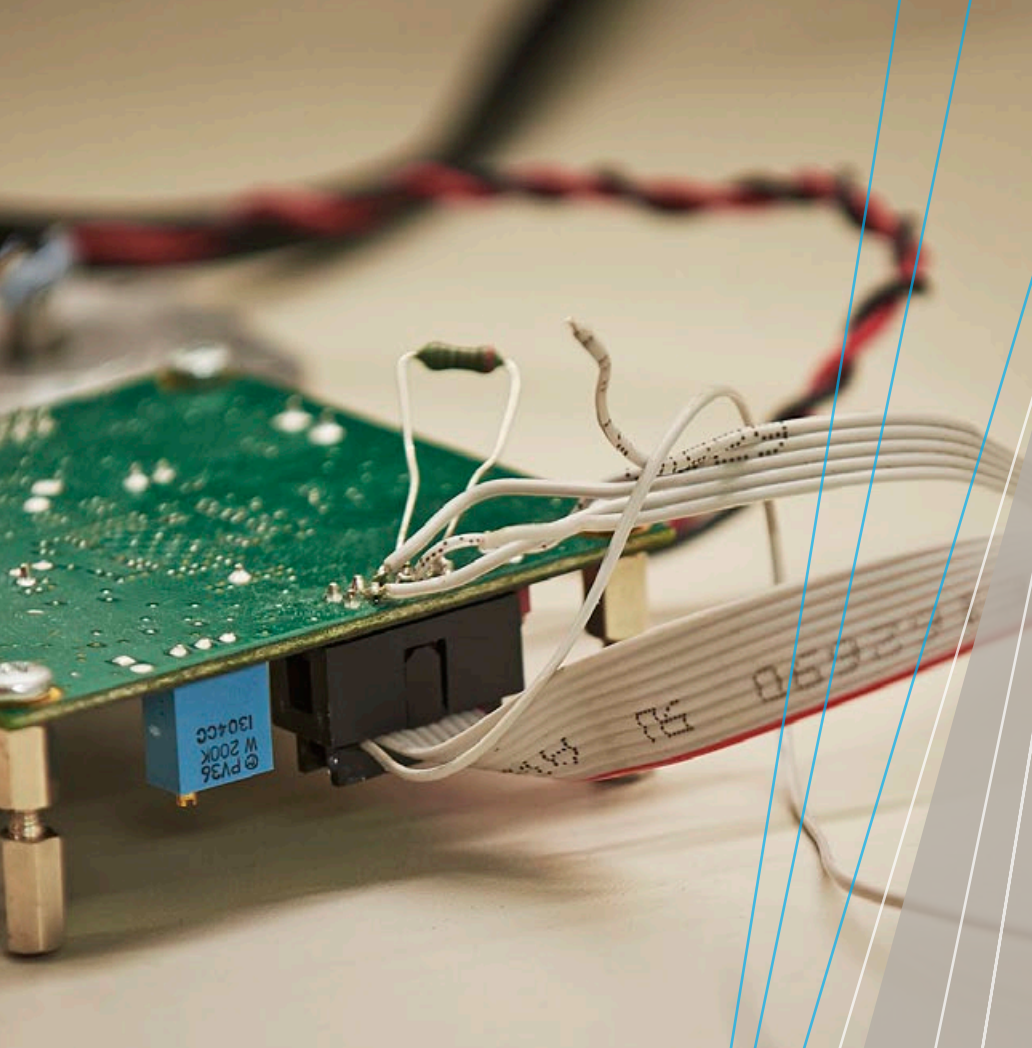
Competitiveness: Nurturing New Ideas

Supporting small business in the region, the **Entrepreneurship in Micro Enterprise Scheme**, managed by Enterprise Ireland and delivered through the 13 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) has significantly enhanced the competitiveness of our SME sector.

Our region has a strong history of research and development (R&D) – the cornerstone of our future. The Assembly channelled funds into regional **Research Technological Development & Innovation (RTDI)** totalling nearly €13m focusing on schemes for research centres, marine research, and commercialisation of research.

In 2015, the Assembly supported 11 applications for Commercial Case Feasibility Support through the **Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund**.





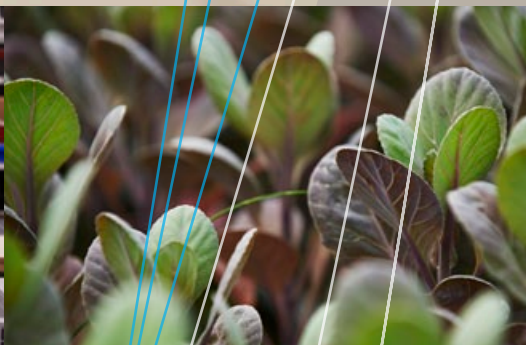
Your Projects



This project is funded through the Atlantic Area Fund. LABELFISH is the name for the “Atlantic Network on Genetic Control of Fish and Seafood Labelling and Traceability”. This will protect European consumers and SMEs in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors across the Atlantic area. Our Assembly strongly supports the marine sector.



This is a two-year Northern Periphery Programme strategic project which will explore the hidden and unexploited potential of water utilities to generate renewable energy.



Competitiveness: Reports and Conferences

HEISME: The Regional Assembly is one of four partners involved in the HEISME project. The other partners are Mid Sweden University, University of Applied Sciences Jyväskylä, Finland and the lead partner on the project the Institute of Technology, Sligo. The aim of the project is to improve entrepreneurial and innovative business through the Higher Education Institutes by providing better supports to start-ups and existing SMEs thus enhancing their competitiveness, sustainability and export potential.



Design-Driven Innovation: Why it matters for SME

Competitiveness: This report was launched in March 2015, by Mr. Ged Nash T.D., Minister for Business and Employment. The Assembly was involved in promoting the application of design-driven innovation methodologies to enhance the impact of innovation and innovative ideas in Ireland.

Supporting Public Service Innovation using Design-Driven Innovation: In June, the Assembly took the lead in organising the prestigious Europe-wide SPIDER conference at Dublin Castle. More than 300 delegates gathered to hear stories about smarter cities and towns, public service design and innovations from across Europe. The Assembly coordinated the event's planning and provided support and administration.

The NWRA is one of seven European partners. The project aims to deliver innovative solutions to Europe's toughest social challenges.






SPIDER

@SPIDERPROJECTEU
#SPIDERDUB15
Network: DC_Conference_WIFI
Password: June-2015




Designing better public services.

The SPIDER project can help you to start using service design.

Making the public services you manage simpler and more effective for users.




SPIDER

@SPIDERPROJECTEU
#SPIDERDUB15
Network: DC_Conference_WIFI
Password: June-2015






SPIDER

Public Service Innovation using Design in European Regions



Financial Review

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2015

		2015	2014
		€	€
INCOME			
Contributions from Local Authorities	See Schedule 1 & 1(a)	739,089.00	887,704.89
Technical Assistance Receipts		440,699.03	483,560.28
Interreg Technical Assistance Support Costs		61,520.07	72,237.04
European Project receipts		337,608.50	335,116.52
First Level Control Receipts		29,750.00	67,000.00
Miscellaneous Receipts		6,474.77	15,317.06
Bank Interest Receivable		3,747.49	7,151.80
Superannuation Contributions		41,706.97	32,869.66
Technical Assistance Grants		440,200.07	483,657.68
Gateway Grant Scheme Receipts		917,543.07	267,023.06
TESLA NW Europe Project Receipts		328,603.63	485,375.71
Marnet Atlantic Area Project Receipts		230,733.82	286,637.02
Contributions to Regional Authority from Other Bodies			21,423.95
Cancelled and Un-cashed Cheques			23,178.41
Interbank Transfer ex Regional Authority Account			120,000.00
TOTAL INCOME		3,577,676.42	3,588,253.08
EXPENDITURE			
Salaries		923,109.84	1,590,000.49
Retirement Lump Sum		92,127.00	0.00
Lease & Rates, etc		90,690.45	128,137.32
Postage & Phones, etc,		10,795.52	18,438.43
Equipment & Supplies, etc		43,074.33	70,714.18
Annual Allowance – Elected Members		34,737.10	98,876.90
Annual Allowance – Chairman (Taxable)		6,383.25	17,295.20
Annual Allowance – Chairman (Non-Taxable)		6,000.00	8,000.00

Travel & Subsistence – Article 35 2(a)	13,310.72	46,479.61
Travel & Subsistence – Article 35 2(b)	0.00	5,449.61
Staff Travel Cumulative	99,083.23	103,826.33
Subscriptions & Donations	24,524.79	56,840.88
Maintenance & Repairs	7,996.24	8,616.13
Energy Costs	9,719.68	13,809.59
Conference Fees	3,310.00	4,164.23
Miscellaneous	129,443.96	302,354.73
Insurance	11,842.73	16,576.41
Staff Training	6,832.48	4,683.80
Regional Planning guidelines	0.00	2,639.19
EU Project Costs	0.00	9,940.48
Bank Charges	695.03	1,220.52
Depreciation Charge	2,308.78	2,983.15
Technical Assistance Expenditure	440,699.05	483,560.28
TESLA NW Europe Project Expenditure	328,603.63	485,375.70
Marnet Atlantic Area Project Expenditure	230,733.82	286,637.02
Gateway Grant Scheme Expenditure	917,543.07	267,023.06
Regional Initiatives	0.00	21,751.33
West Regional Authority EU Project Activity	0.00	114,050.90
Reissued Cancelled / Un-cashed Cheques	0.00	23,705.02
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,433,564.70	4,193,147.49
EXCESS EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME	144,111.72	-604,894.41
CUMULATIVE OPENING BALANCE AS AT 1ST JANUARY 2015	695,337.32	1,300,231.73
CLOSING BALANCE AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2015	839,449.04	695,337.32

Financial Review

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2015

	2015 €	2014 €
FIXED ASSETS		
Fixtures & Fittings	3,195.84	147.90
Computer Equipment	4,355.13	3,501.10
Office Equipment	50.00	50.00
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	7,600.97	3,699.00
CURRENT ASSETS		
Sales Ledger Control	73,302.83	94,988.53
Prepayments	0.00	2,827.85
NWRA Current Account	172,478.07	186,487.97
NWRA Savings Account	253,501.54	31,810.04
NWRA Term Deposit Account	381,266.33	377,558.69
NWRA Credit Card	47.26	-250.94
NWRA Current Account	908.92	1,407.90
NWRA Gateway Account	16.70	16.70
NWRA TESLA Project	0.00	77.75
NWRA MARNET Project	1,624.94	1624.94
NWRA Petty Cash	105.75	0.00
Border Regional Authority – Cavan Account	0.00	0.00
BMW Regional Assembly – Border Account	746.79	76,445.07
Midland Regional Authority – Tullamore Account	0.00	115.21
BMW Regional Assembly – Midland Account	433.77	2,323.30
West Regional Authority – Galway Account	0.00	36,982.18
BMW Regional Assembly – West Account	19,432.55	13,892.69
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	903,865.45	826,307.88
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Purchase Ledger Control	14,244.29	29,546.37
MARNET Purchase Ledger Control	1,624.94	
West Regional Authority Purchase Ledger	0.00	17,918.17
Accruals	56,148.16	87,205.03
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	72,017.39	134,669.57
TOTAL NET ASSETS	839,449.03	695,337.31
CAPITAL & RESERVES		
Excess Expenditure over Income	144,111.72	-604,894.41
Opening Balance Control	695,337.32	1,300,231.73
TOTAL CAPITAL & RESERVES	839,449.04	695,337.32

Stakeholders



Comhairle Chontae An Cabháin
Cavan County Council



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City 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

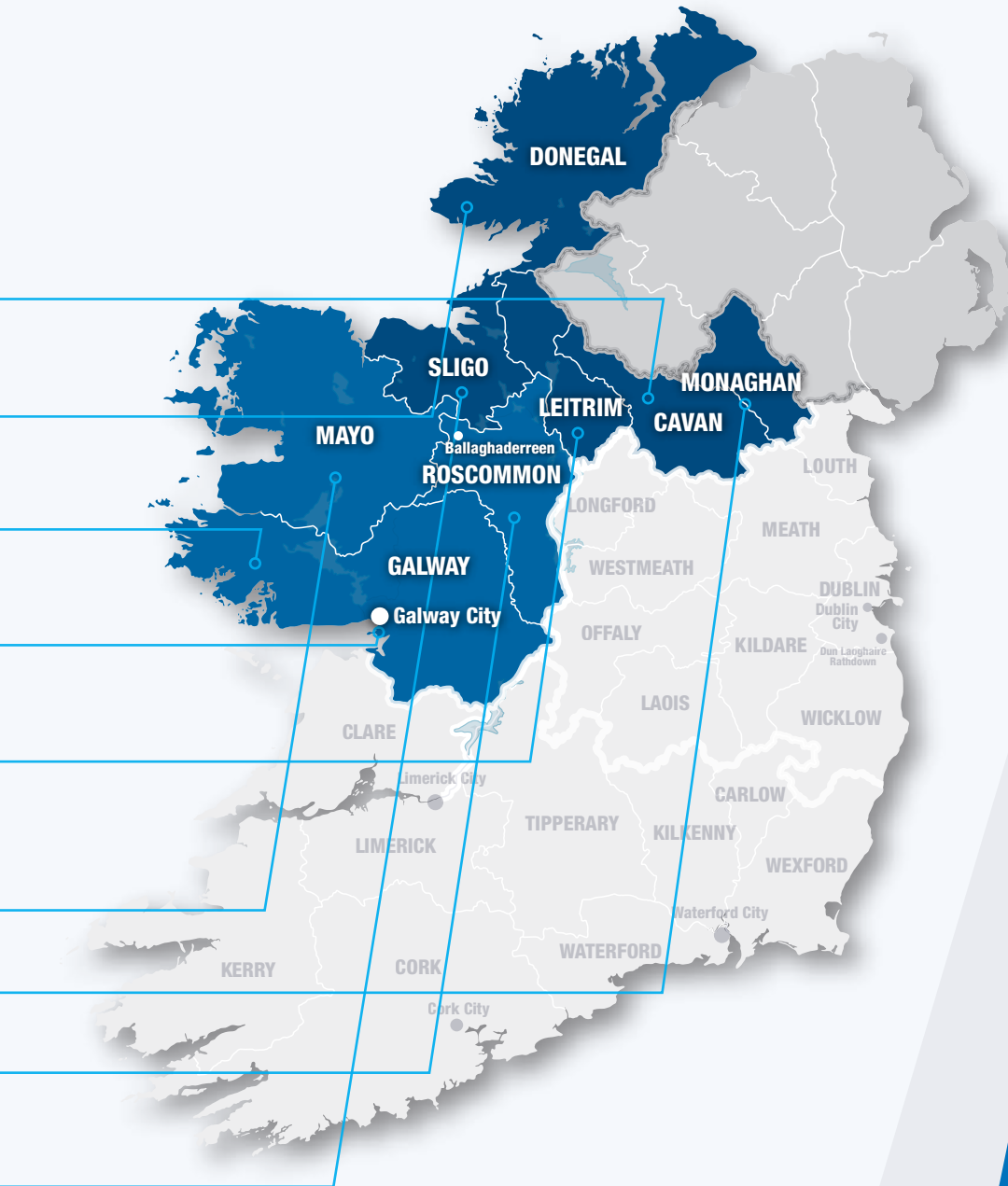


**An Roinn Caiteachais Phoiblí
agus Athchóirithe**
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform

Membership of the Regional Assembly

Membership of the Regional Assembly is comprised of designated elected representatives from each county in the region.

> Cavan	2	Cllr. Paddy Smith Cllr. Sean Smith	<i>Fine Gael</i> <i>Fianna Fáil</i>
> Donegal	3	Cllr. Seamus O'Domhnaill Cllr. Jack Murray Cllr. Frank McBrearty	<i>Fianna Fáil</i> <i>Sinn Fein</i> <i>Non Party</i>
> Galway	3	Cllr. Jimmy McClearn Cllr. Martina Kinane Cllr. Tomás Ó Curraoin	<i>Fine Gael</i> <i>Fianna Fáil</i> <i>Non Party</i>
> Galway City	3	Cllr. Pearce Flannery Cllr. Declan McDonnell Cllr. Niall McNelis (CoR)	<i>Fine Gael</i> <i>Non Party</i> <i>Labour</i>
> Leitrim	3	Cllr. Frank Dolan Cllr. Justin Warnock Cllr. Enda Stenson (CoR)	<i>Fine Gael</i> <i>Fianna Fáil</i> <i>Non Party</i>
> Mayo	4	Cllr. John Caulfield Cllr. Patsy O'Brien Cllr. Christy Hyland Cllr Rose Conway Walsh (CoR)	<i>Fianna Fáil</i> <i>Fine Gael</i> <i>Non Party</i> <i>Sinn Fein</i>
> Monaghan	2	Cllr. Jackie Crowe Cllr. Séamus Coyle	<i>Sinn Fein</i> <i>Fianna Fáil</i>
> Roscommon	2	Cllr. Nigel Dineen Cllr. Eugene Murphy	<i>Non Party</i> <i>Fianna Fáil</i>
> Sligo	3	Cllr Keith Henry Cllr Seamus Kilgallon Cllr. Jerry Lundy (CoR)	<i>Fianna Fáil</i> <i>Fianna Fáil</i> <i>Fianna Fáil</i>



Meet the Team



Mr. David Minton
Director
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Mr. Denis Kelly
Assistant Director/
Senior Planner
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Mr. Barry Guckian
Programme Executive
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Ms. Catherine Burke
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Ms. Gerardine Lafferty
Assistant Staff Officer
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Ms. Pauline Grennan
Clerical Officer
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Ms. Marie Moriarty
Clerical Officer
mmoriarty@nwra.ie

Protected Disclosures Act 2014: There were no protected disclosures by Staff in 2015

Overview of Energy Usage in 2015

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

The energy consumption in 2015 was 77735 kWh of energy through the use of electricity only. This represents a 16% better performance than the baseline

Actions Undertaken in 2015

Because the Assembly lease its premises we are limited in our capacity to make radical changes. The Assembly registered with the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland as part of their Energy Advice and Mentoring Programme and continues to monitor the situation. There is a planned phased replacement of older light fittings with new energy efficient lights.




Photos left to right:


Operational Programme launch delegates; An Taoiseach Enda Kenny at the Operational Programme launch; Ireland West Airport, Knock.




Northern & Western Regional Assembly

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An tAontas Eorpach
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