

Regional approaches to the challenges of spatial and economic planning in Ireland



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Policy Documents



Outline of Presentation

- Emerging **Strategic Regional Issues**
- The need for and **role of Regional Indicators**
- Importance of **linkages** from EU, National, Regional to Local level
- Significance of **EU Directives**
- **Challenges for Regional Governance** - new Regional Structures from 10 to 3
- Conclusion

Emerging Strategic Regional Issues

- PPF proposals to convert RPGs to Regional **Spatial and Economic Strategies (SESs)** 10 year plan
- SESs to focus CDPs on population targets, smart specialisation, economic development goals where **regions(part of) will focus on what they are good at**
- **New NSS** will be required to give direction to future SESs
- Integration of **EU Directives** into Irish Spatial Economic, Social and Environmental planning legislation
- **Cross border initiatives**, including Interreg IV, The Peace III Programme and Inter-County strategies are required to strengthen SES objectives
- **New SESs will require real engagement with employment and enterprise agencies** e.g. agencies to align and prioritise key actions with SES policies to be reviewed on an annual basis
- **Future alignment of Spatial, Transportation, Social and Economic Planning as part of new SESs**

Need for Regional Indicators

Why do we need Regional Indicators?

- **Measurement of strategic trends** i.e. Population growth or not, economic performance, environment and quality of life over a specific measured periods of time e.g. Gateway Growth, FDI's/SMEs
- **Benchmark of regional performance** which is measurable, and attainable over specific time frames e.g. population growth
- **PPF** emphasis on Performance Standards Monitoring based on outcomes rather than outputs, Value for Money, and comparative performance of the regions e.g. Regional Retail/Housing/LUTS Strategies - shared costs and services and governance

Role of Regional Indicators

- Provide evidence **baseline data to inform and guide strategic planning** and development of regional policy.
- **Identify priority policy areas** and their alignment between national and local policy e.g. MWASP a new LUTS for the Mid-West Region.
- **Provide useable indicators** – datasets which are common to EU/National/Regional and Local levels.
- **Measure progress** of key regional policy/plans/strategies against agreed specific measurable indicators themes, Economic Prosperity, People and Places, Environment and Infrastructure e.g.;
 1. **Economic Development** : MWRA study of the Mid-West Region findings, 6,357 companies 98% SMEs, 2% FDI's, employing 149,000, Service sector largest employer 37%, of SMEs & FDI's, growth sectors are Energy, Tourism and Leisure and Aviation/Logistics
 2. **People and Places** : Urban v's Rural Settlement Patterns, Urban sprawl, lack of sustainable transport
 3. **Environment and Infrastructure**: Surface Water Status, River Basin Plans, Ground/Surface and waste water Pollution, Smarter Travel

Role of Regional Indicators contd.

- Provide comparative analysis of regional performance and trends of policies that promote competitiveness between regions. E.g. No of start up companies, No Employed, GVA, R&D Spend.
- Identify areas of deficiencies/gaps in the region and establish what outputs are required to meet identified challenges
- Identify who is responsible for regional priorities' implementation? Govt, Agencies, Private Sector
- The linking of indicators to the EU 2014- 2020 SMART specialisation strategies for the next round of EU funding to boost science and innovation and regional competitiveness; e.g. Identification of Assets R&D potential, leverage of private investment i.e. specialisation

Importance of linkages from EU, National, Regional to Local level

- If new SES's are to be successful then;
 - A new overarching national framework (new NSS) is required, i.e. Do we need to review numbers of Gateways and Hubs?
 - SESs will only be effective if implementation of priority objectives is properly aligned with Agencies/Authorities funding and investment priorities.
 - Provide a Governance structure that has capacity to promote balanced regional development.
 - The need to ensure the alignment of population, employment, infrastructure and investment targets/ programmes with any NSS successor.

Importance of linkages from EU, National, Regional to Local level contd.

- The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, require the evidence based CDP Core Strategies to be consistent with national and regional policy, e.g. The Implementation of Core Strategies outcomes to-date since 2010:
 - ✓ Reduction of residential land zoned land since 2010 by 13,000ha's
 - ✓ 60% of City, County and Town Development Plans have been amended in terms of P&D (Amendment) Act 2010

Significance of EU directives contd.

The N2/A5 Dublin to Derry Cross Border Dual Carriageway challenge Court finds in favour of Alternative A5 Alliances'
 Mr Justice Stephens of N.I. High Court accepted legal challenges by the A5 Alternative Alliance proposed development of the N2/A5 dual carriageway on the grounds that the Department for Regional Development had not undertaken a proper **appropriate assessment** under the Habitats Directive.
 On that basis he was minded to quash the decision of the Minister

Galway City Outer Bypass
 The ECJ says planning permission cannot be granted for projects that "**adversely affect the integrity of that site**" if they stop the site from being a protected priority natural habitat.



Challenges for Regional Governance

- Provide for the **promotion of economic growth, sustainable development and environmental protection** e.g. attract new FDI/SME investment.
- Promote **proper co-ordination and a policy environment** which is consistent with EU, National, Regional and Local policy and Irish law.
- Ensure progress of emerging **SESS are properly monitored and measured** against a range of robust indicators which include GHDI , RPGs indicators e.g. People and Places, promote sustainable travel 'SMART Travel'
- Irelands Spatial, Social and Economic **planning is highly centralised** - the principle of subsidiarity to promote democratic accountability?
- To deliver more co-ordinated and **enhanced use of ICT and GIS platforms** in delivering spatial planning outcomes; e.g. AIRO, ESPON, MYplan systems etc.

Conclusions

- EU OP Ex-Ante requirement - **SMART specialisation**, R&D, Innovation and competition economic growth and new spatial opportunities will be advanced in Ireland.
- Ireland Inc. has no choice but to transpose **EU Directives** into Irish Law but Ireland should promote the positive impacts of such directives in the preparation of lower tier plans and strategies.
- If the **strategic objectives can be agreed at SES level** there will be a positive impact for lower tier statutory plans.
- The **alignment of zoning plans and infrastructure priorities** will be crucial in the context of the important role to be played by Irish Water in the delivery of water infra
- Have existing policies **delivered improved economic growth, job creation or educational attainment in regions?**

Conclusions contd.

- Has current **EU cohesion/structural funding** been fully drawn down? and what action plans are in place to access the new round of **cohesion funding for 2014-2020** with the new structures.
- **ICT will key tool** for the measurement of success of the new SESs and it will **make it easier to interact and engage with the citizens and public bodies.**
- Need to provide for **active engagement with employment and enterprise agencies in the planning process.**
- **Alignment of SES policies with Agencies, DoE, Regional and Local Authorities priorities** are essential for the future growth, planning and delivery of key identified strategic objectives to provide improved quality for all.
