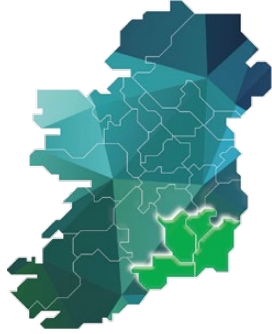




Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



REGIONAL ENTERPRISE PLAN
TO 2024

SOUTH-EAST



An initiative of the Department
of Enterprise, Trade and Employment



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Minister's Foreword



A handwritten signature in white ink on a green background, reading "Robert Troy".

Robert Troy TD,
Minister of State for Trade Promotion,
Digital and Company Regulation

I am very pleased to welcome the publication of this new Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the South-East. Its preparation comes as Ireland's society and economy has been facing one of its greatest challenges with COVID-19 and the imperative to recover strongly and in a sustainable manner.

This recovery must and will be different. The Government's Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) launched earlier this year provides a vision of the economy post-pandemic, which is export-oriented, digital, and green, whilst also being regionally balanced and inclusive. We need to address the economic fallout from the pandemic, but there is more to consider. There are new opportunities from pandemic related behavioural changes such as remote working that are potentially transformative; we need to continue to navigate the post Brexit complexities; and, above all, our recovery must embrace, an ambitious green and digital transition. Our recently reviewed National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030, underpins this sustainable and regionally balanced post-pandemic recovery.

Within the framework of the ERP, realising the enterprise and jobs potential in all of our regions and reducing disparities between regions remains a core priority. My Department has an important role to play in regional development, by assisting businesses directly through the work of our enterprise agencies, and through ecosystem strengthening measures through for example, capital investment in innovation and start-up infrastructures. Critically, through our Regional Enterprise Plans, we recognise that there is added benefit for all if local stakeholders work together to understand their unique enterprise opportunities and challenges; and collaborate on solutions.

Over the past months there has been intensive engagement around the country amongst regionally located stakeholders, representing the Enterprise Agencies, LEOs, Local Authorities, Regional Skills, Higher & Further Education, Private Sector, Fáilte Ireland and others, who have collectively considered important questions about enterprise development and recovery in their region, including: enterprise resilience; place attractiveness; competitiveness; and the twin business transformation imperatives – low carbon and digital that are so critical for future business success and sustainable job creation.



This new Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the South-East is future focused and centred around a number of priorities including: encouraging start-ups and scaling; developing and growing green businesses; focusing on smart specialisation in areas of regional strength including the development of clusters including micro clusters; strengthening and developing innovation and making the region more attractive through positive placemaking initiatives.

With continued regional collaboration, knowledge sharing and a solutions mindset, we are confident that the actions within this Plan can make a real and lasting difference for the South-East, and to national economic recovery.

I would like to especially thank the Chairperson of the South-East Regional Steering Committee Patsy Carney, Director of Kinetic Labs, for his leadership on the preparation of this new Plan, and Alan Quirke and Richard Hickey, from the Ireland South-East Development Office for their critical role in delivering the final product. I am also very appreciative of the time and energy given by all the members of the Steering Committee, and for your ongoing commitment to the Regional Enterprise Plan.

To assist the Regional Enterprise Plans, my Department, through Enterprise Ireland, has made available to date over €126m in regional enterprise funding since 2018 to assist locally led regional enterprise development projects. Of this, €7.9m has been invested by the Government into eight South-East regional enterprise projects under three calls of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund and the Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme. This new Regional Enterprise Plan for the South-East positions the region to effectively leverage future funding calls.

I am very much looking forward to further engagement with Patsy and the members of the South-East Steering Committee as implementation progresses.



Message from the Chair



Patsy Carney,
Chair of the South-East Regional
Enterprise Plan Committee

I present this South-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment on behalf of the South-East Regional Committee. The Committee is made up of the major economic stakeholders, both public and private, who have an input into economic development in the region. We have had an extensive consultation period throughout 2021 and I would like to thank all the stakeholders who gave their time to contribute to the discussions and workshops during the development of this plan.

The Regional Enterprise Plan is being launched after a period of unprecedented uncertainty and accelerated change brought about by the economic shock of COVID-19. Some of our key sectors have been severely disrupted while others have remarkably gone from strength to strength. The pandemic has also caused some trends to emerge that can become opportunities for the region such as remote working and a heightened company focus on quality-of-life benefits for employees. This plan is designed to create resilience in the regional economy by addressing identified gaps and maximising opportunities while focussing on developing a sustainable future.

Education and skills are central to regional economic development and the recent news of the South-East Technological University commencing in 2022 is a hugely significant step for our region. Our aim has been to align this Regional Enterprise Plan as closely as possible to the Technological University with a view to ensuring it can be genuinely transformative for the region.



In doing so, we have identified the following five strategic pillars:

1. **Start and Grow:** Encouraging entrepreneurship and enhancing the region's start up ecosystem.
2. **Green Growth:** Ensuring that the green economy becomes an engine for future job creation and economic growth in the region.
3. **Smart Specialisation and Clustering:** The principles of smart specialisation and clustering are critical for the region to create a resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and competitive economy.
4. **Innovate:** Building on our existing RD&I capacity to place innovation at the heart of the South-East economy.
5. **Place:** Developing a region that is attractive to both domestic and international visitors and communicating the benefits of living and working in the South-East.

It has been very encouraging to see a common agreement on the need to focus on the economy at the regional level and an acknowledgment of the benefits that regional focus can bring to residents and stakeholders across all four counties. We are working towards the shared vision of the South-East becoming an even more thriving, innovative and creative regional economy with high-value output, a broad range of job opportunities and becoming the place of choice in which to work and invest. These strategic pillars, and the actions required to support them, are designed to guide us towards this vision.

I look forward to seeing the actions in this plan come to fruition and further developing the levels of collaboration among stakeholders across the region as we work towards our shared vision.



SOUTH EAST Regional Profile

01



SOUTH EAST TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

- 25,000 students, top 3 largest Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ireland

02



CONNECTIVITY

- 2 ports, Rosslare Europort and Waterford, facilitating RORO & LOLO
- Motorway routes within 1 hour of Dublin via M9 and M11 and M25
- Waterford airport runway extension granted planning permission

03



#1 SMALL REGION IN EUROPE

- #1 Small Region in Europe for FDI Strategy in the Financial Times FDI Intelligence Rankings

04



MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS

- **KK:** Abbey Quarter
- **Wex:** Hatchlab, Enniscorthy Tech Park, Trinity Wharf
- **Waterford:** North Quays development
- **Carlow:** Carlow 2040 projects including the Carlow Exchange
- **IDA:** 2 Advanced Technology Buildings in Waterford and Carlow

05



INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH COLLABORATING

- 4 Technology Gateways: Walton Institute, PMBRC, SEAM, and Design+
- 3 Managed Clusters: Financial Services, Engineering, and ICT
- REDF Funded Industry Supports: Kinetic Labs, LI4 Lab, 3DWIT, and Centre for Design

06



KEY REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Offshore Renewable Energy with Rosslare Europort and Waterford Port working together
- Improved East to West connectivity along N24 and N25
- Growth of key sectors ICT, Life Sciences, Engineering and Financial Services



Overview of Strategic Objectives and Actions



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Start and Grow

- Action 1.1** Establish a South-East advisory board of established senior entrepreneurs and develop a structured programme of engagement for this group.
- Action 1.2** Enhance coordination of public start-up supports across the region.
- Action 1.3** Deliver on the South-East Technological University's objective of supporting entrepreneurship and enterprise development in the region.
- Action 1.4** Increase investment in RDI support structures to maximise opportunities for enterprises to effectively engage, access and exploit knowledge and IP.
- Action 1.5** Build on EU-funded Pilot South-East Intrapreneurship Report to support local companies realise new opportunities.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: Green Growth

- Action 2.1** Position the South-East as an Offshore and Onshore Wind Energy Hub.
- Action 2.2** Develop a Strategic Approach to Regional Green Skills at Further and Higher Education levels.
- Action 2.3** Support the growth of a National Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Food, Forestry and Marine Innovation in the South-East.
- Action 2.4** Support the growth of a National Centre of Excellence for High Performance Buildings in Wexford.
- Action 2.5** Green Awareness – Promotion of Industry Best Practice in Sustainability and Green Opportunities.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Smart Specialisation and Clustering

- Action 3.1** Develop a coherent approach with industry-driven governance to strategic development of key South-East clusters.
- Action 3.2** Expand and enhance industry engagement with the South-East Engineering Cluster.
- Action 3.3** Expand and enhance industry engagement with the South-East Financial Services Cluster.
- Action 3.4** Assess and progress the South-East ICT Cluster.
- Action 3.5** Explore potential to start and grow an industry-led South-East Life Sciences Cluster.
- Action 3.6** Explore potential to start and grow an industry led South-East Agri-food, Forestry and Marine Cluster.
- Action 3.7** Local Enterprise Offices to develop four Regional micro-clusters in Pharma/ Lean Manufacturing/ Green/ Digital Marketing.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Innovate

- Action 4.1** Explore a feasibility study for a TU multi-disciplinary research centre of excellence.
- Action 4.2** Create a LEO South-East virtual Innovation Hub.
- Action 4.3** Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in the Life Sciences innovation, research and development ecosystem in South-East.
- Action 4.4** Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in Advanced manufacturing innovation, research and development ecosystem in South-East.
- Action 4.5** Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in the ICT innovation, research and development ecosystem in South-East.
- Action 4.6** Position the South-East as a destination for design-led thinking, design innovation, education and training.
- Action 4.7** Explore opportunity to develop a Financial Services Centre of Excellence in the South-East.
- Action 4.8** Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in the Agri-Food, Forestry innovation, research and development ecosystem in the South-East.
- Action 4.9** Advance KCETB's Further Education and Training College of the Future.
- Action 4.10** Complete the development of the WWETB Wexford FET College.
- Action 4.11** Position the South-East as a productivity and process improvement hub for companies through increased engagement in enterprise excellence research, innovation, training and clustering.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: Place

- Action 5.1** Implement the Ireland's Ancient East South-East Tourism Action Plan to enhance visitor experiences in activity tourism; food and drink tourism; history and culture tourism; and castles, houses and gardens.
- Action 5.2** Strengthen upskilling opportunities in hospitality and customer service in the South-East.
- Action 5.3** Scale up the Ireland South-East marketing campaign for the region.
- Action 5.4** Position the South-East as Ireland's top remote working location.

1

The Regional Enterprise Plans Initiative

Introduction

In early 2019, nine Regional Steering Committees established by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), finalised and commenced implementation of the first *Regional Enterprise Plans*. This 'bottom-up' collaborative mechanism, involves the enterprise agencies, local enterprise offices, regional assemblies, local authorities, higher and further education bodies, private sector and others, within each region, chaired by a senior figure from industry. The Committees were formed initially in 2015 to drive the Regional Action Plans for Jobs until 2018.

The Regional Enterprise Plans each contain agreed 'Strategic Objectives' for enterprise development, accompanied by a time-bound set of actions that deliver to the objectives. Progress Reports on implementation of the Regional Enterprise Plans to 2020 are available on the Department's website.

Policy Context

Delivering balanced regional growth through a coherent policy approach to the enterprise needs of every part of Ireland is a stated objective within the Programme for Government (PfG) and more recently emphasised in the *Economic Recovery Plan 2021*.

DETE contributes to this agenda in a number of ways, including through: the enterprise agencies; the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs); and direct investments in strengthening the enterprise ecosystem (incl. Regional Enterprise Development Fund, IDA Ireland property programme etc.), guided by our national enterprise policy. This work takes place in the context of the National Planning Framework (NPF), which provides the vision and holistic future planning framework for Ireland's spatial development across society and economy over the longer-term, and its translation through Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and the aligned Local Authority County and City Development Plans.

The NPF and the three RSES provide a statutory long-term framework for the spatial, economic and social development of all regions in Ireland, offering an ambitious and sustainable proposition to delivering balanced regional development in Ireland. Smart Specialisation (S3) represents one of the key economic principles adopted in each of these high-level statutory frameworks, with a key enabling condition for funding interventions under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) also being the development of and alignment with the Member State's S3. By placing Smart Specialisation as one of the thematic areas of the Regional Enterprise Plans, we can ensure that regional enterprise priorities identified and supported in these plans are aligned with the long-term vision and objectives of the NPF and the RSES.



Other pertinent national policies include the *National Skills Strategy 2025*, *Innovation 2020* (with a new innovation strategy forthcoming); and Making Remote Work amongst others. Also, as part of the Shared Island initiative, there will be added impetus to delivering balanced regional growth by leveraging the potential to grow the all-island economy, while driving growth and job creation North and South.

Ensuring that all regions can realise their enterprise development potential and that regional disparities are reduced therefore requires that the Department works closely with relevant partners across Government to strengthen the enabling conditions for investment and business growth.

The Regional Enterprise Plans recognise that enterprise policy coherence and collaboration at the national level needs to be mirrored from the 'bottom up', to enable:

- a place-based perspective on needs, capabilities and opportunities to inform national enterprise and other policies;
- economies of scale through joined up actions and investment;
- effective targeting of national initiatives to areas of opportunity and greatest need; and
- development and delivery of a programme of collaborative actions that can drive better outcomes in terms of regional job creation.

Although the Plans themselves are focused and timebound, the Steering Committee mechanism also maintains a live agenda at regional level, responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges, for example: Brexit, COVID-19 pandemic impacts, remote working opportunity for regions, climate action/just transition, and regional shocks requiring joined up responses.

Developing new Regional Enterprise Plans to 2024

The outgoing Regional Enterprise Plans (REPs) concluded at the end of 2020. Final Progress Reports from the nine Steering Committees show that the model has impact and that actions delivered are complementary and add value to the mainstream interventions of the enterprise agencies and other bodies working to enable enterprise development at a regional level.

The new Plans to 2024 build on the first iteration of the REPs and each Steering Committee had a clear mandate to deliver a new Plan to 2024 that would:

- complement and translate national enterprise policy in a regional context;
- facilitate collaboration regionally to address prioritised ecosystem gaps and opportunities, and help achieve Agency and LEO investment and jobs targets in each region; and
- use collective insight and resources in each region, and available regional funding, to progress initiatives to enable enterprise growth and job creation in each region.

The Department highlighted a number of national policy challenges that each of the Regional Committees were asked to consider as part of the preparation of the new Plans: enabling recovery and building enterprise resilience in the context of COVID-19 and other external shocks; the twin transition imperative for enterprises to digitalise and contribute to a carbon neutral economy; improving competitiveness through effective placemaking, including enabling flexible work patterns; and capitalising on existing and emerging sectoral strengths and capabilities through smart specialisation.

The development of Regional Enterprise Plans to 2024 has for the first time been done in parallel with the creation of Ireland's forthcoming new Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3). The stakeholder consultation events undertaken as part of the development of these Regional Enterprise Plans has acted as an entrepreneurial discovery process which has contributed valuable insights to the S3 for Ireland.

The final appendix summarises the various stages that has led to the publication of the Regional Enterprise Plans. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the development of the nine new Plans to 2024 was undertaken in a virtual environment. The Regional Enterprise Plans and Initiatives Unit, within DETE, will oversee the implementation of the new Plans at the national level, while roll-out of the process in each region will be driven on the ground by the existing Regional Steering Committees, assisted by Programme Managers appointed by the Local Authorities in each region.

Finally, to help drive delivery of the new REPs to 2024, drive best practice across regions, and encourage cross-regional collaboration on areas of common interest and opportunity, the Department has established a National Oversight Group (NOG) for the REPs, chaired jointly by Minister Robert Troy and Minister Damien English. This grouping includes the Chairpersons and the Programme Managers of the Regional Steering Committees, national level representatives of the enterprise agencies and other relevant bodies, as well as relevant Government Departments. The Group will meet over the lifetime of the new Regional Enterprise Plans.



2

South-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

Strategic Objective 1:

Start and Grow

Context and Vision to 2024

Encouraging entrepreneurship is critical to the region's challenge of generating growth and prosperity that builds on and extends its successes in attracting high quality foreign direct investment. The South-East Region's start-up ecosystem is well populated with the relevant and necessary actors required to facilitate and support a start-up on its early growth journey from idea generation to securing its first sale. The actions outlined in this plan are designed to bring together those actors in a more cohesive way than ever before. The actions will also embed the new Technological University into the start-up ecosystem and create an advisory board of established entrepreneurs from the region who can guide additional collaborative projects designed to increase the pipeline of new start-ups into the various existing support structures. Working together on this objective, the partners in the start-up ecosystem in the South-East can make the region the best regional location in Ireland to start and grow a business.

- To become the top regional location in Ireland to start and grow a business.
- A Technological University of the South-East Region driving entrepreneurship among its students and graduates.
- An advisory board of experienced entrepreneurs guiding the region's collaborative efforts to increase the pipeline of start-ups.



Actions to 2024

Action 1.1: Establish a South-East advisory board of established senior entrepreneurs and develop a structured programme of engagement for this group.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Ireland South-East Development Office	Enterprise Ireland Local Enterprise Offices SEBIC	Establishment by Q3 2022
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To replicate the Cork BIC “Entrepreneur Experience” Model. In particular, to leverage the EY Entrepreneur of the Year network in the South-East. To develop a structured programme of engagement with this network ranging from County level pitching competitions to regional bootcamp event. To develop funding and partnerships for enhancement of pre accelerator and accelerator offering in the South-East. Leverage SEBIC / HBAN network. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall outcomes aim to increase the volume of concept ideas developed, number of start-ups created and the availability of expert entrepreneurial advice to scaling companies. Network of 8 to 10 senior entrepreneurs established with clear terms of reference. Formalised programme for engagement developed. Events at county and regional level developed. A regional accelerator offering for the South-East developed. 		

Action 1.2: Enhance coordination of public start-up supports across the region.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Enterprise Ireland	Local Enterprise Office SEBIC Ireland South-East Development Office TU start-up ecosystem – Linked to South-East advisory network of senior entrepreneurs.	Q4 2024
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve signposting of information for potential entrepreneurs within and outside the South-East. To enhance start-up support in key remote working hubs across region. To develop and promote case studies stories of successful entrepreneurs from the South-East. To explore the potential of instigating “Year of Start-Up in South-East” 2023. To develop a Targeted Approach to Immigrant Entrepreneurship in South-East. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a map of supports. Number of meetings among the key stakeholders and project delivery team and number of agreed interventions to be implemented to enhance the start-up support ecosystem. Produce an interactive guide to supports tailored to the needs of the prospective start-ups. 		



Action 1.3: Deliver on the South-East Technological University's objective of supporting entrepreneurship and enterprise development in the region.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
South-East Technological University	Enterprise Ireland Science Foundation Ireland DFHERIS Ireland South-East Development Office SEBIC KTI Local Enterprise Offices, SE Entrepreneur Advisory Board ETBs Local Authorities	By end 2024

Rationale:

- ITC and WIT have considerable experience in supporting entrepreneurship and enterprise development in the South-East.
- Through programmes such as New Frontiers, the South-East Accelerator, the supports of incubation centres, (ERIC and ArcLabs), student entrepreneurship initiatives (e.g. the Growth Hub, Spin Up Science) and accessibility to research centres, the Institutes play a key role in the entrepreneurial development of the region.
- The TU will build upon this experience and strengthen the region's entrepreneurship capacity.

Action Outcome:

- A TU investment plan to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem consisting of undergraduate teaching, research, innovation and new enterprise supports to drive regional entrepreneurial growth.
- A TU entrepreneurship strategy and approach connecting students with entrepreneurs, agencies, industry partners, and investor networks.
- Increase in the number of students with startup ideas.
- An increase in investment to support student entrepreneurship and increase in the number of startups supported through collaboration with the TU.
- Increase the level of knowledge transfer from research to enterprise.
- Enhanced entrepreneurial support through Apprenticeship Education which is being increased by ETBs.

Action 1.4: Increase investment in RDI support structures to maximise opportunities for enterprises to effectively engage, access and exploit knowledge and IP.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
South-East Technological University	Enterprise Ireland Science Foundation Ireland KTI Local Enterprise Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office SEBIC Industry clusters and SE Entrepreneur Advisory Board Local Authorities	Ongoing to 2024 Proposal to KTI submitted in 2022



Rationale:

- ITC and WIT have an established track record in supporting spin-out companies, collaborating on R&D, providing access to specialist infrastructure and consultancy support to enterprise.
- Partnering under the KTI national consortium, both institutes have developed professional structures and practices to enable effective collaboration.
- Building on this the TU aims to ensure a robust framework is in place to increase industry/academic research and maximise impact of RDI investment for the region.

Action Outcome:

- A proposal for funding to be submitted in 2022 by the TU to Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) to support a robust commercialisation strategy and resource plan for 2023-2027.
- An integrated Knowledge Transfer / Technology Transfer framework which will maximise opportunities to exploit IP, support industry engagement and strengthen the pipeline of IP co-created and generated by the TU.

Action 1.5: Build on EU-funded Pilot South-East Intrapreneurship Report to support local companies realise new opportunities.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Ireland South-East Development Office	Industry South-East BIC LEO Key TU research centres Chambers	Q4 2022

Rationale:

- The previous South-East Regional Enterprise Plan secured EU funding for a regional intrapreneurship case study of the South-East.
- The proposed action builds on this work with a targeted approach to supporting company intrapreneurship in the South-East through workshops, pilot programmes and ecosystem support.
- Monthly workshops will be held with South-East based companies to embed intrapreneurship systems and structures.

Action Outcome:

- Number of South-East companies engaging in workshops and using the developed toolkit.
- Attendance at key event in the South-East.
- South-East research centres utilising the project output to add value to their SME client base.



Strategic Objective 2

Green Growth

Context and Vision to 2024

The South-East Region is determined to play its part in working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to tackle climate change. The region has the necessary ingredients to become a hub for green enterprise. The region has access to key natural resources in wind and sun, and has an existing industry base and skills pipeline that aligns to the new green economy. The Regional Enterprise Plan is an opportunity to focus on areas of distinct strength for the region and to explore opportunities for companies and job creation. The actions within this objective are designed to build on the latent potential in the region, attract further investment, further grow our indigenous base, and ensure that the green economy becomes an engine for future job creation and economic growth.

- Establish the South-East Region as the #1 region for fixed bed Offshore Renewable Energy.
- To have our traditional advanced manufacturing and engineering company base transitioning successfully to the new green economy.
- Establish centres of excellence in Sustainable Food, Forestry and Marine Innovation and High-performance buildings.



Actions to 2024

Action 2.1: Position the South-East as an Offshore and Onshore Wind Energy Hub.		
Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Ireland South-East Development Office Rosslare Europort Port of Waterford Industry	Regional Skills Forum South-East Technological University Education and Training Boards IDA Ireland Enterprise Ireland Construction Industry Federation Local Authorities Chambers 3CEA	Q4 2021 onwards
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Rosslare Europort in securing up to €200m infrastructure investment. • Bring together key regional stakeholders in a South-East Wind Energy Working Group/ cluster to develop a strategic approach to offshore wind energy development in South-East – in particular to focus on skills, regional supply chain, marketing, research etc. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional material developed. • Investment secured in Rosslare Europort. • South-East Wind Energy Working Group/ cluster established. • Commencement of infrastructure development. • Strategy developed for future of wind energy in South-East- looking at key areas such as skills, supply chain, innovation, marketing, etc. • Feasibility study developed around hub concept (with Enterprise Ireland funding). 		

Action 2.2: Develop a Strategic Approach to Regional Green Skills at Further and Higher Education level.		
Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Regional Skills Forum Technological University Education and Training Boards	Industry Engineering South-East Cluster CIF Ireland South-East Development Office	Q4 2024
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake and understand baseline of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Skills requirements in key relevant sectors. › Current provision of relevant training/ educational courses in South-East. › Current research and innovation ecosystem in South-East. • To agree a trajectory for the training provision in the region to 2025. 		



Action Outcome:

- Baseline skills requirements completed.
- Current training provision mapped at further and higher education levels.
- Trajectory established for key skills.

Action 2.3: Support the growth of a National Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Food, Forestry and Marine Innovation in the South-East.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
South-East Technological University	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Teagasc SFI Research Centre VistaMilk Precision Agricultural Centre of Excellence (PACE), Coillte DAFM	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- To baseline current research and innovation ecosystem in the South-East in the following domains
 - › Sustainable Agriculture.
 - › Sustainable Forestry.
 - › Biodiversity.
 - › Marine.
 - › Sustainable Food production.
- To assess current provision of relevant training/ educational courses in South-East - in line with Action 2 above.
- To identify priority areas of green innovation.

Action Outcome:

- Mapping of all researcher activity in relevant domains.
- Signpost information for funding opportunities for industry to engage with Research (visa versa – problem statements).
- Current training provision mapped – in line with action 2 above.
- Developing a strategic approach to relevant research developed for Technological University.
- Trajectory established for key skills required in each of the above sectors.



Action 2.4: Support the growth of a National Centre of Excellence for High Performance Buildings in Wexford.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board Wexford County Council	Employers’ groups including CIF, Construction Unions Universities including Technological Universities SEAI NSAI NCCA Enterprise Ireland LEOs Chambers	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- In 2018, WWETB established a pilot dedicated NZEB training centre in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford to currently provide NZEB training programmes to existing construction workers in areas such as plumbing, electrical, bricklaying, carpentry and plastering.
- Action 50 of the national Climate Action Plan: “Develop a Centre of Excellence for high performing buildings in WWETB.
- This action seeks to build on this momentum.

Action Outcome:

The delivery can be measured in a number of ways including and:

- Continued NZEB training in the WWETB NZEB training facility in Enniscorthy.
- Further developed Retrofit training in the retrofit training facility based in Waterford Training Centre.
- Increased number of courses.
- Development of courses.
- Number of beneficiaries.
- Number of companies and individuals who have availed of the services of the centre.
- Conferences.
- International links.



Action 2.5: Green Awareness – Promotion of Industry Best Practice in Sustainability and Green Opportunities.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
South-East LEOs Ireland South-East Development Office 3CEA	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland SEAI	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- The aim is to have a collaborative project in the area of education and promotion of awareness of the benefits of the Green Economy for companies at regional level.
- At LEO level this would complement the LEO Green for Micro Voucher Scheme which covers the project design support at company level.

Action Outcome:

- Number of case studies developed.
- Case studies promoted.
- Company engagement with green marketing campaign.



Strategic Objective 3

Smart Specialisation and Clustering

Context and Vision to 2024

The principles of smart specialisation and clustering are critical for the region to create a resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and competitive economy. Smart specialisation is about fostering structural industrial transformation through the discovery of new areas of opportunity and the concentration of regional resources. The region's clusters can facilitate this activity and leverage the strengths and capabilities of the regional ecosystem by concentrating resources on the further development of these high potential activities to drive economic growth.

Clusters can be crucial to regional development by enhancing company productivity, stimulating innovation and facilitating commercialisation. A key requirement will be for clusters to be industry-led with clear objectives and focused agendas supporting key industry challenges such as skills, innovation, networking, infrastructure development, etc. There is an opportunity in the South-East for greater alignment between cluster priorities and those of the wider education system, including further and higher education, within the region. In particular, there will be an opportunity for clusters to inform research and education priorities in the TU and for the TU able to guide the future development of the cluster, inform on future skills needs, and identify a range of industry development opportunities.

- The South-East will have thriving and organised economic clusters in our key sectors, working collaboratively on shared challenges and helping to position the region as a place of choice for further investment.
- Collaborative activity across the clusters will drive industrial transformation and unlock new areas of opportunity that can drive economic growth.



Actions to 2024

Action 3.1: Develop a coherent approach with industry-driven governance to strategic development of key South-East clusters.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Ireland South-East Development Office	Clusters, TU, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, RSF, Industry, ETBs, Chambers	Q4 2022
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REP 2024 looks to establish and grow a number of regional clusters in key areas of strength. • There is a need for consistency of approach, operation, KPIs and accountability. • An industry-led oversight group can provide direction on the strategic development of these groupings. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent and strategic approach to regional clustering, linking to national policy. • Industry-led oversight group in place. • Building cross cluster relationships. 		

Action 3.2: Expand and enhance industry engagement with the South-East Engineering Cluster.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Sector Industry Champion Cluster Manager	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office TU ETBs South-East Regional Skills Forum Chambers IBEC SE LEOs	Ongoing
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Engineering the South-East Cluster was launched in 2019. There is an opportunity to review existing cluster activity to date and identify key learnings. • Focused activity around industry-led common themes. • Skills needs being consistently assessed by skills and training providers and South-East Regional Skills Forum. • Company to company networking events. • Formalised engagement with research and innovation ecosystem. • Targeting crossovers between companies with other sectors and proposed LEO micro-clusters. • External communication and promotional events – spotlight on region and careers events. 		



Action Outcome:

- Industry-led group established with clear governance structures.
- Annual work programme developed with associated KPIs.
- Funding model identified to support the continued development of the relevant cluster.
- Cluster manager in place and funded.
- Targeted focus on skills development in place, including a specific focus on digital skills agenda.
- Engagement with other clusters formalised.
- Engagement with research ecosystem formalised.
- Additional upskilling opportunities in engineering skills to businesses in the region through ETBs, including use of FABLABs.
- Promotional material and events developed (e.g. building on Toys4Engineers).

Action 3.3: Expand and enhance industry engagement with the South-East Financial Services Cluster.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Sector Industry Champion Cluster Manager	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office TU ETBs South-East Regional Skills Forum Chambers IBEC South-East	Ongoing

Rationale:

- The Ireland South-East Financial Services Cluster has been functioning since 2020. There is an opportunity to review existing cluster activity to date and to identify key learnings.
- Focused activity around industry-led common themes.
- Skills needs being consistently assessed by skills and training providers and South-East Regional Skills Forum.
- Company to company networking events.
- Formalised engagement and supporting the growth of the South-East research and innovation ecosystem, e.g. developing the South-East’s Fintech and Fund Academy capability.
- Targeting crossovers between companies with other sectors and proposed LEO micro-clusters.
- External communication and promotional events – spotlight on region and careers events.

Action Outcome

- Industry-led group established with clear governance structures.
- Annual work programme developed with associated KPIs.
- Funding model identified to support the continued development of the relevant cluster.
- Cluster manager in place and funded.
- Targeted focus on skills development in place, including a specific focus on digital skills agenda.
- Engagement with other clusters formalised.
- Engagement with research ecosystem formalised.
- Promotional material and events developed.



Action 3.4: Assess and progress the South-East ICT Cluster.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Sector Industry Champion Cluster Manager	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office TU ETBs South-East Regional Skills Forum Chambers IBEC South-East	Ongoing

Rationale:

- The Crystal Valley Tech Cluster has been functioning since 2017. There is an opportunity to review existing cluster activity to date and to identify key learnings.
- Focused activity around industry-led common themes.
- Skills needs being consistently assessed by skills and training providers and South-East Regional Skills Forum.
- Company to company networking events.
- Formalised engagement and supporting the growth of the South-East research and innovation ecosystem, e.g. Walton Institute.
- Targeting crossovers between companies with other sector clusters and proposed LEO micro-cluster.
- External communication and promotional events – spotlight on region and careers events.

Action Outcome

- Industry-led group established with clear governance structures.
- Annual work programme developed with associated KPIs.
- Funding model identified to support the continued development of the relevant cluster.
- Cluster manager in place and funded.
- Targeted focus on skills development in place, including a specific focus on digital skills agenda.
- Engagement with other clusters formalised.
- Engagement with research ecosystem formalised.
- Promotional material and events developed.
- Establish a European Digital Innovation Hub in South-East supported by the EU commission and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The EDIH will focus on companies active in the digitalisation of Smart Urban, Smart Rural and Smart Coastal communities, where there is a clear opportunity to start exploring and investing in the utilisation of intelligent secure IoT sensors and networks.
- Explore Testing and Experiment facilities for Agriculture under the Digital Europe Programme, to support key areas such as mobility, healthcare, manufacturing, agro-food or security.
- Target funding for the Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence (PACE) for the period 2023-2027.



Action 3.5: Explore potential to start and grow an industry-led South-East Life Sciences Cluster.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Chair of Ireland South-East Development Office IDA Ireland Enterprise Ireland	TU ETBs South-East Regional Skills Forum Chambers IBEC South-East	Ongoing

Rationale:

- Focused activity around industry-led common themes.
- Skills needs being consistently assessed by skills and training providers, e.g. South-East Regional Skills Forum and Pharma BioPharma Medtech Industry Board.
- Company to company networking events.
- Formalised engagement and supporting the growth of the South-East research and innovation ecosystem, e.g. PMBRC and SEAM.
- Targeting crossovers between companies with other sector clusters and proposed LEO micro-cluster.
- External communication and promotional events – spotlight on region and careers events.

Action Outcome

- Industry-led group established with clear governance structures.
- Annual work programme developed with associated KPIs.
- Funding model identified to support the continued development of the relevant cluster.
- Cluster manager in place and funded.
- Targeted focus on skills development in place, including a specific focus on digital skills agenda.
- ETBs providing pharmaceutical manufacturing training through dedicated traineeship and upskilling to existing employees.
- Engagement with other clusters formalised.
- Engagement with research ecosystem formalised.
- Promotional material and events developed.

Action 3.6: Explore potential to start and grow an industry-led South-East Agri-food, Forestry and Marine Cluster.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Industry chair to be identified with TU Industry Board Technological University	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland RSF Teagasc Chambers IBEC South-East	Ongoing



Rationale:

- Focused activity around industry-led common themes.
- Skills needs being consistently assessed by skills and training providers and South-East Regional Skills Forum.
- Company to company networking events.
- Formalised engagement and supporting the growth of the South-East research and innovation ecosystem.
- Targeting crossovers between companies with other sector clusters and proposed LEO micro-cluster.
- External communication and promotional events – spotlight on region and careers events.

Action Outcome

- Industry-led group established with clear governance structures.
- Annual work programme developed with associated KPIs.
- Funding model identified to support the continued development of the relevant cluster.
- Cluster manager in place and funded.
- Targeted focus on skills development in place, including a specific focus on digital skills agenda.
- Engagement with other clusters formalised.
- Engagement with research ecosystem formalised.
- Promotional material and events developed.

Action 3.7: Local Enterprise Offices to develop four Regional micro-clusters in Pharma/ Lean Manufacturing/ Green/ Digital Marketing.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
4 Local Enterprise Offices of Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford	Link to larger clusters, Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office RSF TU and others	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- Micro-clusters are proposed for companies who have greater than 4 staff and are participants of Local Enterprise Office programmes.
- The concept of micro-clusters is to support the preparation and development of companies to participate effectively in larger cluster regional activities, where relevant.
- The cluster activities will be collaborative best practice and opportunity sharing.

Action Outcome

The proposed activities would be resourced by the Local Enterprise Offices for Cluster Regional Activities. This would be utilised towards:

- The cost of an animation and cluster development specialist.
- The development of Cluster Brands and Marketing.
- The provision of 16 activities per year (1 per quarter, per cluster).

It is estimated that the Cluster Activities would support at least 150 companies per year on a Regional Basis.



Strategic Objective 4

Innovate

Context and Vision to 2024

Innovation and access to cutting edge research and development are crucial to company growth. This Regional Enterprise Plan has the ambition of placing research, development and innovation at the heart of the South-East economy and aims to build the capacity and capability of our existing research ecosystem while developing new areas of RD&I activity that can assist the region's continued transformation to a green, digital, and sustainable knowledge-based economy. It is crucial that while the South-East enhances and grows its innovation ecosystem, the region must also increase SME awareness and engagement with it.

- Enhance and grow our existing research centres of excellence.
- New centres of excellence identified and emerging to develop the region's RD&I capacity.
- Increased engagement of our SME community with the research ecosystem.



Actions to 2024

Action 4.1: Explore a feasibility study for a TU multi-disciplinary research centre of excellence.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
TU Ireland South-East Development Office	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Industry Clusters	Q4 2022
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is increasingly a convergence with respect to technologies, innovation, business processes and model across key industry sectors in the region such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, functional food, personalised medicines, etc. • There is also convergence and alignment of applied research capabilities with industry needs in the region with distinct expertise in areas such as advanced manufacturing, business innovation, ICT and design, Life Sciences. • This action is one of the areas that could position TU as a catalyst for future economic development. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feasibility study to map out resource requirements, funding sources, infrastructure, technology, knowledge roadmap and focus of a dedicated centre. 		

Action 4.2: Create a LEO South-East virtual Innovation Hub.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
South-East Local Enterprise Offices	Enterprise Ireland SEBIC Technological University Walton Institute	Q4 2024
<p>Rationale:</p> <p>This action builds on the detailed South-East LEO Regional Innovation Study which identified key requirements for LEO companies. It proposes to be a virtual layer of support that would exist between the LEOs to support the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation Advisor: assigned to LEO companies for their complete journey. • Specific training for LEO companies in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Securing funding for Innovation. › Making Innovation Pay. › Market insights for Innovation. › Protecting Intellectual Property. › Accelerating Innovation through Collaboration. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation funding increases for SMEs: Lifecycle funding based on achievements in increments of €10k. • Management Development in Innovation: Certified coursework that involves the entire company. • Broader Workforce Skills in Innovation: Delivered to 15 companies per annum. • Digitalisation skills for company management: Delivered to 12 companies per annum. • Use of intellectual property rights: Training delivered to 25 companies per annum. 		



Action 4.3: Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in the Life Sciences innovation, research and development ecosystem in South-East.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
PMBRC Technological University Kinetic Labs	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Science Foundation Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office ETBs	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- PMBRC (Pharmaceutical and Molecular Biotechnology Research Centre) is an applied research centre in WIT and commenced operations in 2009, consolidating research in the chemical, pharmaceutical and biotechnological sciences into one institutionally-prioritised centre. The centre conducts multidisciplinary research in areas such as drug delivery, pharmaceutical characterisation, molecular biology, sensor technologies and biomedical science.
- Funding for the current Technology Gateway Programme expires at the end of 2022.
- Capacity to scale activities is currently inhibited by space constraints.

Action Outcome:

- Target continued funding for the PMBRC Technology Gateway for the period 2023-2027.
- Strategically target RDI investment in this field from Science Foundation Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, EU, industry and other sources to continue to develop a deepened and sustainable research capacity both within the TU and the region in terms of infrastructure, human capital, programmes of research and partnerships.
- By creating awareness nationally through various events across the country, PMBRC will collaborate with the other regional gateways to deliver these events to targeted client companies.
- PMBRC will target and encourage Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, LEO and affiliated support agency clients including the targeted regional clusters and create links with clients.
- Encourage and increase targeted industry partners use of the innovation supports provided by Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland including; innovation vouchers, innovation partnerships, RD&I funding, technical feasibility studies and SME targeted funding under Horizon Europe.
- Provide upskilling opportunities via the WWETB advanced manufacturing centre/ clean room facility to companies in the region.
- Work with Ireland South-East Development Office to deliver two Industry days per year focusing on innovation, new product development and competitiveness.

Action 4.4: Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in Advanced manufacturing innovation, research and development ecosystem in South-East.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
SEAM Technological University	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Science Foundation Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office ETBs	Q4 2024



Rationale:

- SEAM (South-Eastern Applied Materials) is an Applied Research and Development facility in WIT. It provides innovative materials engineering solutions for research and industrial partners seeking assistance on materials-related issues that cannot be solved by utilising their on-site resources. SEAM works with sectors such as Medical devices, Precision Engineering, Pharma, Electronics and Energy.
- Funding for the current Technology Gateway Programme expires at the end of 2022.
- Capacity to scale activities beyond current levels is inhibited by space constraints.

Action Outcome:

- Target continued funding for the SEAM Technology Gateway for the period 2023–2027.
- Strategically target RDI investment in this field from Science Foundation Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, EU, industry and other sources to continue to develop a deepened and sustainable research capacity both within the TU and the region in terms of infrastructure, human capital, programmes of research and partnerships.
- By creating awareness nationally through various events across the country. SEAM will collaborate with the other regional gateways to deliver events to targeted client companies.
- SEAM will target and encourage Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, LEO and affiliated support agency clients including the targeted regional clusters and create links with clients.
- Encourage and increase targeted industry partners use of the innovation supports provided by Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland including; innovation vouchers, innovation partnerships, RD&I funding, technical feasibility studies and SME targeted funding under Horizon Europe.
- Work with Ireland South-East Development Office to deliver two Industry days per year focusing on innovation, new product development and competitiveness.
- Provide upskilling opportunities via the WWETB advanced manufacturing centre/ clean room facility to companies in the region.

Action 4.5: Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in the ICT innovation, research and development ecosystem in South-East.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Walton Institute Technological University	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- The Walton Institute (formerly the Telecommunications Software and Systems Group – TSSG) is one of the top-performing, international ICT research performing organisations in Ireland.
- The Institute has created a number of spin out companies and through its Gateway has been central to supporting technology-based economic development in the region.
- The Walton Institute is also a key participant in EU ICT RDI programmes and is a key access route for regional enterprise to participate in EU RDI collaborations.



Action Outcome:

- Target continued funding for the Technology Gateway for the period 2023-2027.
- Strategically target RDI investment in this field from Science Foundation Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, EU, industry and other sources to continue to develop a deepened and sustainable research capacity both within the TU and the region in terms of infrastructure, human capital, programmes of research and partnerships.
- By creating awareness nationally through various events across the country. The Walton Institute will collaborate with the other regional gateways to deliver events to targeted client companies.
- The Walton Institute will target and encourage Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, LEO and affiliated support agency clients including the targeted regional clusters and create links with clients.
- Encourage and increase targeted industry partners use of the innovation supports provided by Enterprise Ireland including innovation vouchers, innovation partnerships, RD&I funding, technical feasibility studies and SME targeted funding under Horizon Europe.
- Work with Ireland South-East Development Office to deliver two Industry days per year focusing on innovation, new product development and competitiveness.

Action 4.6: Position the South-East as a destination for design-led thinking, design innovation, education and training.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Technological University, Carlow and Kilkenny Councils Industry	Design and Craft Council of Ireland Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- Building on latent capabilities of the design sector in the South-East.
- Building on the DCCI which is located in Kilkenny.
- Supporting local companies in design-led innovation.
- Growing the Design Plus Gateway.
- Establishing C4D as a dedicated centre of excellence for design-led thinking.

Action Outcome:

DESIGN+ will:

- Collaborate with the other regional gateways to deliver events to targeted client companies.
- Three training events annually will provide companies with practical demonstrations of how design is an integral part of any new product development process. Design+ will target and encourage Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, LEO and affiliated support agency clients including the targeted regional clusters and create links with clients.
- Encourage and increase targeted industry partners use of the innovation supports provided by Enterprise Ireland including; innovation vouchers, innovation partnerships, RD&I funding, technical feasibility studies and SME targeted funding under Horizon Europe.
- Work with Ireland South-East Development Office to deliver two Industry days per year focusing on design, innovation, new product development and competitiveness.

C4D KPIs will include:

- Design Strategy: no. of Masterclasses; Bootcamps; Training Programmes; Design Strategy: Mentoring Sessions delivered and no. of businesses/entrepreneurs participating.
- Product Design: no. of referrals from Technology Gateways, LEOs and Enterprise Ireland; (C4D will collaborate with Engineering the South-East cluster to develop links into Engineering companies that require rapid prototyping and / or 3D printing; Product Design; Electronic Design; etc).



Action 4.7: Explore opportunity to develop a Financial Services Centre of Excellence in the South-East.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
INC DAC Ireland South-East Financial Services Cluster CIRDAS with collaborative industry partners from these networks Funds Academy with collaborative industry partners	Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland TU Walton Institute Sustainable Ireland AIB centre for Finance and Business Research	Q4 2023

Rationale:

- The South-East Region is the largest financial services employment cohort outside of Dublin. The Ireland South-East Financial Services Cluster (ISEFSC), the Insurtech Network Centre (INC), the Centre for Insurance Risk and Data Analytics Studies (CIRDAS), the Academy for Investment Funds Executive Education and Development, the Walton Institute, and the AIB Centre for Finance and Business Research are actively supporting this sector in the region.
- Key opportunities are emerging through financial innovation, collaboration and inclusion in the areas of fintech/ insurtech, building critical mass in research, developing regional capacity in executive talent in the funds industry, sustainable finance, regulatory management and governance, and wealth services.
- This action aims to explore the appetite for the development of a distinct Financial Services Centre of Excellence – a South-East Digital Sandbox (complementing the CBI Innovation Hub) – which could act as a sector specific enterprise development centre supporting the formation and commercialisation of technology solutions to the global insurance and financial services sector, including the delivery of business development programmes and technology transfer services.
- The action aims to solidify the South-East as a national centre for education and research in financial services.

Action Outcome:

- Pre-accelerator programme delivery involving 8-10 companies per iteration.
- Graduate level training programmes developed and delivered focused on industry challenges including data analysis, artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- Priority structured projects based on the feasibility study learnings.
- Education-Industry research programme.



Action 4.8: Identify opportunities to scale and increase enterprise engagement in the Agri-Food, Forestry innovation, research and development ecosystem in the South-East.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
EIRC Envirocore Technological University	Industry Enterprise Ireland Science Foundation Ireland Ireland South-East Development Office	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- EIRC (Eco-Innovation Research Centre) is a research centre in WIT, consolidating research in the agri/food, forestry, marine and biodiversity domains into an institutionally prioritised centre. The centre conducts multidisciplinary research in areas such as sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry, biodiversity and ecosystems services, molecular ecology, high-value marine products, and food waste minimisation.
- Envirocore in IT Carlow is researching innovative environmental technologies and biotechnologies in areas such as Environmental Remediation (Soil and Water), Ecology and Biodiversity, Natural Resources, Environmentally Friendly Biomass Production and Biomass Transformation into Biofuels (Bioethanol and Biogas) and the Development of Environmental Monitoring Sensors, Biosensors and Biomarkers.

Action Outcome:

- Creating awareness nationally through various events across the country. EIRC and Envirocore will collaborate with industry partners to deliver these events to targeted client companies.
- EIRC and Envirocore will target and encourage Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, LEO and affiliated support agency clients including the targeted regional clusters and create links with clients.
- Encourage and increase targeted industry partners use of the innovation supports provided by Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland including; innovation vouchers, innovation partnerships, RD&I funding, technical feasibility studies and SME targeted funding under Horizon Europe.
- Work with Ireland South-East Development Office to deliver an Industry day focusing on innovation, new product development and competitiveness.



Action 4.9: Advance KCETB's Further Education and Training College of the Future.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Kilkenny-Carlow Education and Training Board	South-East Regional Skills Forum TU and other skills providers in region	To Q4 2024

Rationale:

- The provision of education and training facilities across all levels of provision in the South-East is essential to ensuring that students and learners have the broadest range of options possible available to them. The development of the TU will provide the higher education option for students. Allied to this the region needs a strong and effective further education network to provide learning options from levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- A strong Further and Higher Education network is crucial to the growth and development of the region and would support more effective access, transfer and progression routes between the two sectors and would enhance educational outcomes leading to a more skilled workforce.

Action Outcome:

- Kilkenny and Carlow ETB is seeking to develop a flagship FET College of the Future to provide the full suite of further education and training opportunities in the KCETB area.
- This would build the capacity of the ETB and the region creating a model of provision which is agile and responsive to current and future skills needs and would contribute to stronger regional development. In addition, it would contribute to supporting the business and workforce demands of the region.

Action 4.10: Complete the development of the WWETB Wexford FET College.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Waterford Wexford Education and Training Board	South-East Regional Skills Forum TU and other skills providers in region	To Q4 2024

Rationale:

- The provision of education and training facilities across all levels of provision in the South-East is essential to ensuring that students and learners have the broadest range of options possible available to them. The development of the TU will provide the higher education option for students. Allied to this the region needs a strong and effective further education network to provide learning options from levels 1-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- A strong Further and Higher Education network is crucial to the growth and development of the region and would support more effective access, transfer and progression routes between the two sectors and would enhance educational outcomes leading to a more skilled workforce.

Action Outcome:

- WWETB is seeking to develop a 52,000sq ft FET campus in Wexford town which will incorporate Apprenticeship, Traineeship, PLC and skills training together with a range of part-time provision.
- This would build the capacity of the ETB and the region creating a model of provision which is agile and responsive to current and future skills needs and would contribute to stronger regional development. In addition, it would contribute to supporting the business and workforce demands of the region.



Action 4.11: Position the South-East as a productivity and process improvement hub for companies through increased engagement in enterprise excellence research, innovation, training and clustering.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
RIKON Technological University	LI4 Industry Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland TU Ireland South-East Development Office	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- RIKON is a hybrid centre of innovation in Business Technology Management that empowers organisations by re-imagining the way they do business better. The centre conducts multidisciplinary research in areas such as business strategy, enterprise excellence, data driven process optimisation, design thinking and digital marketing.
- Embracing the digital transformation of lean manufacturing and services will become crucial to building a competitive advantage for companies in the South-East because it represents a real opportunity for improving productivity growth by enabling innovation and reducing the costs of a range of business processes.
- Supports local companies in digital transformation and enterprise excellence.

Action Outcome:

- Establish and position LI4 as a state of the art Lean Industry 4.0 facility (LI4) and the vanguard of lean operations and process optimisation excellence in the South-East for enhanced efficiencies and productivity through the use of technology, analytics and simulation across operation and business processes.
- RIKON and LI4 will leverage the TU's multidisciplinary research and industry expertise in business, digital marketing, engineering, ICT through its Technology Gateways and utilising the strong stakeholder ecosystem to educate and support SMEs in the South-East and beyond to seek and scale successful lean and digital transformations for enhanced productivity.
- Encourage and increase targeted industry partners use of the innovation supports provided by Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland including; innovation vouchers, innovation partnerships, RD&I funding, technical feasibility studies and SME targeted funding under Horizon Europe.
- Work with Ireland South-East Development Office to deliver an Industry day focusing on innovation, new product development and competitiveness.
- Support Local Authorities in their digital transformation for data driven operational excellence, data driven strategic policy decision making and economic modeling based upon near-to-real-time performance overview of key urban centers.
- The digital revolution is creating a hyper-connected and collaborative society that transforms the relationship between local government, businesses and people. There is a real competitive advantage to be gained for the region by position itself as a smart destination and leveraging the power of technology and the power of its people to create numerous innovative opportunities that will drive greater productivity and efficiency and support investment, further bolstering economic activity.



Strategic Objective 5

Place

Context and Vision to 2024

Placemaking for investment purposes and enhancing the region for tourist activity can work hand in hand – places that offer a good quality of life will also be great places to visit. Tourism is a key industry in the South-East, employing approximately 8 percent of the total workforce. In 2019 and 2020, the 5 County Councils (Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford) worked jointly with Fáilte Ireland to develop a South-East Ireland's Ancient East Tourism Action Plan. This work – which was understandably paused in light of COVID-19 – can now come back into focus as the region looks forward to improved conditions for tourism activity over the next three years.

Placemaking offers the opportunity to differentiate the region from other locations by delivering attractive urban areas in which to reside. Each council will oversee the development of its urban environments and the actions in this plan will focus on the promotion of the region as a place of choice for investors and talent. The promotion of our region as an environment that offers good quality of life is important in assisting investors to attract and retain the talent necessary to support their establishment and growth. The region will also seek to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the trend towards remote working and highlight its benefits as an ideal second site location.

- Increase in international visitors to South-East and the quantity and quality of experiences on offer.
- Elevated perception of the region in the minds of investors, talent and remote workers as a place of choice to locate in.



Actions to 2024

Action 5.1: Implement the Ireland’s Ancient East South-East Tourism Action Plan to enhance visitor experiences in activity tourism; food and drink tourism; history and culture tourism; and castles, houses and gardens.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Fáilte Ireland County Councils	Industry local tourism networks Hotels Federation South-East	Q4 2024

Rationale:

In 2019 and 2020, the five County Councils (Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford) worked jointly with Fáilte Ireland to develop a South-East Ireland’s Ancient East Tourism Action Plan. This work – which was understandably paused in light of COVID-19 – focused on 4 key pillars with specific actions aligned to the Ireland’s Ancient East story:

1. Outstanding outdoor experiences for all to enjoy.
2. High quality food and drink experiences offering an authentic taste of place.
3. Enhanced products and experiences of our unique castles, houses, gardens.
4. Animated experiences of our history and culture that capture hearts and minds.

Action Outcome:

- Quantity and quality of experiences on offer.
- Increase in international visitors to South-East.
- Extension of the season.

Action 5.2: Strengthen upskilling opportunities in hospitality and customer service in the South-East.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
ETBs South-East Regional Skills Forum	Industry local tourism networks Hotels Federation South-East	Q4 2024

Rationale:

- Hospitality and retail are key sectors of employment in South-East.
- There are emerging skills gaps in these key employment areas.
- Building on SE Regional Skills Forum’s Hospitality Study 2021.

Action Outcome:

- Increased upskilling opportunities to the hospitality sector in a number of FET centres region.
- Provide additional input via the Barista, bar tendering and Food Service traineeship in ETBs across the region.



Action 5.3: Scale up the Ireland South-East marketing campaign for the region.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
South-East Marketing Stakeholder Group to be established by Ireland South-East Development Office Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland to Action Leaders	Other stakeholders	Q4 2024
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing time and resources into marketing the region and highlighting the benefits of investing and living here is of critical importance as the region competes on a global stage for business and talent. Promotion of the region has increased steadily over the course of the first two action plans. Initially a logo and brand were developed for the region and more recently a high-quality website and promotional video were launched. The next step is to increase the levels of ongoing digital marketing activity across several platforms and to continue to use peer to peer promotion of the region by capturing the stories of the people who invest, live, and work here. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <p>Marketing the region as a place of choice for investors and talent is ongoing and can be enhanced by increasing engagement with industry, agencies, and county stakeholders and further developing collaborative activities.</p> <p>This can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake further market research to regional improve marketing offer. Elevate the perception of the region in the minds of investors and talent as a place of choice to locate in. Provide marketing collateral that can be used by stakeholders in the region to highlight the benefits of locating here. 		

Action 5.4: Position the South-East as Ireland's top remote working location.

Action Leader:	Action Partners:	For completion by:
Ireland South-East Development Office	Network of Hubs in South-East Local Authorities	Ongoing
<p>Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the region's hubs as ideal second site locations for companies seeking to locate teams away from their main office and to offer remote working to staff in certain locations. To highlight the opportunity for employees in high-cost regions to get a remote job and utilise a South-East based hub to access all the quality-of-life benefits of living here. To build on the 2020 South-East Remote Working Survey. 		
<p>Action Outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of promotional collateral. Marketing campaign. Number of company contacts for hubs. 		



3

Implementation

The consultation process to develop the South-East Regional Enterprise Plan (REP) to 2024 was enhanced by an understanding amongst stakeholders of the importance of ownership, collaboration, and the definition and delivery of specific measurable actions that could add value to the existing activities being undertaken by the Enterprise Agencies, Local Enterprise Offices and other relevant bodies involved in supporting enterprise development. These priorities are reflected in the implementation structure for the South-East REP to 2024.

Implementation of the REP will be overseen by a Regional Enterprise Steering Committee. The Steering Committee for the South-East Region will continue to be chaired by Mr Patsy Carney, and this is welcomed by Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The functions of the Steering Committee are as follows:

- Oversee and drive delivery of the REP.
- Nominate and secure Public and Private Sector leads, where appropriate, to support delivery of the Strategic Objectives.
- Oversee the formation of working groups as necessary to drive implementation of actions.
- Explore and propagate new ideas and opportunities for collaborative projects and funding opportunities.
- Provide a forum for the sharing of updates and information by members on key enterprise development initiatives including those set out by the Agencies and LEOs in this Plan and other pertinent updates (incl. REDF, RSES, URDF, RRDF Project Ireland 2040 etc.).
- Oversee, contribute to and sign off on Progress Reports to the Department.

The Chairperson will convene at least two meetings of the Steering Committee per year and will present a progress update on the implementation of the Plan. The Chairperson will also lead the Committee in the preparation of both a mid-term and a final progress report, to be submitted to the Department. These reports will be the subject of a meeting between the Chairperson and/or the Steering Committee and the Minister during one of the biannual meetings.

The South-East Regional Steering Committee will oversee the formation of working groups to drive delivery of each of the strategic objectives and their list of actions in the REP. Working Groups will convene as frequently as is required and will report on progress to the Chairperson and the Regional Steering Committee.

The Department will be responsible for the oversight and coordination of the REPs at national level. A National Oversight Group (NOG), which all Chairpersons attend, will oversee implementation of the new REPs. This group will be chaired by Ministers of State Robert Troy and Damien English and will provide a fora for the Chairs to share good practice and identify potential areas for inter-regional cooperation.





South-East Enterprise Agencies and Local Enterprise Offices

The Regional Enterprise Plans to 2024 are based on a collaborative approach to regional enterprise development. The Strategic Objectives and actions identified are set alongside and complement the core activities of the Enterprise Agencies and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). Each Agency have corporate strategies which include national level objectives as well as activities that support specific regional enterprise development potential. This Chapter provides an overview of those Agency activities and that of the LEOs in the South-East Region to 2024.



4.1 Enterprise Ireland: Focus to 2024

Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. Enterprise Ireland work in partnership with Irish enterprises to help them start, grow, innovate and achieve international growth. In this way, Enterprise Ireland support sustainable economic growth, regional development and secure employment.

Balanced regional development is central to Enterprise Ireland's remit. Enterprise Ireland manage a number of regional development funds on behalf of Government and work in collaboration with key stakeholders in all regions to deliver regional enterprise infrastructure, strengthen the enterprise base and deliver regional growth.

Strengthening regional enterprise development is a key focus in the new Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022-2024, reflecting the varying needs and opportunities of enterprise across the different regions.

Recent developments in the South-East region

Enterprise Ireland's team of Development Advisors and capability specialists work with over 345 companies employing more than 20,003 people in the South-East Region.



Between 2018-2020, Enterprise Ireland invested €39.5m in companies in the South-East Region to support employment creation, innovation, competitiveness and expansion including, investment in 12 High Potential Start Ups (HPSUs).

A strategic priority is to support successful domestically focussed companies to seek growth through international markets. Enterprise Ireland has recently added a dedicated resource, based in the Waterford office, to work with the South East's successful, non-exporting companies on developing exporting capability and targeting overseas markets for their next phase of growth.

Strong regional clustering is important to enhancing regional enterprise success. Under the Regional Technology Cluster Fund, Enterprise Ireland approved funding for the South-East Engineering Cluster, and is working with other regional stakeholders to develop additional clustering projects in Life Sciences, Financial Services and ICT.

Investment in regional infrastructure that supports innovation and entrepreneurship is central to Enterprise Ireland's regional development strategy. The South-East benefits from important well-established supports such as the five Local Enterprise Offices in the region, two New Frontiers Programmes in WIT and ITC, the South-East BIC, and the NDRC at Arclabs Start-Up Accelerator. Enterprise Ireland continues to support, through collaboration and funding, the region's centres of excellence: Insurtech, 3D WIT, Lean 4.0 Centre, Centre for Design and Incupharm.

Building on sectors where the region performs well, in September 2021 two new sector-focussed pre-accelerators were announced. SportX, is a new pre-accelerator programme designed by the Arclabs Fund in Waterford to identify ideas and founders that can go on to become high potential start-ups in the South-East Region. Insurtech is a pre-accelerator specifically designed to develop opportunities in the Insurance industry, building on the network developed by IT Carlow Insurtech centre of excellence.

Enterprise Centres are another critical development support to which Enterprise Ireland has committed significant funding over several years. In 2020, in response to COVID-19, €774,455 in development funding was allocated to nine Enterprise Centres across the South-East.

Enterprise Ireland's objectives for the South-East Region to 2024

Enterprise Ireland's development objectives for the South-East to 2024 focus on the dual priorities of delivering an effective and supportive enterprise ecosystem and driving entrepreneurship activity across the South-East Region.

To support these objectives, our strategic priorities for the South-East to 2024 include:

- The successful delivery of projects funded under the regional development funds including the Regional Enterprise Development Fund, the Regional Technology Clustering Fund and the Powering the Regions Community Enterprise Centre Scheme.
- Collaboration with local stakeholders to identify gaps in the South East's enterprise ecosystem and to plan and help fund essential regional enterprise-enabling infrastructure.
- Work with partners such as the LEOs, the BICs, HEIs and regional accelerators to deliver initiatives that support entrepreneurship and foster an exciting new generation of innovative and ambitious start-ups in the South-East.
- Enterprise Ireland's sectoral and capability specialists will work closely with clients across the South-East Region to support their growth plans as well as supporting and assisting companies on transformation initiatives such as climate change, digitisation and sustainability.
- Broadening and strengthening the South-East's exporting base by identifying and supporting first-time exporters, growing knowledge and capability and supporting SMEs to scale-up their exporting strategies.
- Drive strong and effective regional clustering and collaboration in the South-East, particularly in Engineering, Lifesciences, Financial Services and ICT.
- Continue to strengthen linkages between the South-East's third level and research institutes and industry through the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund, the Commercialisation Fund, Innovation Partnerships and Innovation Vouchers.
- In partnership with Údarás na Gaeltachta, promote initiatives to attract and retain entrepreneurs to Gaeltacht na nDéise.
- Work with the Regional Skills Forum and our clients to ensure availability and development of appropriate skills and talent to support company growth.

Enterprise Ireland is a member of the Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee for the South-East Region and looks forward to working closely with our partners on the implementation of this Plan and continuing the strong spirit of collaboration and collective effort that is essential to delivering on our ambition for the South-East Region.





4.2 IDA Ireland: Focus to 2024

IDA Ireland's mission is to partner with multi-national companies (MNCs) to win and develop foreign direct investment, providing jobs for the economic and social benefit of Ireland. IDA Ireland works with key stakeholders both in the public and private sectors to deliver on this mandate. IDA Ireland partners closely with Enterprise Ireland across the Regions on multiple initiatives, including under the Regional Enterprise Plans and in relation to the provision of property solutions to the indigenous base, where appropriate.

IDA's strategy Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth 2021-2024 was developed in the context of the Government's National Economic Recovery Plan and positions IDA to respond to the emerging trends that are accelerating as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. It identifies the opportunities for sustainable growth among IDA's established base of clients through a focus on transformative investments to increase the productivity of Irish operations and their workforce through RD&I, digitisation, training, and actions on sustainability. Crucially it also maintains a focus on attracting the next generation of leading MNCs to locate in Ireland, further driving sustainable growth and maximising the impact of FDI in Ireland to 2024 and beyond.

The Strategy has five pillars:

1 Growth pillar – win investment to support job creation and economic activity

2 Transformation pillar – partner with clients for future growth in Ireland

3 Regions pillar – win investment to advance regional development

4 Sustainability pillar – embrace an inclusive and green recovery; and

5 Impact pillar – maximise FDI's positive impact on local businesses and communities

Regional development is at the centre of IDA's strategy. Although FDI cannot be the sole contributor in addressing the challenges facing Ireland's regions – from Brexit to COVID-19, digital transformation to the climate transition – it can have a significant impact in propelling economic recovery and realising more balanced growth. IDA is targeting half of all investments (400) from 2021-2024 to regional locations and is maintaining the same high level of investment as targeted in IDA's previous strategy for each region of the country.

Under the Regions pillar of *Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth*, IDA Ireland will:

- Win investment to propel recovery and support development in each region;
- Partner with existing regional clients to transform through innovation and upskilling;
- Develop clusters to support transformation, spill overs and linkages;
- Collaborate with clients and stakeholders to facilitate remote working opportunities; and
- Continue to roll-out IDA's regional property programme, including delivery of 19 Advanced Building Solutions (ABS) to regional locations over the course of the strategy.

The global competition for FDI is intense as countries compete for investment to support economic recovery. It is in this context – of greater competition for potentially fewer projects – that IDA wins investment for Ireland and engages with MNCs on the benefits of choosing regional locations for their investment projects. Key to IDA's success in the past and essential to success in the future is strategic collaboration with national and local stakeholders to ensure that each region has the necessary conditions in place to foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. The delivery of necessary infrastructure and property solutions, the availability of a skilled and future ready workforce, and an emphasis on quality of life and placemaking in each region are pre-requisites to winning continued investment from MNCs.



Regional Economic Impact of FDI

IDA client companies directly employed almost 145,000 people outside of Dublin in 2020. Combined with indirect employment of 116,000, an estimated 260,000 jobs in the regions were supported by FDI in 2020. Clients in regional locations had an annual spend of €7.9bn on payroll, €2.7bn on Irish services and €2.2bn on Irish materials in 2019. They contributed a further €1.3bn on in-house R&D. These linkages support diverse, innovative, and vital local economies.

Over the period 2021-2024 IDA Ireland will:

- Win 800 total investments to support job creation of 50,000 and economic activity
- Partner with clients for future growth through 170 RD&I and 130 Training investments
- Win 400 investments to advance Regional Development
- Embrace a green recovery with 60 sustainability investments
- Target a 20 percent increase in client expenditure in Ireland to maximise the impact of FDI

Read more about IDA Ireland's 2001-2024 Strategy *Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth* at www.idaireland.com.

IDA Ireland objectives for the South-East Region to 2024

There are 79 IDA client companies in the South-East Region, employing 14,932 people. FDI performance in the region has been strong over the past five years with employment among IDA clients increasing by 24 percent.

Under IDA's *Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth* strategy, IDA will target 40 investments for the South-East Region in the period 2021 to 2024. The Agency will continue to work with stakeholders to enhance the strengths of the region and to win investment that builds upon its existing regional clusters and innovative enterprise base.

IDA will deliver an Advanced Building Solution in Waterford over 2021-2024 and complete the construction of an Advanced Building Solution in Carlow. Additional upgrade works, and investment are planned for IDA Parks in the region to ensure a robust value proposition for clients.

Companies in the region include MSD, Sulzer Pumps, Unum, State Street, Lighthouse Studios, SRA, Sanofi, Sunlife, Integer, BNY Mellon, GSK and UPMC.

Significant investments since 2020 from both new names and established IDA clients that underpin the strength of the South-East's business ecosystem, include: CSC Global (75 jobs) and Mtech Mobility (25 jobs) in Wexford; Unum (50 jobs) in Carlow; State Street (400 jobs), Trilateral research (40 jobs) and UPMC (60 jobs) in Kilkenny; and Horizon (90 jobs), Repligen Corporation (130 jobs) and Bausch and Lomb (130 jobs) in Waterford.

FDI in the South-East is estimated to generate €4.28bn for the region and Ireland through Payroll (€2,377m), Purchasing of Irish Materials and Services (€1,609m) and in-house R&D spend (€295m)

(Source: DETE ABSEI 2019).

The South-East is well placed to attract further investment. Currently, over 10,000 people work in high value Life Sciences manufacturing across the region. In addition to Life Sciences, there are important regional clusters in Technology, Engineering and Industrial Technologies, and International Financial Services, which are complemented by research centres that help win new business and assist existing client companies with transformation.

State Street's announcement of 400 Cyber Security roles in Kilkenny (Sept 2021) is one of the largest jobs announcements in recent years in the South-East and a vote of confidence in not only the Financial Services sector but also in the Tech Talent which will be required to fulfil the roles. The South-East for Financial Services Industry Group is building momentum and is providing a strong link for industry leaders in financial services to academia and other relevant stakeholders.

The presence of Waterford Institute of Technology and Institute of Technology Carlow is a key asset to businesses located in the region, and the proposed merger of these Institutes to form a new Technological University of the South-East (TUSE) will further enhance its educational profile, once established.

IDA Ireland is a member of the Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee for the South-East Region and looks forward to working closely with its partners on the implementation of this Plan and continuing the strong spirit of collaboration and collective effort that is essential to delivering on our ambition for the South-East Region.





Local Enterprise Office

4.3 Local Enterprise Office: Focus to 2024

The Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) aim to promote entrepreneurship, foster business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible high quality supports for your Business ideas. The Local Enterprise Office is the First Stop Shop for anyone seeking information and support on starting or growing a business in Ireland.

Entrepreneurs and Businesses are supported to:

- Increase exports
- Build resilience
- Increase productivity
- Prepare for the Low carbon economy
- Embrace the Digital economy
- Innovate
- Be managed by ambitious and capable individuals
- Fuel regional growth

Recent Developments in the South-East Region

Regions	Client Numbers 2021	Total Jobs 2021	Net Job Change 2021
South-East	893	4,903	524

The Local Enterprise Offices work with the Ireland South-East Development Office in respect of the Regional Jobs Plan. The Ireland South-East Development Office (ISED) is a bottom-up, local authority initiative which works with leaders of the major regional industries as well as the Chief Executives of the councils of the 5 counties in the South-East (Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford) and other public and private stakeholders. Its priority is to make the South-East the 1st choice for business, careers, inward investment and tourists.

The South-East LEO's have 975 active clients supporting 5,003 jobs in the South-East Region. The Region during the lifetime of the previous plan completed 3 projects under the LEO competitive fund in the area of start-up's, scale-up, Export and Green.

Local Enterprise Office objectives for the South-East Region to 2024

The objectives of the South-East Local Enterprise Offices in the South-East includes regional projects in the area of:

1. Clusters
2. LEO Green Awareness
3. Innovation
4. Start Up Eco-System.
5. Development of Hubs and Enterprise Spaces

Micro-clusters: It is proposed that the South-East LEO establish a series of micro-clusters for companies who have greater than four staff and are participants of Local Enterprise Office programmes. The concept of micro-clusters is to support the preparation and development of companies to participate effectively in larger cluster regional activities. The cluster activities will be collaborative best practice and opportunity sharing. Four regional micro-clusters are proposed in:

- Micro Pharma Cluster – which links to proposed Life Sciences cluster
- Micro Manufacturing Lean Cluster – which links to Engineering the SE cluster
- Micro Green Cluster focused on Tourism / Hospitality / Food and Drink Manufacturing
- Micro Digital Marketing Cluster

LEO Green Awareness Programme: The LEO Green Awareness programmed is a collaborative project in the area of Education and Awareness of the benefits of the Green Economy at Regional Level which would complement the LEO Green for Micro Voucher Scheme which covers the project design support at company level.

Start Up Eco-system supports: It is proposed that the LEO's support the Start Eco-System by the engagement in a variety of programmes and projects.

Innovation: The innovation agenda will continue to be supported and the South-East Local Enterprise Offices will work with TU South-East to ensure a link between industry and the TU system. Separate to working with the IT the LEO's will work towards the development of a Innovation Development Service for the South-East.

The Local Enterprise Office is a member of the Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee for the South-East Region and looks forward to working closely with our partners on the implementation of this Plan and continuing the strong spirit of collaboration and collective effort that is essential to delivering on our ambition for the South-East Region.



5

Complementary Strategies and Initiatives



5.1 Fáilte Ireland: Focus to 2024

As the National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland's role is to support the long-term sustainable growth in the economic, social, cultural and environmental contribution of tourism to Ireland. In addition to helping to develop destinations, Fáilte Ireland also provides consumer and buyer insights, mentoring, business supports and training programmes and buyer platforms to help tourism businesses innovate and grow.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fáilte Ireland's mission over the next three years is to support the survival and drive the recovery of the sector in order to maximise the sustainable economic, environmental, cultural and social contribution of tourism to Ireland. It is also Fáilte Ireland's objective to spread the benefits of tourism more evenly around the country.

The South-East Region is served by Fáilte Ireland's regional tourism brand, Ireland's Ancient East. Fáilte Ireland is currently preparing a suite of four Regional Tourism Strategies (one for each of the four Regional Tourism Brands), which will be published in early 2022.

Through these regional brand development initiatives, Fáilte Ireland has worked closely with a wide range of industry and stakeholder partners towards the sustainable development of tourism in the South-East.

Since March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the tourism industry went through a series of prolonged shutdowns, Fáilte Ireland has been focused on supporting the survival of the industry through a series of significant business supports, by way of direct grant-aid, mentoring and training. Destination Recovery Task Forces were established in key destinations which sought to co-ordinate the recovery and provide targeted supports at a local catchment level.

In addition to the short-term tactical supports that have been necessary to ensure the survival of the industry, Fáilte Ireland has remained focused on the medium-to-long term strategic initiatives that are necessary to facilitate the future sustainable recovery and development of tourism in the South-East Region.



Fáilte Ireland's objectives for the South-East region to 2024

The overall tourism objective for the South-East Region is to continually increase visitor numbers by raising awareness of the region as a visitor destination through sustained domestic marketing and sales promotion; and by substantiating the Ireland's Ancient East brand propositions with exciting saleable visitor experiences that appeal to our target audiences. Fáilte Ireland will also work with Tourism Ireland to ensure awareness of all that's new in the South-East Region such that it informs their international marketing activity as well.

Priority areas of focus for Fáilte Ireland over the coming three years in the region include:

- Finalisation of Destination and Experience Development Plans for Waterford and Wexford in 2021, with Kilkenny to follow in 2022 and Carlow in 2023. These 5-year plans will be agreed by all stakeholders and will outline shared development priorities that will improve both the destinations' appeal and the experience they offer on the ground; and by extension, help to increase visitor dwell time and spend in the region. These are the key tourism plans to which the REP and other regional strategic plans such as Regional Spatial Strategy, County Tourism Plans etc. can align with so as to optimise resources and impact.
- Establish and assist effective commercially focused tourism business networks throughout the region to execute these DEDPs, cross-promote and cross-sell the region.
- Continuing to promote and raise awareness of the region as a visitor destination and of the range of things for visitors to see and do.
- Aiding the digital transformation of the tourism industry in the region through a 'Digital that Delivers' initiative, aimed at providing improved online presence and bookability for tourism businesses, enhancing their connected distribution and improving their digital skills.
- Providing a range of business supports focused on meeting the particular needs of tourism businesses in the region in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic to enable recovery and growth.
- Helping tourism providers to secure new business by introducing them to new markets and buyers and helping them to secure incremental sales by honing their saleable experiences.

- Working with local authorities to deliver capital investment projects and develop new/ improved visitor experiences at The Tholsel Kilkenny incorporating the Medieval Mile Museum, Butler Gallery, Mount Congreve Gardens, Norman Experience New Ross, Hook Lighthouse, Irish National Heritage Park.
- Work with the local authorities to deliver Fáilte Ireland funded Destination Towns, Urban Animation and Outdoor Dining Enhancement schemes to improve the public realm, orientation and flow for the visitor and resident alike.
- Liaising with Local Authorities and other State Agencies such as Coillte, Waterways Ireland and the OPW in optimising the benefit of state assets and attractions for tourism, in particular through the development of Greenways, Blueways, and walking trails, which can be leveraged by tourism enterprises to create new jobs.
- Ensuring that the potential of existing strategic tourism infrastructure, assets and facilities is fully explored and that they are fully leveraged by tourism businesses to create new enterprises and jobs, in particular, the new Greenway in the South-East, among others.
- Develop and execute a sustained strategy for Tourism Skills and Careers to both attract and retain staff within the tourism industry – the absence of staff represents an existential crisis as businesses capacity to trade is being restricted.

As a member of the Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee for the South-East Region, Fáilte Ireland looks forward to continuing the strong spirit of collaboration and collective effort that is essential to delivering on its ambition for the South-East Region.



5.2 Regional Skills Forum: Focus to 2024

The National Skills Strategy to 2025, provides a framework for skills development that drives Ireland's growth both economically and societally. One of the key elements of the Strategy was the development of a National Skills Council (NSC) and 9 Regional Skills Fora (RSF). The Fora structure fosters engagement and collaboration between relevant Government Departments and agencies, the education (Further and Higher) and training system, and enterprise.



The RSF seek to bring people together at local and regional level, to identify, interrogate and validate skills needs, and to ensure that employers and enterprise are linked with the appropriate resources across the education and training system. The RSF provide an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions. The RSF work to ensure the availability of skills and talent to realise the region's economic potential and address upskilling requirements.

The Regional Skills Forum leads a number of key activities in each region:

- acting at local and regional level, to drive forward the National Skills Strategy;
- assisting local enterprises identify skills needs to ensure that the region has the effective use of skills to support economic and social prosperity;
- linking (once skills needs have been identified) companies with regional education and training providers best suited to responding to identified skills need; and
- assisting with actions in the Regional Enterprise Plan where linkages to Education and Training Providers are required.

The South-East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF) has been working with industry sectors across the region in recent years and has developed a profile of ongoing education and training needs. Sectors of focus have been determined by Forum members. Additionally, a number of other sectors and cross-sectoral needs have been identified and will continue to be addressed.

The SERSF will continue to engage with these businesses through new and established clusters and groupings as this has been shown to be an effective mechanism to identify and address education and training needs. The SERSF will also continue to engage with the further and higher education providers (Third Level, Education and Training Boards and Skillnets) within the region to deliver industry focused solutions.

In terms of education and training needs of industry across the region, the following will continue to be a priority for the SERSF over the period of the Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 and beyond:

- Engineering education and training (from Level 4 to Level 9) and part-time upskilling opportunities are required across all manufacturing sectors and construction. There continues to be a shortage of candidates pursuing education across a wide range of engineering disciplines.
- Life Sciences education and training (from Level 5 to Level 9) and part-time upskilling is required by the pharma, food manufacturing and medtech sectors.
- Technological innovation and digitisation will continue to be a driver for all sectors and requires ongoing focus and a pipeline of ICT graduates as well as opportunities for part time upskilling.
- The hospitality sector requires a more coordinated approach from industry and the education and training providers to address periods of chronic skills and labour shortages.
- Financial Services is also a growing and valuable sector in the region that requires ongoing education and training for full time and part time learners from L6 to L9.
- The transport and logistics sector is vital to the regional economy and requires ongoing focus, particularly HGV training and transitioning to a low carbon economy.
- The construction sector, in addition to the engineering education and training referred to above, requires a continuation of upskilling in the broad area of sustainable construction.
- Transitioning to a low carbon economy will also require the development of new and enhanced education and training across a broad range of sectors and disciplines.

Innovation in the delivery of solutions to enterprise's education and training needs will be to the forefront of the SERSF's approach, encompassing blended models of delivery as well as joint delivery with enterprise.





5.3 The Regional Assembly

The Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) covers nine counties containing 10 Local Authorities namely – Carlow, Clare, Cork City, Cork County, Kerry, Kilkenny, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

One of the principal functions of the Assembly is the delivery of a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which sets out the strategic regional development framework for the region. The primary aim of the RSES is to implement Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF), at the regional tier of Government and to support NPF policy for achieving balanced regional development.

The region's priorities for investment are identified in the RSES and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) and set a 12-year strategic planning and economic development framework for future economic, spatial, and social development for the region in line with vision and objectives for national change in the NPF and the National Development Plan (NDP).

The Regional Assembly's RSES also aims to develop a sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient regional economy. Key to delivering this vision is ensuring the region develops a strong and diverse economic base and with immediate challenges such as COVID-19, Brexit, Just Transition and potential vulnerabilities for Ireland's enterprise base.

Alignment of the economic principles of the RSES and Regional Enterprise Plan (REP) is critical to underpin the achievement of national strategic outcomes at the regional and local level and give regional support for the implementation of actions identified through the REP. This is also of key relevance for EU cohesion funding in Ireland for the period 2021-2027 and the development of priorities under the ERDF 2021-2027 Programme. The Regional Assembly has an enhanced role in the management of this programme which will have a focus on smart cities and a smart region, lower carbon emissions, climate resilience and urban regeneration, themes that support priorities and actions under the REP.



5.4 Local Authorities – Local Economic and Community Plans

Local Authorities are the key agents of government responsible for local and community development at local level. The Local Government Reform Act 2014 strengthened the role of Local Authorities towards economic, social and community development.

The Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs), as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014, set out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) has statutory responsibility for the LECPs overall and additional responsibility for the Local Community Development Committees who are charged with the development and the delivery of the Community elements of the LECP. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) have statutory responsibility for the Economic elements of the LECP. The local authorities are responsible for the development and implementation of the economic elements of the LECP through the relevant Strategic Policy Committee.

The purpose of the community elements of the LECP is to promote local and community development and to ensure the coordination of relevant public funded local and community development actions in a way that reduces duplication, targets available resources where they are most needed and maximises benefits for communities. The focus of the community elements of the LECP should be on the social and economic issues that have relevance and can be addressed at a community level.

The development of the economic elements of the LECP is part of the wider role of economic development in local government. Revised guidelines on the development of LECPs to assist with the development of local area plans were published in November 2021.

As the framework for the economic and community development of the local authority area, the LECP is also the primary mechanism at local level to bring forward relevant actions arising from national and regional strategies and policies that have a local remit.



Appendices



Appendix 1: Membership of the Regional Steering Committee

Chair Regional Enterprise Plan:
Patsy Carney, Director Kinetic Labs
Programme Manager:
Alan Quirke
Project Executive:
Richard Hickey
Membership of the Committee:
Kilkenny County Council
Waterford City and County Council
Wexford County Council
Carlow County Council
IDA Ireland
Enterprise Ireland
Fáilte Ireland
Local Enterprise Offices
Southern Regional Assembly
South-East Regional Skills Forum
Waterford Wexford ETB
Kilkenny and Carlow ETB
Waterford Institute of Technology
IT Carlow
Waterford Chamber of Commerce
Wexford Chamber of Commerce
Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce
Carlow Chamber of Commerce
Skillnets
Design and Crafts Council of Ireland
Enterprise Champions
Clune Technologies
WorkLab
Arboretum Home and Garden Heaven
Griffin Hotel Group
Construction Industry Federation Southern Region
WLR FM
Abbot Vascular Clonmel
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment



Appendix 2: South-East Statistical Snapshot

Constituent counties	Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford		
South-East Population	422,062 ¹		
Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment	200,800 ²		
ILO Participation Rate	60.2% ³		
ILO Unemployment Rate	5.8% ⁴		
Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment (Male)	106,900 ⁵		
Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment (Female)	93,900 ⁶		
Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment from Q1 2015 ⁷ – Q3 2021	Q1 2015	Q3 2021	
	168,900	200,800	
Actual Increase in Employment between from Q1 2015 – Q3 2021	31,900		
Employment Growth Rate between Q1 2015 – Q3 2021	18.9%		
Persons aged 25 years and over on Live Register in the South-East at 01/12/2021	17,845 ⁸		
Persons in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment at 07/12/2021 in the South-East	3,470 ⁹		
Unemployment blackspots ¹⁰	13 ¹¹		
Irish-owned Companies – Total Employment in the South-East, 2015-2020 ¹²	2015	2020	Change between 2015-2020
	Jobs:	16,140	18,865
Foreign-owned Companies – Total Employment in the South-East, 2015-2020 ¹³	2015	2020	Change between 2015-2020
	Jobs:	11,121	14,035

1. 2016 CSO Census

2. Q3 2021 CSO Labour Force Survey (South-East)

3. Q3 2021 CSO Labour Force Survey (South-East)

4. Q3 2021 CSO Labour Force Survey (South-East)

5. Q3 2021 CSO Labour Force Survey (South-East)

6. Q3 2021 CSO Labour Force Survey (South-East)

7. Launch of the Regional Action Plan for Jobs

8. CSO Live Register

9. <https://www.gov.ie>

10. Unemployment Blackspots are defined as Electoral Districts with at least 200 people in the labour force and an unemployment rate of 27% or higher

11. Unemployment blackspots in the Region: Kilkenny (1), Waterford (9) and Wexford (3)

12. Annual Employment Survey 2020

13. Annual Employment Survey 2020



Appendix 3: Other State Agencies and Bodies Supporting Enterprise Development

Bord Bia

Bord Bia, the Irish Food Board, is responsible for the development of new markets and the promotion of Irish food, drink and horticulture, reporting to the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine. The agency's mandate covers trade development, promotion, quality programmes, information provision and marketing support especially for export markets. Bord Bia operates in thirteen overseas locations. Its Origin Green programme is the only sustainability programme in the world that operates on a national scale, uniting government, the private sector and food producers.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)

BIM is the state agency with responsibility for developing the Irish sea-fishing and aquaculture industries. BIM's mission is to lead the sustainable development of a competitive, market-led, innovative and quality-driven Irish seafood industry, maximising the returns to industry stakeholders and the socio-economic contribution to communities in coastal regions in particular. BIM is focused on expanding the volume, quality and value of output from the Irish seafood industry. It provides a range of advisory, financial, technical and training services to all sectors of the Irish seafood industry. BIM's Strategy 2013-2017 is an action plan that aims to deliver 1,200 jobs and €1bn seafood sales by building scale and enhancing competitiveness in the Irish seafood sector.

InterTradelreland

InterTradelreland's mission is to support businesses, through innovation and trade initiatives, to take advantage of North/South co-operative opportunities to improve capability and drive competitiveness, jobs and growth. InterTradelreland helps small businesses through a strong mix of funding support, business intelligence and meaningful contacts. It supports companies not only with funding, but also with specialist expertise and introductions.

Skillnet Ireland

Funded by the Department of Education and Skills, the network of 9 Regional Skills Fora has been created as part of the Government's National Skills Strategy 2025. The Fora provides an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions. The Fora have been established to align with wider Government policy and initiatives on regional economic development. The innovative structure of the Fora sees the work plan within each region being driven by key stakeholders in the region including employers, enterprises and education and training providers. The work of the Fora through facilitation and engagement will contribute to better outcomes for learners and support enterprise development. The Fora provide a single point of contact in each region to help employers connect with the range of services and supports available across the education and training system; provide more robust labour market information and analysis of employer needs to inform programme development, greater collaboration and utilisation of resources across the education and training system; and enhancement of progression routes for learners. The Fora also provide a structure for employers to become more involved in promoting employment roles and opportunities for career progression in their sectors.



Science Foundation Ireland (SFI)

Science Foundation Ireland is the national foundation for investment in scientific and engineering research, operating under the auspices of DBEI. SFI invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading edge technologies and competitive enterprises in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths. SFI has supported the establishment of 17 National Research Centres, aligned with the research priority areas set out in Ireland's research prioritisation exercise (which is currently being refreshed). SFI plays a key role in developing international relationships in the research and innovation domain. It is instrumental in raising Ireland's profile and visibility as a location of research excellence in international markets, thus strengthening Ireland's attractiveness for overseas investment.

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

The purpose of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) is to play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices. SEAI provides a range of programmes and services to homes, businesses, schools and communities. It is a key actor in providing research and advice to Government on sustainable energy policy, including renewables and energy efficiency.

Waterways Ireland

Waterways Ireland is one of six North-South Implementation Bodies established under the British-Irish Agreement in 1999. It has responsibility for the management, maintenance, development, promotion and restoration of inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes. The waterways under the remit of the Body are the Shannon-erne Waterway, the Shannon, the Erne Navigation, the Barrow Navigation, the Grand Canal, the Lower Bann, and the Royal Canal.

South-East BIC (SEBIC)

South-East BIC, a public private partnership, supports the generation and development of new innovative enterprises and assists existing SMEs to innovate and expand.

The BIC team works closely in collaboration with other local, regional, national enterprise support agencies and has strong international connections, particularly in Europe, through its membership of the European BIC Network (EBN).

South-East Chambers of Commerce

The South-East Region Chamber is the regional voice of Chambers in the South-East of Ireland and is comprised of Chambers of Commerce in the counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.



Appendix 4: Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021–2025

Introduction

Our *Rural Future-Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* is the most ambitious and transformational policy for rural development in Ireland for decades.

The vision of the policy is for a thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development, which is built on the interdependence of urban and rural areas, and which recognises the centrality of people, the importance of vibrant and lived-in rural places, and the potential to create quality jobs and sustain our shared environment.

The policy contains more than 150 commitments for delivery across the whole-of-Government for both short-term recovery and longer-term development. It has a five-year timeframe, with updates on delivery provided by a series of Progress Reports. Annual work programmes allow for the review and revision of priorities contained in the measures for delivery.

Policy Objectives

The policy aims to bring about improved opportunities and a better quality of life for people who live and work in rural areas, through balanced regional development, benefitting individuals, families, communities and businesses.

We want to see more people living and working in rural Ireland, rural towns as vibrant hubs for commercial and social activity, reduced regional income disparities, improved access to public services such as transport links, rural Ireland benefitting from the transition to a more sustainable future and rural communities – especially young people – having an active role in shaping their future.

Funding streams

The level of activity across Government in recent months highlights delivery of the Policy's ambition. The Government's commitment to rural Ireland is also evidenced in the unprecedented capital investment of €850m provided under the revised *National Development Plan* for rural development projects to 2025, across a range of areas such as remote working facilities, rural regeneration projects and outdoor amenities. This includes huge levels of support for important projects under the Department of Rural and Community Development's (DRCD) Rural Development Investment Programme.

DRCD initiatives include:

- Revitalisation of rural town centres through the €1bn Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.
- Investment of €220m through the LEADER Programme.
- Provision of funding for other programmes such as the Small-Scale Rural Projects (CLÁR), Town and Village Renewal, Local Improvement Scheme for non-public roads, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme and Connected Hubs Fund.



Appendix 5: Regional Enterprise Development Funding

South-East Regional Enterprise Development Fund and Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) and Regional Enterprise Transition Scheme (RETS) supports the development and implementation of collaborative and innovative projects that can enable and sustain enterprise and employment growth in the regions. Under the RETS and the three calls of the REDF to date, the South-East has secured over €7.9m in funding for 8 enterprise projects.

Projects approved for South-East Region

Projects approved award	County	Project description
Insurtech Network Centre DAC	Carlow	Support Tech Solutions to the Global Insurance Services Sector
ThreeD DAC	Waterford	3D Manufacturing Facility
Crystal Valley Tech DAC	Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary	ICT Industry Cluster
Incupharm DAC	Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary	Lab Facilities for Life Science Sector
National Design Innovation HUB DAC (C4D)	Carlow, Kilkenny	Enterprise Development Hub
National Design Innovation HUB DAC (Team Rural)	Carlow / Laois	The project involves a dedicated approach to entrepreneurship and ecosystem development in Rural
South-East Economic Development Office	Waterford	Towns and Villages
The Tradebridge Collaboration DAC	Wexford	The overall aim of this project is to create a Lean Industry 4.0 facility (LI4)
The Tradebridge Collaboration DAC	Waterford	This project creates new opportunities for Enterprise Ireland and LEO clients to generate export sales and to open opportunities for the three South-East Ports.
Total South-East REDF and RETS Funding		€7,995,463



Appendix 6: Methodology

The process to develop these Regional Enterprise Plans involved the following steps:

January 2021	A round of initial consultations with key stakeholders was undertaken by the Department including the Chairpersons of the Regional Steering Committees, Agency representatives, Programme Managers, and other key organisations represented on the Regional Steering Committees. The bilateral discussions focused on what worked/didn't work well over the period of the outgoing Regional Enterprise Plans.
February-March 2021	In February 2021 the Tánaiste wrote to the Chairpersons of the Regional Steering Committees formally setting out the Department's intention to develop new Plans to 2024.
February-May 2021	The Tánaiste and Ministers of State formally launched the commencement of the process to develop Regional Enterprise Plans to 2024 with meetings of the nine Regional Steering Committees in virtual sessions around the country. Each Committee established a Project Delivery Team for the process, led by the Steering Committee chairperson.
March-May 2021	Each of the Project Delivery Teams met to review the outgoing Regional Plans and considered future thematic areas of focus and agreed an approach for a formal stakeholder consultation with the wider Steering Committee members and other relevant stakeholders.
May-August 2021	An online facilitated Stakeholder Consultation event was held in eight of the nine regions; with a series of bilateral stakeholder engagements and focus group discussions undertaken in the South-East Region. Participants considered topics including: enterprise resilience, smart specialisation, placemaking, transition-climate, digitalisation.
July-October 2021	The Project Delivery Teams re-grouped to consider the consultation outcomes and further develop emerging themes into Strategic Objectives and to identify suitable actions for delivery in the period to 2024.
November-December 2021	The Draft Final Regional Enterprise Plans were signed off by the Project Delivery Teams and Steering Committees.
February 2022	Memo for Government considered by Cabinet and noted the Department's intention to publish the nine Regional Enterprise Plans.



An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostaíochta

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

23 Sráid Chill Dara, Baile Átha Cliath 2, D02 TD30

23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2, D02 TD30

T +353 (0)1 631 2121, 0818 302 121

www.enterprise.gov.ie

www.gov.ie

info@enterprise.gov.ie

An initiative of the Department of
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