

ANNUAL REPORT

2010

BORDER, MIDLAND
& WESTERN
REGIONAL ASSEMBLY



Ireland's EU Structural Funds
Programmes 2007 - 2013

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



Border, Midland & Western
Regional Assembly
Investing in Your Future

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1. Cathaoirleach's Statement



This is the twelfth Annual Report of the Border, Midland and Western (BMW) Regional Assembly. The Assembly is now in existence since 1999 and has passed the mid-term stage in the implementation of the 2007-13 BMW Regional Operational Programme (OP). This Programme is focused on Innovation, ICT and the Knowledge Economy, the Environment, Renewable Energy, Urban Development and Transport Networks, with a total planned investment of €458m, 50% of which is provided by the EU Structural Funds.

The injection of EU Structural Funds into our Region is providing a much needed stimulus to the Region's economy, in sectors that will create the conditions for future economic growth and prosperity. Ireland has experienced serious economic challenges over the past two years resulting in a greater reliance on the support mechanisms provided by the European Union and the ECB. The EU has played a critical role in our economic development over the past three decades, not least its direct support for regional development through the Structural Funds and for the agri-food sector under the CAP. I believe that the European Union can continue to play a positive role in our recovery.

The Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth provides an EU-wide blueprint for sustainable and inclusive economic development over the next ten years. Ireland's membership of the European Union has also brought important benefits in terms of our access to Europe-wide markets. The recent economic downturn demonstrates how important it is that we maintain close links to Europe in order to restore economic growth in all regions. I have confidence in the resolve of the new Government to steer a new path towards economic recovery, in partnership with the EU.

Unemployment is at an all time high and radical change is required to reverse the exodus of young talented people who are emigrating each week. We must be positive. As a nation we have overcome great obstacles in the past and I am confident that we can rise to the challenges that lay ahead.

During 2010, the Assembly adopted a joint statement on the future of EU Regional Policy and on the administration of EU Funding in Ireland. The Regional Assemblies have demonstrated their capacity to effectively manage both the previous and current Operational Programmes and to ensure the full utilisation of the funds available for the benefit of our regional economies. I therefore call on the Government to give the Regional Assemblies a greater role in the allocation of Structural Funds in the next programme round and allow a more focussed use of the funds in our regions.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to Mr. Gerry Finn, Director and the Assembly staff members for their support and assistance to me during the past year. I also wish to acknowledge the important contribution of my fellow Assembly members during my term as Cathaoirleach.

Councillor Joe Flanagan, Cathaoirleach

2. Director's Statement



It gives me great pleasure to present the twelfth annual report and financial statements of the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly. Notwithstanding the continued economic challenges and the constrained public finances over the past three years, satisfactory progress has been made in the implementation of the BMW Regional Operational Programme (OP) up to the end of 2010, with 76% of programme expenditure incurred and sufficient grant commitments already in place to meet the full programme allocation for two of the three priorities. I wish to acknowledge the co-operation of all implementing bodies and EU co-funded agencies for this achievement. We have continued to implement agreed financial verifications on the reported expenditure in order to ensure its eligibility and compliance under EU and national regulations and guidelines.

During 2010 the mid-term evaluation of the BMW Regional OP was carried out independently by the Central Expenditure Evaluation Unit of the Department of Finance. This found that the OP is performing well overall and is being implemented effectively. The recommendations of the evaluation were considered and approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee in December 2010 and are currently being implemented by the Regional Assembly.

The two Regional Assemblies in Ireland agreed a joint statement on the future of EU Structural Funds in April 2010, calling for the continuation of an ambitious cohesion policy and a more active role for the Assemblies in the allocation of Structural Funds and the selection of projects. This would lead to greater efficiency in the administration of future programmes and also lead to a more focussed use of EU funds. The EU Commission presented its proposals for the future of EU Cohesion in November 2010 in its fifth report on economic and social cohesion. The designation of the BMW Region post-2013 and the level of EU funding that the Region will receive, is not yet clear. We have already commenced engagement with the Department of Finance on these proposals.

There has been a high level of involvement of Irish organisations in the cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional programmes. As National Contact Point for both the Atlantic Area and Northern Periphery programmes we have hosted several information events for potential Irish project partners and many of these have been successful. We have also continued our engagement on the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA cross-border programmes and have co-operated actively with the Special EU Programmes Body on areas of mutual interest.

One of the important functions of the Regional Assembly is to promote public policies that support the economic development of the region and to ensure that national policies take account of the needs of the region. During 2010 we concluded a study into the economic value of the regional airports in the BMW Region. We also prepared submissions on the future shape of the Common Agriculture Policy, the future of EU Cohesion Policy and on the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth.

I wish to acknowledge the ongoing support and co-operation of the EU Commission officials and also that of the Government Departments and Agencies for their continued assistance. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Cathaoirleach, Cllr Joe Flanagan and all of the members of the Regional Assembly, Sub-Committees and our OP Monitoring Committee who have supported our work in the past year and the staff of the Assembly for their continued commitment in support of our activities.

Gerry Finn, Director

3. Overview and Background to the BMW Regional Assembly

Introduction and Background

The Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly was established in 1999 to give effect to the designation of the BMW Region as an Objective 1 region.

The main roles of the B.M.W. Regional Assembly are to:

- > **Manage the BMW Regional Operational Programmes 2000-2006 and 2007-2013;**
- > **Monitor the general impact of all EU and Irish exchequer-funded programmes in the Border, Midland and West Region;**
- > **Promote the co-ordination of the provision of public services in the Region; and**
- > **Ensure that national policies take regional issues into account.**

The Assembly itself comprises of 29 elected representatives of the Regional Authorities within the Region and the geographical area of the BMW Region includes the following 13 Counties:

- > **Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan, Sligo, (Border Counties);**
- > **Laois, Longford, Offaly, Westmeath, (Midland Counties); and,**
- > **Galway, Mayo, Roscommon (West Counties).**

For the 2007-2013 Programming period the BMW Region is categorised as a 'phasing in' region under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Strand (Objective 2) and the BMW Region will receive European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding of €229m and a further €229m in European Social Fund (ESF).

The Irish Government, as set out in the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) has designated the BMW Regional Assembly to be the Managing Authority for the BMW Regional Operational Programme and to be responsible for its preparation and delivery.

The Structural Funds are concentrated on implementing community policies, namely Lisbon, Göteborg and the European Employment Strategy. The specific focus is on innovation and the knowledge economy, environment and risk minimisation and accessibility to services of general interest (e.g. Broadband, transport infrastructure).

In addition to its statutory function of managing EU Funds, the Assembly has continued to expand its role in relation to other EU initiatives and policy and research activities. The EU initiatives that the Assembly is engaged in are described in more detail in Chapter 9.

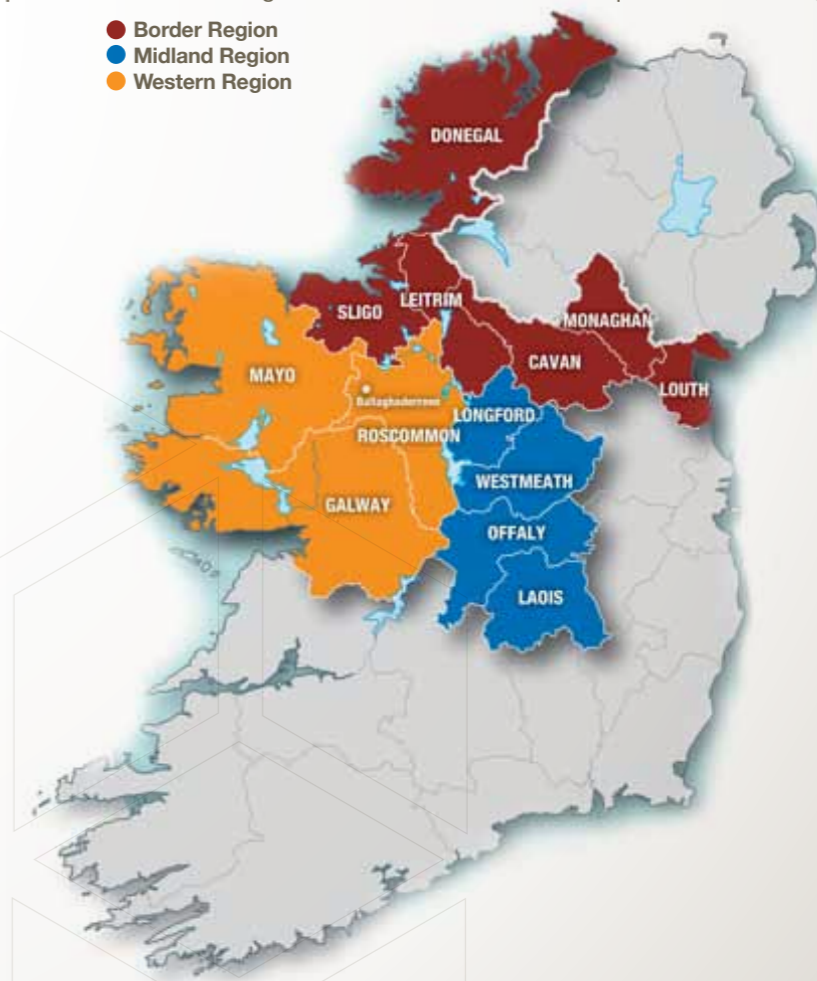
4. BMW Regional Operational Programme 2000 - 2006

Closure of BMW Operational Programme 2000-2006

The final report on the BMW Regional Operational Programme 2000-2006 was formally submitted in September 2010. Because of the presence of the four structural funds in the BMW Regional OP, this closure process was completed separately for each of the individual funds as well as collectively for the Programme as a whole. Total expenditure under the programme exceeded €3bn with EU co-financing of €425m.

Key achievements have been the €1.3bn investment in non-national roads, the improvement in water services for over 380,000 people and the roll-out of broadband infrastructure across the BMW Region. Other highlights were the investment in 40 tourism projects, the level of job creation by the County Enterprise Boards and the huge increase in childcare services provision in the Region.

- Border Region
- Midland Region
- Western Region



5. BMW Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013

Under the current BMW Operational Programme, over €352m in co-financed expenditure has been incurred up to the end of 2010. This represents about 76% of the overall OP target of €458m. This level of expenditure is very satisfactory given the fiscal constraints within which we are operating.

During 2010 the Managing Authority closely monitored the level of expenditure and commitments in respect of all EU co-financed themes and also co-operated fully in the Mid-Term (Performance) evaluation of the OP conducted by the Central Expenditure Evaluation Unit. Notwithstanding the difficulties imposed by the current economic and fiscal situation, good progress has been made in the implementation of the majority of the co-financed themes, with full completion of works under both the key linking routes and natural heritage themes. Implementation has commenced on aspects of all four priorities



Ballina Gateway & Hub Project

Implementation of the Operational Programme by Priority

Priority 1: Innovation, ICT and the Knowledge Economy



NUI Galway

The objective of this Priority is to enhance the research, innovation and ICT infrastructure and capacity of the BMW Region, to promote entrepreneurship and enterprise development and to support collaboration and technology transfer between research institutions and the business sector. The expenditure in 2010 was €41m and cumulatively (2007-10) was €119m, representing 57% of the Priority forecast over the 2007-13 period.

Applied Research Enhancement (ARE) Programme

The purpose of ARE is to enhance third level institutions research, innovation and business incubation activity and to build upon existing and emerging sectoral specialisations within the region. The ARE Centres in the BMW Region completed 22 industrial collaborative projects with industry partners in 2010.

Incubation Facilities

This intervention is concerned with the provision of supports and business space within the environment of third level institutions that will advance the development of emerging high potential start-up companies. There are now six centres operating successfully in: Athlone, Castlebar, Dundalk, Galway, Letterkenny and Sligo, with 67 companies in these units employing 189 personnel in areas such as digital media and medical devices.

Collaboration Initiatives

This initiative provides support to researchers in third level institutions and research performing organisations for applied research generating ideas for commercial development for the benefit of the Irish economy. In 2010, a total of 12 proposals were submitted by Principal Investigators from the BMW Region and 4 projects were approved for funding.

Programme of Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLII)

This programme is designed to facilitate Irish institutions to produce world class research, supports research in humanities, science, technology and the social sciences, including business and law. Cycle 5 of the PRTLII was launched in July 2010, and construction work under this cycle will provide more than 64,000 square metres of research space in new and refurbished buildings on our higher education campuses.

Research Facilities Enhancement Scheme

The Research Facilities Enhancement Scheme (RFES) targets the elimination of sub standard research facilities. It serves two principal purposes. Firstly, it permits institutions to undertake the necessary refurbishment, conversion and / or upgrade of facilities in their ownership as well as facilities planned to be adapted for exclusive use for existing research purposes. Secondly, the scope of the scheme extends to enabling institutions to acquire necessary equipment for the conducting of research. To date €10.67 million under the RFES scheme was awarded to HEI's in the BMW Region, spread over seven projects. This was made up of €8.7 million for buildings and €1.936 million for equipment and furniture.

SFI (Science Foundation Ireland) Actions

The Science Foundation Ireland theme provides for the development of human capital in research excellence in strategic areas relevant to Irish economic development, particularly in the areas of Biotechnology, Information and Communications Technologies and Sustainable Energy/Energy Efficient Technologies. One new award was made during 2010, in the area of regenerative medicine, to the value of €9.4m. This award has excellent linkages with a number of the major multinationals as well as indigenous firms in the medical devices field in the BMW Region and underpins and supports the retention of existing jobs and the creation of new jobs.

Micro-Enterprise – Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Micro-enterprise Theme which is delivered through the 13 County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) aims to stimulate economic and entrepreneurial activity at local level and to develop local indigenous enterprise in the micro-business sector. Since 2007, 1,164 micro-enterprises have been assisted.

Broadband Provision and Demand Stimulation

This action aims to overcome identified gaps in broadband infrastructure and services. Broadband was available by Autumn 2010 in all of the designated areas in the National Broadband Scheme (NBS) Coverage Area, 53% of which are located within the BMW Region.

Priority 2: Environment and Risk Prevention

The objective of this Priority is to contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas and the protection and enhancement of the rural environment. The priority will also stimulate energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment and the integration of sustainable energy practices into public policies. Expenditure in 2010 was €17m and cumulatively was €32m, representing 42% of the budget over the 2007-13 period.

Rural Water Source Protection

This theme supports the protection of surface and ground water sources from agricultural pollution, commercial/industrial and residential sources and aims to bring group water schemes with a private source of supply into compliance with National Drinking Water Quality Standards. A pilot programme was co-ordinated through the Science Dept, Dundalk Institute of Technology in 2010.

Village Sewerage Systems

The objective of this pilot project is to assess new cost effective ways of providing a wastewater collection and treatment systems for small rural villages and to test a range of innovative technologies for collecting and treating domestic wastewater. The Pilot Projects advanced by the National Rural Water Services Committee and the Local Authorities was completed in 2007. Following full commissioning of the plants, performance monitoring commenced in 2008 and continued in 2009. The final reports on the pilot project have now been completed and are due to be submitted for final clearance.

Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment

The main objective of the Water Services Investment Programme Unit is to protect the environment and public health, meeting national and European standards for drinking water and wastewater treatment and supporting social and economic development. Two projects have been approved, the Galway Group Water Scheme Bundle No 2 and the Roscommon/Leitrim Group Water Scheme.

Water Conservation

The objective of this measure is to reduce unaccounted for water in urban areas. Expenditure to date is in the region of €288,000 and the bulk of the expenditure will be in 2011 and 2012.

Built Heritage

The Built Heritage measure ensures vital conservation works are carried out on protected buildings. In 2010, eleven properties in the counties of Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Donegal and Galway have benefited from funding under the programme, on a variety of structures such as Boyle Abbey, the town walls of Athlone and Newmills Corn and Flax Mills, Letterkenny.

Waste Recycling

The Waste Recycling Capital Grants Scheme, which was launched in June 2008, is designed to encourage Local Authority investment in waste recycling infrastructure such as civic amenity sites. The standard grant rate is at 75% of approved costs under this scheme, however grants of up to 85% are available for projects to increase the biological treatment of biowaste.

Energy for Business Programme

The objective of this Programme is to deliver energy cost- and carbon-reduction services to all sectors of business through networks, training and advisory programmes. 35 large industries and SMEs are engaged with the programme in the Region

Renewable Energy R, D & D

The main focus of the Renewable Energy R,D&D programme is on stimulating the deployment of renewable energies. It adopts an aggressive technology-led approach to renewable resolving technology and market barriers such as energy storage and demand management in the electricity sector. SEAI has delivered 51 research reports/studies to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy.

CHP & Bioheat (Reheat) Programme

This programme is aimed at stimulating the installation of new renewable energy plants supplying space, water and process heating in the commercial, industrial, services, public sectors as well as ESCO (Energy Supply Company) installations by means of grant assistance. The programme so far has facilitated 20 new gas fired CHP installations, 60 wood fuelled boilers, 1,122m of installed solar panels and 25 heat pump systems by the end of 2010.

Ocean Energy

This theme has been established to implement the Government's policy decision to accelerate the development of Ocean Energy (Wave and Tidal) in Ireland and to advance the deployment of ocean energy technologies by increasing the capacity for research and development both within academic institutions and commercial entities developing such devices in Ireland. The 'Full Scale' wave test site project is now underway and the *Environmental Impact Statement* is being prepared.



Priority 3: Urban Development and Secondary Transport Networks

The objective of this Priority is to strengthen the spatial structuring of the BMW Region by investing in integrated sustainable initiatives in order to enhance the competitiveness, accessibility and social cohesion of the region's urban growth centres and to modernise the region's transport infrastructure. Reported Expenditure in 2010 was €18m and cumulatively was €198m (2007-10), representing 105% of the Priority forecast over the 2007-13 period.

Public Transport

This Iarnrod Eireann programme will see the automation of level crossings throughout the BMW Region and these level crossings will be centrally controlled, increasing the safety and flexibility of the operation of the crossings and reducing the financial burden on Iarnrod Eireann. Currently, there are 4 projects underway in the BMW Region, automating crossings on the Sligo Line (13), the Galway Line (5) the Westport Line (9) and the Ballina Line (2). In addition Iarnrod Eireann have purchased 33 Intercity Railcars for use on the Outer Commuter routes. 24 of these railcars will serve the BMW Region, 18 serving Portlaoise and 6 serving Athlone. These have now entered service.

Key Linking Routes

The N52 Tullamore By-Pass scheme supports the National Spatial Strategy by improving connectivity between the linked Midland Gateway towns of Athlone Tullamore and Mullingar.

The M6 Athlone-Ballinasloe motorway comprises 19.3 kilometres of National Primary Route on the (N6) between Athlone and Ballinasloe.

Gateway and Hub Fund

Substantial progress was made in 2010 in the implementation of the 12 projects approved under the ERDF Gateway & Hub Fund, which is administered by the BMW Regional Assembly. (See Chapter 7 for further details)

Financial Management and Control 2007-2013

In the course of 2010, the financial management and control activities performed by the Managing Authority evolved from designing and documenting the financial management and control system, which had been the focus in 2008/09, to the implementation phase. This phase had a number of sequential steps as follows:

- › Financial Management Guidance Seminars
- › Submission and Approval of Sampling Methodologies
- › Verification of Expenditure Declarations by the Managing Authority
- › Submission of Declarations to the Certifying Authority (Department of Finance)
- › System Description Revisions

Over €18m in eligible expenditure was declared by the BMW Regional Assembly acting as Managing Authority in 2010

Mid Term Evaluation 2007-2013

A Mid-Term Evaluation of the BMW Regional Operational Programme 2007-13 was undertaken by the Central Expenditure Evaluation Unit of the Department of Finance between May and November 2010. This forms a significant component of the overall evaluation plan for the BMW Regional OP.

The objective of the evaluation was to provide an independent analysis of progress under the Operational Programme and relevant developments in the programme environment to date and to make recommendations for programme adjustments on the basis of this analysis.

The evaluation report noted the significant changes in the economic environment since the OP was prepared, but concluded that the Priorities and themes that make up the OP continue to be relevant to the challenges faced and are closely aligned to the actions considered to be the highest priority, both nationally and at EU level. It reported that Priorities 1 and 3 of the OP are performing well with potential to absorb funding from Priority 2, which is at risk of under spending. Some performance indicators were found to be acceptable, but many were in need of improvement. The standard of reporting on Horizontal Principles was found to be mixed and there was a lack of horizontal principle performance indicators.

The evaluation found some good examples of themes which contribute to North/South co-operation, but other themes had a limited scope and were poorly reported on in the Progress Reports. The evaluation also concluded that there are well established monitoring and administrative arrangements in place and these arrangements have not been an impediment to progress. Selection Criteria were reviewed and found generally to be in accordance with the principles set out in the OP.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation were presented by the Central Expenditure Evaluation Unit and were discussed at a special meeting of the OP Monitoring Committee, held in December 2010. The Monitoring Committee accepted the recommendations and approved the proposed financial re-allocations. Arising from the evaluation, the Managing Authority committed to review the performance indicators and to engage with the specialist horizontal units to act upon the recommendations.

6. Significant Activities during 2010



Taoiseach Mr. Enda Kenny T.D. and Cllr Connie Hanniffy, BMW Regional Assembly

Annual Conference – Opportunities for Growth and Jobs in the Region



More than 100 delegates attended the Border, Midland and Western (BMW) Regional Assembly's 10th Annual Conference "Promoting Growth and Jobs in Ireland's Regions" in Cavan Town on Friday April 14th, 2010. The delegates were informed that real opportunities exist for future growth and development in the BMW Region. The conference which was addressed by the Tánaiste and Minister for Education and Skills, Ms. Mary Coughlan TD and a distinguished panel of speakers, examined the challenges that exist for stimulating growth and employment in the BMW Region.

Mr. Gerry Finn, Director of BMW Regional Assembly, highlighted the impact of the BMW Regional Operational Programme which has an EU contribution of €229m, the €17m Gateway and Hub Fund and the initiatives undertaken in policy development such as those in relation to advocating the development of regional airports and recently published report of the Innovation Taskforce. Other speakers at the conference were Mr. Vincent Reynolds, CEO of Cavan County Enterprise Board, the President of the Dundalk Institute of Technology and Convenor of Lónra, (the higher education network in the BMW Region), Mr. Dennis Cummins and Mr. Liam Nellis CEO of InterTradelreland.

Joint Meeting of the BMW and S&E Regional Assemblies, Trim, Co Meath



Minister for Transport, Mr Noel Dempsey TD addressed the Annual Joint Meeting of the Border, Midland and Western and the Southern and Eastern (S&E) Regional Assemblies which took place in the Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim, Co. Meath on 23rd April. In his opening address, Councillor Kevin Murphy, Chairman of the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly, called on the Government to maintain and continue to prioritise investment in Ireland's transportation infrastructure as a means of protecting our international competitiveness. The Chairman said that the two Regional Assemblies strongly support the re-opening of the Western Rail

Corridor and welcome the recent opening of the first phase between Limerick and Galway. The Minister acknowledged the critical role that regional airports play in stimulating business development and improving connectivity to Ireland's regions. The Minister concluded by highlighting the contribution made by Local Authorities in promoting sustainable transport.

Councillor Andrew Boylan, Chairman of the BMW Regional Assembly stated that in the BMW Region in particular, good transport connections are vitally important for businesses to operate efficiently, to enable people to access employment and to attract tourists to the Region.

Joint Statement by the Irish Regional Assemblies on the future of EU Cohesion Policy and the administration of Cohesion Policy in Ireland

At a meeting in Trim, Co Meath on the 23rd April, 2010 the Border, Midland and Western (BMW) and Southern and Eastern (S&E) Regional Assemblies issued a joint statement on the future of EU Cohesion Policy and the administration of Cohesion Policy in Ireland for the post-2013 programming period. The statement, which has been submitted to the Department of Finance, called for the continuation of an ambitious regional policy of benefit to all regions. As Managing Authorities for Regional Competitiveness and Employment Programmes, the Regional Assemblies are key shapers of effective and coherent regional policy and as key actors in the implementation of Cohesion Policy in Ireland.

Declaration of the "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" regions on the future of EU Cohesion Policy post-2013

The Border, Midland and Western (BMW) and Southern and Eastern (S&E) Regional Assemblies signed an EU-wide declaration on behalf of eligible regions under the current Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective of EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, at a meeting in Trim, Co Meath on the 23rd April, 2010. This declaration expressed the importance of EU-Cohesion Policy for all EU regions post-2013 and requested the European Commission, European Parliament and Council as well as the Committee of the Regions to reliably take into account the requests contained in the declaration for the future priority-setting of the EU and to allow the regions to assume their share of the responsibility based on the principles of partnership and subsidiarity. The declaration was presented to the Commission in Brussels on 5th October, 2010.

Chambers Ireland Award

The BMW Regional Assembly won the award for best Strategic Economic Development project at the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government Awards at a ceremony in Dublin on 28th October 2010. The award was in recognition of the EU contribution to the Gateway and Hubs Scheme and was accepted by Councillor Joe Flanagan, Cathaoirleach of the BMW Regional Assembly, from Mr. John Gormley, TD, Minister for the Environment Heritage and Local Government. Councillor Flanagan stated that the award recognised the positive impact that the structural funds investment in the BMW Region is having on the economic development of the region, especially in these challenging times.

Moate Students Win BMW Assembly Prizes

The Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly Pilot Online Quiz was run over four weeks in 2010. The quiz encouraged students to develop an understanding of the role and functions of the Assembly and where EU funds are spent in Ireland. Moate Community School was chosen as a pilot to launch the quiz. Councillor Joe Flanagan Chairman of the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly presented students of the school with various prizes at an awards presentation in the school on 17th December, 2010.

The European Employment Circus

The European Employment Circus arrived in Ireland on 17th and 18th July 2010, as part of the Galway Arts Festival to promote jobs, skills and opportunities from local to European level. The EU is looking to help its citizens tackle the current crisis by finding new employment perspectives and by addressing items that are on everyone's agenda: jobs, unemployment, skills and equal opportunities. The Circus was an initiative of DG Employment following the launch of the Renewed Social Agenda in July 2008, and was organised in Ireland by the European Commission Representation Office. The BMW Regional Assembly had a stand at the event to promote opportunities for people in the Region.

Visiting Delegations

Since the establishment of the Assembly in 1999, a wealth of knowledge in dealing with EU affairs has been accumulated. Presentations were given to visiting parliamentarians and civil servants on the regulations governing the administration of Structural Funds. Presentations were also given to several groups from Romania during 2010.

The European Union at Regional and Local Level in Ireland

The publication of the Association of Irish Region's (AIR) Guide to "The European Union at Regional and Local Level in Ireland" was launched in European Union House Dublin by Mr. John Gormley TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The publication provides a comprehensive overview of local and regional engagement with the European Union and of the EU's contribution to a wide range of local and regional initiatives in Ireland. The BMW Regional Assembly is a member of AIR. Minister Gormley acknowledged the deep connections and inter-dependencies between the EU and Regional and Local Authorities from both policy and legislative perspectives and stated that the publication provides a valuable source of information on the opportunities that Ireland's membership of the EU provides. He also emphasised that the continued engagement of local and regional interests in the EU policymaking process will be hugely beneficial.

TALKTOEU

TALKTOEU is a programme funded by the European Commission Representation in Ireland, which aims to engage Irish citizens, and let them know what the EU does, and can do for them. Talktoeu also gives people a chance to air their opinions and views on existing and new policies. The BMW Regional Assembly organised a Seminar on the Impact of EU Environmental Policy in Ireland on 27th April, 2010. The Seminar was well attended by Local Representatives, students and the general public.

AGM - Election of New Cathaoirleach

Councillor Joe Flanagan from Moyvoughley, Moate, Co Westmeath was elected unopposed as the new Cathaoirleach of the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly at the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 16th July, 2010 in Ballaghaderreen. Councillor Flanagan was first elected to Westmeath County Council in 1979 for the Kilbeggan electoral area and has represented this area since. Cllr. Flanagan was Chairperson of Westmeath County Council in 2006 and Chairman of the Midland Regional Authority in 2007. He has been a member of the BMW Regional Assembly since 1999 and the Midland Regional Authority since 1994. Cllr Aidan Boyle, Cavan County Council, was elected Leas Cathaoirleach.



Brussels Open Days "European Week of Cities and Regions"

In October, 2010 the annual Open Days – European Week of Regions and Cities was held in Brussels. The BMW Regional Assembly was again involved through the Irish Regions Office. A seminar was organised titled 'In Search of a Framework for Co-operation in the Atlantic Area', which discussed the possibility of an integrated macro-region strategy along the Atlantic coast, drawing on the experiences of the Baltic Sea Strategy. This was a very successful seminar, with over 100 participants. The Director, Mr. Gerry Finn, held a number of bilateral meetings with other regions to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Visit by Commissioner Hahn

Commissioner Johannes Hahn attended the Annual Conference of the European Association of Border Regions held in Dundalk on 22nd October 2010, where he provided the keynote address. As part of his visit to Ireland, the Commissioner visited Dundalk IT Incubation and Applied Research Centres funded by the ERDF under the Regional Programmes in Dundalk IT. The Director of the Regional Assembly, Mr. Gerry Finn, was among the dignitaries who accompanied Commissioner Hahn on his visit.

Irish Regions Office (IRO)

The Irish Regions Office represents Irish regional interests in Brussels and supports the work of Irish members on the EU Committee of the Regions. In 2010, the IRO provided the regions and local authorities with a range of EU information services on relevant policy developments and on potential EU funding opportunities. During 2010, the IRO directly assisted a number of local/regional authorities' participation in EU funded projects and in identifying partners for EU supported projects. As part of its role in supporting the Irish members on the Committee of the Regions, the IRO further developed the briefing service that members receive, especially through enhanced contacts and meetings with the Irish Permanent Representation to the EU.

In 2010, the IRO facilitated both the BMW and S&E Assemblies' participation in a campaign calling for the retention of Structural Funding ('objective 2' funding) post 2013 for regions above 75% EU average GDP. This campaign culminated in October when representatives from over 140 regions gathered in Brussels to sign a declaration of intent to secure future funding and march to the European Commission headquarters to present this to President José Manuel Barroso, Regional Policy Commissioner Johannes Hahn as well as the Presidents of the European Parliament and EU Committee of the Regions. Cllr. Joe Flanagan, as Cathaoirleach signed the Declaration on behalf of the BMW and was accompanied by Mr. Gerry Finn, Director.

Líonra

The BMW Regional Assembly continues to support Líonra - the Regional Higher Education Network for the BMW Region. Mr. Gerry Finn, Director of the Assembly, is a member of the Management Committee of Líonra, and Mr. Kieran Moylan, Assistant Director, is a member of Líonra's Operational Committee. Líonra consists of the following third level institutions: Athlone IT, Dundalk IT, Galway-Mayo IT, Letterkenny IT, Sligo IT, St. Angela's College and NUI Galway. A key initiative in 2010 was the Líonra Heads of Agreement on a Collaborative Research and Innovation Strategy.



top left: Chambers Ireland Award



top right: Moate Students win BMW Assembly Prizes



bottom left: Presentation of Declaration of the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Regions



bottom right: TalktoEU Seminar

7. Gateways and Hubs Scheme



Gateway & Hub Project - Model Arts Centre, Sligo

ERDF Gateways and Hubs Grant Scheme

The ERDF co-financed Gateways and Hub Grants Scheme is targeted at enhancing the attractiveness of the Gateways and Hub Towns as places to live, work and invest in and will also contribute to improving their development potential through enhancement of the economic, social and environmental conditions of the growth centres.

The BMW Regional Assembly allocated a total of €17.15m in ERDF funding under the scheme. Work on all the approved projects is well underway and in some cases completed.

Athlone/Mullingar/Tullamore

In the Midlands, €1.45m was allocated towards the **Athlone** Art Gallery and €1.2m each to both the **Mullingar** Cycle Network and the Canal Corridor in **Tullamore**. The contract for the Athlone Art Gallery was awarded to Purcell Construction Ltd., Galway and they took possession of the site in March 2011. The contract will be completed by December 2011.

All preparatory work has been completed on the **Tullamore Canal Corridor** and it is expected that work will commence in 2011.

Construction of the **Mullingar Cycleways Project** cycleways commenced in 2010 and five routes have been completed by the end of 2010, totalling 13 km.

Galway City was awarded €2m towards the cost of the Seamus Quirke Road strategic bus and cycle corridor. It is envisaged that works will be completed by the end of 2011.

Letterkenny was awarded €0.7m towards the re-paving and refurbishment of Upper Main Street along with enhanced traffic management and pedestrian linkages. All works were completed in December 2010.

In **Sligo**, €2.4m was allocated towards the redevelopment and refurbishment of the Model Arts and Niland Gallery and provision of outdoor performance spaces. The Model Arts Centre re-opened in Summer 2010.

Tuam Hub Town was awarded €1.35m towards the refurbishment of the Shambles Square and its environs, the enhancement and energy proofing of public amenities. The restoration of streets will take place as the Main Drainage work is being completed

Cavan Hub Town was awarded €1.4m towards the construction of the Eastern Access Route in the town, including the provision of a cycleway and footpaths. This will facilitate traffic management and will also open new areas for development. Construction commenced in March 2011.

The **Dundalk** Gateway was allocated €1.9m towards the redevelopment of Market Square in the centre of the town which will re-instate Market Square as a multi-functional civic and social focus of the gateway. The program for the project remains on target for completion by the end of 2011.

The Mayo Hub Towns of **Castlebar** and **Ballina** have each been awarded €1.4m. In Ballina, this will fund the refurbishment of Pearse Street and the refurbishment of a former bank on Pearse Street to house the Jackie Clarke Library and Archives. In Castlebar, the funding will go towards town centre regeneration and streetscape refurbishment along with the development of the river walk as an amenity corridor. Work on both schemes is expected to be completed by the 30th June, 2011.

Monaghan Town has been awarded €0.75m towards the enhancement and refurbishment of the Dublin Street area of the town and the provision of enhanced recreation and amenity facilities. This work is scheduled for completion by end of June 2011.

8. Policy and Research

Policy and Research

During 2010 the BMW Regional Assembly was involved in the development, advocacy and articulation of regional development policy through a variety of activities.

Policy Activities

Policy Submissions

Policy papers were submitted in response to public consultations on the Shape of the Common Agricultural Policy Post 2013, the Future of Cohesions Policy and the EU 2020 Strategy.

Policy Subcommittees

Please refer to section 11 for an overview of activities and presentations made to the Assembly's two policy sub-committees, the National Development Plan Sub-Committee and the Regional and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee.

CSO Enterprise Statistics Group

Mr. Adrian O'Donoghue, Policy and Research Officer attended the first meeting of the CSO Enterprise Statistics Group in October 2010 held at the ESRI offices in Dublin. The group was established to facilitate the effective exchange of information on all areas of business and enterprise statistics between the main data providers, compilers and users of these statistics. The BMW Regional Assembly joins Chambers Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation, Forfás, ESRI, IBEC, ISME and the Small Firms Association as members of the Group.

Atlantic Gateway Initiative Workshop

The BMW Regional Assembly is a member of the Atlantic Gateway Initiative Steering Committee – the initiative under the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 is focused on driving the development of Galway, Limerick/Shannon, Cork and Waterford Gateway cities as a counterbalance to the Dublin – Belfast economic corridor. In April 2010, a facilitated workshop for the steering committee members was organised in the Tipperary Institute in Thurles, Co. Tipperary building upon the findings of the public forum held in 2009. The objective of the workshop was to set out the strategic direction and action points required to drive the initiative in 2010 and beyond.

European Globalisation Fund

The BMW Regional Assembly in conjunction with Ms. Marin Harkin MEP and member of the Globalisation Fund working Group engaged in meetings and discussion with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in relation to initiating the development of a new application from Ireland to the European Globalisation Fund (EGF). The EGF supports workers who lose their jobs as a result of the changing global trade patterns so that they can find a job as quickly as possible. Through consultation and analysis of available data, a new application was submitted to the fund for consideration for those who had lost their jobs in the construction industry in Ireland. A funding package was sought for 8,763 workers.

BMW Regional Assembly
Presents Airports Report to
Minister Noel Dempsey



Research Reports

AtlantKIS - Audit of Innovation in the BMW Region

The BMW Regional Assembly is a partner in an Atlantic Area approved project entitled 'AtlantKIS'. The goal of the project is to enhance knowledge, technology transfer and innovation processes among SMEs through collaboration between five member states on Knowledge-Intensive Services. The project aims to examine demand and supply-side knowledge services. The Project is led by the Government of Navarra based in Pamplona, Spain and involves other partners from the UK, France and Portugal. Meetings of the project partners were held in Rennes and Brussels during 2010.

Through funding provided for from AtlantKIS, the BMW Regional Assembly began the process of updating the Audit of Innovation report, first published in 2004, by engaging a team of researchers led by CM International consultants in partnership with the Centre for Innovation and Structural Change, NUI Galway. Stakeholder workshops were held in Athlone, Galway and Sligo during 2010.

Maximising the Economic Impact of Airports in the BMW Region

During 2009, the Assembly in conjunction with the four regional airports in the BMW Region, Donegal, Galway, Ireland West Knock and Sligo Airport, produced a report to examine the multi-faceted collective contribution of the airports in the BMW Region to the regional economy. In April 2010, a meeting was held with the Minister for Transport, Noel Dempsey T.D. in Trim Co. Meath to discuss the findings of the report in the context of the value for money review of regional airports.

The report which was prepared in co-operation with the four airports in the Region, highlights their impact and importance in terms of business investment, tourism, access to markets and quality of life for the Region. An economic impact assessment found that these four airports in 2008 were responsible for 378 jobs (direct and indirect), generated over €14m in direct added value to the economy, while inbound visitors spent an estimated €93m in the Region.

All policy and research publications are available at the Policy and Research Section of The BMW Regional Assembly website - www.bmwassembly.ie

AtlantKIS Partner Meeting
Rennes March 2010



9. EU Initiatives – Innovative Actions and Interreg Programmes

EU Initiatives - Interreg Programmes

The Assembly is actively involved in Interreg Territorial Co-Operation Programmes both at a strategic level and at the level of programme management. Assembly Director Gerry Finn represents the BMW Region on various Programme Monitoring Committees for Interreg cross border, transnational and interregional programmes such as Interreg IVA Ireland/N. Ireland/Scotland, Northern Periphery, Atlantic Area and Interreg IVC. The BMW Assembly is also the contact point for Interreg IVC. Programme Liaison Officer Michael O’ Brien acts as contact point for the Northern Periphery and Atlantic Area programmes advising promoters/applicants on project development matters, calls for proposals and application preparation. He also acts as secretary to regional assessment committees appraising proposals and on a day to day basis liaising with the Managing Authorities of the various programmes on technical project matters and the organisation of National events. Joe Flynn, Auditor and First level Controller with the BMW Regional Assembly certifies all Irish Partner expenditure claims for the Atlantic Area as well as the partner claims from organisations located in the BMW Region for the Northern Periphery and Interreg IVC programme.



NPP Annual Conference 2010, Bunratty

L to R: Gerry Finn, BMW Regional Assembly, Christopher Parker, NPP Programme, Martin Mc Donald, N. Ireland Rural Development Council, Norman Mc Askill, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Maria Callanan, Laois CEB, Kevin Heanue, Teagasc, Olivia Loughnane, Shannon Development and Niclas Forsling, NPP Programme

Atlantic Area Programme

Throughout 2010, the BMW Regional Assembly continued in its role as National Contact Point for the Programme in Ireland promoting the Atlantic Area programme and advising project promoters and applicants on project development issues. Following two public calls, 48 projects have been approved throughout the 5 Member States of the programme. In Ireland, a total of 52 Irish partner organisations are participating in 35 of these projects. The total benefit to date to Ireland has been €8.6m in ERDF. A broad range of themes are being addressed in these projects such as developing locally sourced Tourism Products and the development of the Religious Tourism sector, improving access to venture capital in rural regions, stimulating rural entrepreneurship and innovation as well as developing the marine sector and coastal sustainability. Some examples of Irish projects supported are set out in the table below:

Project	Theme	Irish Partner (BMW Region)	Partners / partner regions	Total Project Budget
ATLANTKIS	Knowledge Intensive Services/ Innovation	BMW Regional Assembly Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly WESTBIC	Navarra (Es) NORTE (PT) Galicia (ES) Devon (UK) Southern & Eastern (IE) Brittany (FR)	€2.3m
CANTATA II	Local Tourism Development	Shannon Development	Denbighshire (UK) Poher (FR) Montemor o Velho (PT) Coruna (Es)	2.2m
CISNET	Creative Industries	Mayo Co Council – (Lead Partner) WESTBIC	Wales – University (UK) Brittany (Fr) Lisbon (PT) Seville- Andalusia (ES)	€1.51m
SHAREBIOTECH	Biotechnology Network	Athlone I o T NUI Galway	Brittany (fr) Pays De La Loire (Fr) Centro (Pt) Navarra (Es) Algarve (Pt) Norte (Pt)	2.7m
NETALGAE	Marine Algae network	Indigo Rock Marine Research Ltd, Cork – Lead Partner	Basque (Es) Basse Normandie-Fr Bretagne (fr) Nordland (Norway) Highlands/Islands UK ALGARVE (Pt)	€2.16m

The next Call for Proposals will take place early in 2011. It was agreed that the focus of the call would be on specific gaps remaining in the programme especially in the areas of the Marine economy and Transportation/connectivity in the regions.

During 2010 the Assembly organised a number of Project Management events to assist Irish Partner organisations in the implementation of projects. Details of these events are set out in the section ‘Joint co-operation initiatives with the SEUPB’. Presentations on Transnational Interreg Programmes were also delivered to the Environmental Research Institute at University College Cork (June), University of Limerick, (July) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (October 2010).



RASLRES International Launch, Sept 7th 2010 Bunratty

L to R: Bernadette Phelan, Western Development Commission, Christopher Parker, NPP Programme Secretariat, Minister for Defence Tony Killeen, TD, Ian Brannigan, Western Development Commission and Gerry Finn, BMW Regional Assembly

Northern Periphery Programme

In 2010 the Assembly continued in its role as Regional Contact Point for the Northern Periphery Programme in Ireland promoting the programme in the eligible west coast region of Ireland and assisting Irish organisations in the development of transnational projects. Following six public calls for projects, a total of 35 proposals have been approved across the Northern Periphery Programme regions. The benefit to Ireland to date has been €3.5m in ERDF grant assistance. A total of 24 partners are involved in 15 approved projects. The Table below provides a snapshot of the approved projects involving Irish Partner organisations: -

Project	Theme	Irish Partner (BMW Region)	Partner regions/partners	Project Budget
Connected Mobile Communities @ NP	ICT – Mobile communications in rural areas	ERNACT – LEAD Donegal Co Council	Derry – N. Ireland San Sebastian – Spain North Karelia (Finland) Vasternorrland (Sweden)	€1.16m
Economusee	Craft Artisans	Teagasc	Hordaland (Norway) Iceland Innovation centre Social Development Research Centre – Faroe Islands Greenland Tourism	€1.8m
MICRE	Waste to Energy	Westbic West Regional Authority Mayo Co Co	North Karelia (Finland) Joensuu (Finland) Univ of Oulu (Finland) University of Ulster (N. Ireland) International Resources & Recycling (Scotland)	€1.4m
RASLRES	Local Renewable Energy Solutions	Western Development Commission	Action Renewables (N. Ireland) Norsjo region (Sweden) Environmental Research Institute (Scotland)	€2.8m

Two public calls for proposals also opened in 2010 and the Assembly convened two Regional Assessment Committee meetings, as required by the Programme. The Assessment Committee reviewed the proposals presented to the fifth and sixth calls in April and November 2010. In 2010 two Programme Monitoring Committee meetings were also held, one in Enniskillen in June and one in Copenhagen in December.

A number of programme events were held in 2010 which included a seminar on the Creative Industries sector held in Portrush, Co. Antrim in April. This event was organised on a cross-border basis in co-operation with the SEUPB.

Annual Conference 2010 – Northern Periphery Programme, Bunratty, September 9th 2010

The BMW Regional Assembly hosted the Annual Conference of the Northern Periphery Programme in Bunratty, Co. Clare on September 9th 2010. The Annual event was held to generate discussion and debate on how rural business development and public service provision can act as a driver of growth and social inclusion across the NPP regions. The conference was attended by over 90 delegates from Ireland, Northern Ireland and across Northern Europe. The key note address was delivered by Olivia Loughnane, Director of the Mid West Task Force with Shannon Development. The Conference programme also included contributions from the County Enterprise Boards, Teagasc and Tipperary Institute on the relevant themes of equality of access to enterprise supports, rural business innovation and Rural Development. Speakers were also drawn from the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. Head of the Northern Periphery Programme Secretariat, Mr. Niclas Forsling also addressed the conference.

Lead Partner Seminar, Bunratty, September 8th 2010

The Assembly organised a Lead Partner Seminar in Bunratty on September 8th 2010 coinciding with the Annual Conference. The purpose of the event was to assist Lead Partners of Northern Periphery Programme projects with project management training, report filing, financial management and publicity compliance. Over 50 Project Managers from throughout the programme area participated in the seminar.

Launch of the RASLRES Project by Minister Tony Killeen, September 7th, 2010 Bunratty, Co Clare

The project was formally launched by Minister for Defence, Mr. Tony Killeen, TD in Bunratty Co Clare in September 2010. Assembly Director Gerry Finn addressed the launch as the Irish Representative on the Programme Monitoring Committee and explained the role of the BMW Regional Assembly as Regional Contact Point for the programme in Ireland. Christopher Parker represented the Copenhagen based Programme Secretariat and spoke of the strategic importance of the Renewable Energies sector and the RASLRES project to the Northern Periphery Programme.

The Western Development Commission is lead partner for the RASLRES project and involves the participation of Action Renewables from Northern Ireland, the Environmental Research Institute in Scotland and the region of Norsjo in Sweden.

Joint Co-operation initiatives with the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

In 2010, the BMW Regional Assembly continued to co-operate with the Special EU Programmes Body in the organisation of joint Interreg programme events both north and south. This forms part of a north/south strategy to deliver programme information and training to facilitate delivery on an all island basis and to encourage more cross border co-operation.

In April 2010, the Assembly participated in the ‘Phoenix Creative Industries Partenariat’ in Portrush, Co. Antrim which was organised to generate more cross-border led creative industries applications to the seventh call for proposals later in the year. The event was attended by Local Authorities, Higher Education Institutes and Creative Industries groups from throughout Northern Ireland and the Republic.

In July 2010, an **Information briefing on the Atlantic Area** Third Call was jointly held in Belfast to provide information to Irish and Northern Irish partners on the Atlantic Area programme priorities in advance of the Third Call for projects. The Contact Points, Ms. Teresa Lennon from the SEUPB, Ms. Heather Silcox, UK Contact Point and Mr. Michael O’ Brien, BMW Regional Assembly presented to a cross section of organisations, north and south on the programme criteria and eligible areas of activities and held one to one meetings with prospective applicants interested in developing transnational projects.

First level Control Seminars, January and November 2010

The Assembly organised two Financial Management Seminars in 2010. One in January at the EU Commission offices in Dublin and the second in Mullingar in November. The purpose of the seminars was to assist Irish and Northern Irish Partners with the Atlantic Area on-line expenditure claims process. These seminars were practical workshops attended by public bodies and Higher Education Institutes, north and south.

Interreg IVC Programme

As the Contact Point in Ireland for the Interreg IVC Programme, the Assembly in 2010 continued in its work with the Programme Managing Authority in Lille, France and the 25 Irish partners participating in 17 approved projects with other regions from throughout the EU 27 member states. To date, the total benefit to Ireland from the programme has been €3.4m in ERDF. A wide range of thematic areas are being explored in these projects including Youth Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Transport, inland waterways development and addressing declining rural populations. A broad mix of Irish partner organisations’ are represented in these projects for example the South East Regional Authority, Shannon Development, WESTBIC and University College Cork.



Visit by Commissioner Hahn to European Association of Border Regions Annual Conference, October 2010

10. Membership of the BMW Regional Assembly



Membership of the Regional Assembly is comprised of 29 elected representatives, in proportion to the population of each county.

County	No.	Name	Party
Cavan	2	Councillor Aidan Boyle	Fine Gael
		Councillor Andrew Boylan	Fine Gael
Donegal	3	Councillor Marie Therese Gallagher	Sinn Fein
		Councillor Charlie Mc Conalogue	Fianna Fáil
		Councillor Terence Slowey	Fine Gael
Galway	3	Councillor Gerry Finnerty	Fianna Fáil
		Councillor Tiernan Walsh	Fine Gael
		Councillor Peter Feeney	Fine Gael
Galway City	2	Councillor Padraig Conneely	Fine Gael
		Councillor Michael J. Crowe	Fianna Fáil
Laois	2	Councillor James Daly	Fine Gael
		Councillor James Deegan	Fine Gael
Leitrim	1	Councillor Frank Dolan	Fine Gael
Longford	1	Councillor Larry Bannon	Fine Gael
Louth	2	Councillor Terry Brennan	Fine Gael
		Councillor Peter Savage	Fianna Fáil
Mayo	3	Councillor Cyril Burke	Fine Gael
		Councillor Damien Ryan	Fianna Fáil
		Councillor Eugene Lavin	Fine Gael
Monaghan	2	Councillor Owen Bannigan	Fine Gael
		Councillor Matt Carthy	Sinn Féin
Offaly	2	Councillor Connie Hanniffy	Fine Gael
		Councillor Eamon Dooley	Fianna Fáil
Roscommon	2	Councillor Tom Crosby	Independent
		Councillor Martin Connaughton	Fianna Fáil
Sligo	2	Councillor Imelda Henry	Fine Gael
		Councillor Dara Mulvey	Fine Gael
Westmeath	2	Councillor Joe Flanagan	Fine Gael
		Councillor Gerard Corcoran	Labour



11. BMW Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee

Role of the Monitoring Committee

The overall role of the Monitoring Committee is to oversee the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of all expenditure under the Regional Operational Programme.

It is open to the Monitoring Committee to consider the progress of co-financed expenditure and to make recommendations in this regard to the BMW Regional Assembly, the relevant Implementing Department and the Department of Finance. The Monitoring Committee has the authority to re-allocate EU Structural Funds within the Operational Programme.

Meetings of the Monitoring Committee

The fifth meeting of the Operational Programme Monitoring Committee took place on April 30th 2010 at the Assembly offices, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. At this meeting, the draft Annual Implementation report for the previous year was presented and adopted, a paper on the proposed financial management and control arrangements was reviewed and the Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the BMW Regional OP 2007-13 were adopted. A presentation was given to the committee on the Public Awareness Survey results.

The sixth meeting of the Operational Programme Monitoring Committee took place on 16th December 2010 at the Model, Sligo. At this meeting, the Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the BMW Regional OP was presented and discussed and a presentation was given on Information and Publicity Actions undertaken by the Managing Authority.

BMW REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME MONITORING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2010

Councillor Connie Hanniffy (Cathaoirleach)
Councillor Owen Bannigan
Councillor Eugene Lavin
Mr. Gerry Finn (Director)
Mr. Kieran Moylan (Secretary to the Monitoring Committee)

IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENTS

Mr. Ronnie Downes	Department of Finance
Mr. Jim Deane	Department of Finance
Mr. Aidan Hodson	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Mr. Fergal Cullen	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Mr. Vincent Landers	Department of Education and Skills
Mr. Brian Duggan	Department of Education and Skills
Mr. Richard Browne	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Mr. Brian Carroll	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

Mr. Michael Clohessy	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Ms. Betty Griffin	Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Mr. Dermot Murphy	Department of Transport
Mr. Pat Boyle	Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs
Ms. Deirdre Kelleher	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

REGIONAL INTERESTS

Cllr. Matt Carthy	Border Regional Authority
Cllr. Johnny Penrose	Midland Regional Authority
Cllr. Damien Ryan	West Regional Authority
Ms. Deirdre Frost	Western Development Commission
Ms. Martina Moloney	City and County Managers Association

SOCIAL PARTNERS

Mr. Philip McGlynn	Employer/Business Pillar
Mr. Pat O'Donnell	Employer/Business Pillar
Mr. Joe Cunningham	Trade Union Pillar
Mr. Maura Hickey	Trade Union Pillar
Mr. Pdraig Gibbons	Farming Pillar
Mr. John O'Donnell	Farming Pillar
Mr. Seamus Boland	Community/Voluntary Pillar
Ms. Tess Murphy	Community/Voluntary Pillar

HORIZONTAL INTERESTS

Ms. Lorraine O'Donoghue	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Ms. Pauline Moreau	Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs (Equality and Gender Equality)
Ms. Carole Sullivan	Equality Authority
Mr. David Logan	Social Inclusion Division, Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs
Ms. Shirley Clerkin	Comhar, Sustainable Development Partnership
Ms. Deirdre Murphy	Environmental Protection Agency

NORTH SOUTH CO-OPERATION

Ms. Tracey Scullion	Special EU Programmes Body
Ms. Sarah Reid	Special EU Programmes Body

ADVISORS TO THE MONITORING COMMITTEE

Ms. Agness Lindemans	EU Commission (DG Regio)
Mr. Stephen Langley	EU Commission (DG Regio)
Mr. Noel Farrell	EU Commission (DG Regio)
Mr. Matt Donnelly	Border Regional Authority
Mr. Martin Daly	Midland Regional Authority
Mr. Jim McGovern	West Regional Authority
Ms. Patricia Hennessy	Department of Finance, ERDF Certifying Authority

12. BMW Joint Sub Committees

Joint Sub-Committees

In addition to the Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee, the BMW Regional Assembly operated two Joint Sub-Committees during 2010: the National Development Plan Sub-Committee and the Regional and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee. The Sub Committees are comprised of the heads of public bodies in the BMW Region together with members of the Assembly and act in an advisory role to the Regional Assembly. The role of the sub-committees is to review the implementation of investment Programmes and public policy in the relevant areas and to put forward policy proposals for adoption by the Regional Assembly. The Joint Sub-Committees met four times during 2010 and a number of presentations were given as detailed hereunder.

National Development Plan Sub-Committee

Mr. Michael Egan, Head of Corporate Affairs & Professional Services NRA, gave a presentation on "The National Roads Programme & the BMW Region" and outlined the objectives of the National Roads Strategy and highlighted the roads network investment under the NRA 2010 Programme.

Ms. Mary Buckley, Head of Regions, IDA, gave a presentation on "Horizon 2020" the IDA's new National Strategy and outlined the objectives of the Horizon 2020 in driving economic and regional development through Foreign Direct Investment.

Mr. Adrian O'Donoghue, Policy and Research Officer, BMW Regional Assembly gave a presentation on preliminary findings from the Audit of Innovation being conducted by the Assembly to be published in 2011 which included an overview of how the innovation services sector is performing in the BMW Region.

Mr. Peter Moran and Mr. Kevin Kennedy, Spectrum Development Manager(s) ComReg, gave a presentation on: "A Review of Services provided in the 2500-2690MHz (2.6 GHz) band" and the importance of Radio Spectrum as a valuable resource that can be used for many purposes.

Regional and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee

A delegation from the **Turf Cutters and Contractors Association** addressed the committee and gave their observations and views on the implementation of the Habitats Directive in Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas and the effects it would have on turf cutting in the area.

Mr. Sean O'Leary Policy and Communications Officer, from Irish Rural Link gave a presentation on Irish Rural Link which was established in 1991 to address the economic, social and cultural needs of rural people and communities and outlined the role, activities and policies of Irish Rural Link.

Dr. Ciarán Byrne, CEO of Inland Fisheries Ireland outlined the role of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) which formed in July, 2010 following the amalgamation of the Central Fisheries Board and the seven former Regional Fisheries Boards and gave an overview of the functions of the new board.

Mr. Conor O' Raghallaigh Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service gave a presentation on the 31 areas of raised bog designated as Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive, for which the derogation has now ended.

Mr. Jim Ryan, Wetlands Specialist with the NPWS gave a detailed briefing on the scientific evidence of how domestic turf-cutting and the drainage required to facilitate it, are detrimental to raised bogs.

North-South Sub-Committee

Mr. Shane Clarke Director of Corporate Services and Policy, Tourism Ireland gave a presentation on "The Role and Activities of Tourism Ireland" and informed the members that the global downturn had significantly impacted on the tourism industry in Ireland in 2010. As an island, Ireland is more dependent on overseas tourism and especially on the Great Britain and North American markets.

Mr. Brian D'Arcy Director of Operations, Waterways Ireland gave a brief synopsis of the role and responsibility of Waterways Ireland which included the management, maintenance, development and restoration of inland navigable waterways. The principal waterways under the remit of Waterways Ireland are the Barrow Navigation, the Erne System, the Grand Canal, the Lower Bann, the Royal, the Shannon-Erne Waterway and the Shannon Navigation, comprising 1000 kms of which 850kms are in the Republic of Ireland.

Mr. Colin McKenna, Development Manager, Irish Central Border Area Network gave an overview on the role of ICBAN. The Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN) was established in 1995 to promote co-operation and communication on a cross-border basis on common regional development concerns. It is made up of 10 Local Authorities, 5 from Northern Ireland and 5 from the Republic of Ireland. It is supported financially by the ten member councils, and through the EU Regional Development Fund co-financed INTERREG IVA Cross-Border Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body

The BMW Regional Assembly is represented on the following Committees:

Border, Midland and Western Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee	Councillor Connie Hanniffy Councillor Eugene Lavin Councillor Owen Bannigan Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
NDP Monitoring Committee	Councillor James Deegan Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
NSRF Monitoring Committee	Councillor Peter Feeney Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Comreg Consumer Panel	Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Human Capital Investment Programme Monitoring Committee (ESF)	Councillor Pdraig Conneely Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Rural Development Programme Monitoring Committee	Councillor Tiernan Walsh Mr. Kieran Moylan, Assistant Director
National Rural Network Co-ordinating Committee	Mr. Kieran Moylan Assistant Director
Peace III Monitoring Committee + Alternate IVA	Councillor James Daly Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Interreg IVA Monitoring Committee + Alternate Peace III	Councillor Terence Slowey Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Lionra Regional Higher Education Network Management Committee	Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd	Councillor Terry Brennan
Interreg IVC Programme Monitoring Committee	Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Atlantic Area IVB Programme Monitoring Committee	Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Northern Periphery IVB Programme Monitoring Committee	Mr. Gerry Finn, Director
Freedom of Information Public Service Users Network	Mr. Gerry Lavelle, Programme Executive
CSO Enterprise Statistical Group	Mr. Adrian O'Donoghue, Policy & Research Officer
SEUPB Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group	Mr. Kieran Moylan, Assistant Director

13. Statement of Accounts - Year Ended 31st December, 2010

INCOME		
Contributions from Local Authorities		758,905.00
Conference Receipts		7,500.00
Technical Assistance Receipts		721,167.14
Interreg Technical Assistance Support Costs		208,766.51
First Level Control Receipts		18,750.00
Shared Costs 2010		27,119.29
Miscellaneous Receipts		3,874.74
Bank Interest Receivable		4,910.52
Superannuation Contributions		33,222.83
Cancelled Cheques		
Technical Assistance Grants	Ex Dept Finance	530,462.25
Innovative Actions Receipts		14.04
Gateway Grant Scheme Receipts	Ex Dept Finance	1,595,616.91
TOTAL INCOME		3,910,309.23

EXPENDITURE		
Salaries		797,773.33
Lease & Rates		119,580.25
Postage & Phones		12,617.59
Equipment & Supplies		17,574.46
Annual Allowance – Elected Members		48,105.91
Annual Allowance – Chairman (Taxable)		4,150.50
Annual Allowance – Chairman (Non-Taxable)		11,000.00
Travel & Subsistence – Article 35 2(a)		16,375.67
Staff Travel	General	13,866.54
	Technical Assistance	24,188.89
	Innovative Actions	961.55
	Atlantic Area	3,377.68
	Atlant-KIS	4,427.40
	Interreg IVA	111.56
	Interreg IVB	4,438.01
	Interreg IVC	999.26
	NPP	6,634.02
	PEACE	79.56
Sub Total Staff Travel		(59,084.41)
Subscriptions & Donations		36,275.36
Maintenance & Repairs		9,833.60
Energy Costs		10,977.03
Conference Fees		3,309.00
Miscellaneous		185,012.48
Bank Charges		735.66
Depreciation Charge		26,174.62
Technical Assistance Expenditure		482,199.75
Innovative Actions Expenditure		1,906.79
Gateway Grant Scheme Expenditure		1,595,623.03
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		3,438,309.50
EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		471,999.73
CUMULATIVE OPENING CONTROL BALANCE AS AT 1ST JANUARY 2010		832,647.51
CLOSING BALANCE AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2010		1,304,647.24

Signed:  Date: 25th March, 2011
Councillor Joe Flanagan, Cathaoirleach

Signed:  Date: 25th March, 2011
Gerry Finn, Director

**BALANCE SHEET
CONSOLIDATED REVENUE ACCOUNT**

2010	€
FIXED ASSETS	
Fixtures & Fittings	18,231.59
Computer Equipment	10,775.34
Office Equipment	1,791.34
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	30,798.27
CURRENT ASSETS	
Sales Ledger Control	95,219.53
Prepayments	23.64
BMW Regional Assembly Current Account	194,303.04
BMW Regional Assembly Savings Account	135,251.46
BMW Regional Assembly Term Deposit Account	754,641.79
BMW Regional Assembly Credit Card	-165.00
BMW Technical Assistance Current Account	183,401.44
BMW Innovative Actions Cumulative Bank Accounts	0.00
BMW Gateway Grant Scheme	-6.12
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1,362,669.78
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Purchase Ledger Control	13,169.96
Accruals	75,650.85
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	88,820.81
TOTAL NET ASSETS	1,304,647.24
CAPITAL & RESERVES	
Excess Income over Expenditure	471,999.73
Opening Balance Control	832,647.51
TOTAL CAPITAL & RESERVES	1,304,647.24

**SCHEDULE 1
PAYMENTS RECEIVED FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

LOCAL AUTHORITY	Total 2010 €
Cavan	42,820.69
Donegal	98,525.80
Galway County	106,548.96
Galway City Council	48,448.00
Laois	44,865.28
Leitrim	19,368.76
Longford	23,009.02
Louth	74,442.29
Mayo	82,853.49
Monaghan	37,464.34
Offaly	0.00
Roscommon	39,318.26
Sligo	36,478.76
Westmeath	53,085.80
TOTAL RECEIVED	707,229.45
Outstanding Contributions at Year End	51,675.55
TOTAL RECEIVABLE	758,905.00

Audit Certificate

I have audited the financial statements of the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly as set out on pages 4 to 19 for the period ended 31st December 2010.

Respective Responsibilities: - Assemblies' Officers and Local Government Auditor

The officers of the Assembly are, by law, responsible for the maintenance of all accounting records including the presentation of the financial statement.

It is my responsibility, based on my audit, to form an independent opinion on these statements and to report my opinion thereon.

Basis of Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the principles of local government audit. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the annual financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made in the preparation of the financial statement, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Assemblies circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the annual financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error.

Opinion

I have obtained all the information and explanations considered necessary for the purpose of my audit.

In my opinion

The financial statements present, fairly, the expenditure and receipts for 2010

The financial statements are in agreement with the books of accounts of the Assembly for the period to 31st December 2010

Signed: *Royce Lavin*

Date: 28th March, 2011

R. Lavin
Local Government Auditor



14. Executive Staff of the BMW Regional Assembly



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