

# TPM

## Territorial Performance Monitoring

### Annexes

Qualitative Analysis  
Greater Dublin Area

Targeted Analysis 2013/02/13

Interim Report | Version 31/August/2011



This report presents the interim results of a Targeted Analysis conducted within the framework of the ESPON 2013 Programme, partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund.

The partnership behind the ESPON Programme consists of the EU Commission and the Member States of the EU27, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. Each partner is represented in the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

This report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the members of the Monitoring Committee.

Information on the ESPON Programme and projects can be found on [www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

The web site provides the possibility to download and examine the most recent documents produced by finalised and ongoing ESPON projects.

This basic report exists only in an electronic version.

© ESPON & IGEAT, 2011.

Printing, reproduction or quotation is authorised provided the source is acknowledged and a copy is forwarded to the ESPON Coordination Unit in Luxembourg.

## List of Authors

Justin Gleeson



## Table of contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction to the Irish Planning System .....</b>                                  | <b>5</b>  |
| Greater Dublin Area (Region) and Regional Planning Guidelines.....                         | 7         |
| <b>2. Resilience of the Planning System .....</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| 2.1. Vision.....   | 10        |
| 2.2. Objectives .....  | 14        |
| 2.3. Monitoring.....   | 16        |
| 2.4. Communication .....   | 17        |
| 2.5. Horizontal Coordination .....   | 18        |
| 2.6. Vertical Integration .....  | 19        |
| 2.7. Cooperation and participation – Public/Private partnerships and<br>cooperation .....  | 20        |
| 2.8. Cooperation and participation – NGO’s cooperation and citizens<br>participation ..... | 21        |
| 2.9. Awareness and Effectives of the Macro Challenges – Climate<br>Change.....             | 21        |
| 2.10. Climate Change Threats and Opportunities.....  | 37        |
| 2.11. Awareness and Efficiency of the Macro Challenges – Energy ....                       | 40        |
| 2.12. Energy Threats and Opportunities .....   | 52        |
| 2.13. Awareness and Effectiveness of the Macro Challenges –<br>Globalisation .....         | 55        |
| 2.14. Globalisation Threats and Opportunities .....  | 71        |
| 2.15. Awareness and Effectiveness of the Macro Challenges –<br>Demographics .....          | 75        |
| 2.16. Demography Threats and Opportunities .....   | 88        |

# 1. Introduction to the Irish Planning System

Planning systems vary from country to country both in terms of their structures and the practical aspects of implementation. A planning system is also influenced by a range of factors associated with the unique nature and configuration of political and legal system in which it is situated. Inaugurated on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1964, following the introduction of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 1963, the Planning System in the Republic of Ireland has since been augmented by a variety of additional planning acts designed to make it congruent with the changing conditions and legislative landscape of Ireland and Europe. While the Irish planning system has evolved considerably since its inception it continues to be categorised as both hierarchical and centralised. In recent times an intermediate level of regional planning has been introduced to supplement the established planning functions at central and local government, the two levels of longstanding authority and power in Ireland. The new regional planning authorities have no substantive powers or funding but have been assigned the important function of addressing the centre-local disconnect by “bridging and co-ordinating” between the two established layers with a view to achieving ‘joined-up’ multi-level governance and integrated multi-scale planning.

Traditionally, planning has been overseen by two main state organisations, the Central Government Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG)<sup>1</sup> and An Bord Pleanála (the Planning Appeals Board)<sup>2</sup>. The DECLG is also responsible for the drafting of planning legislation as well as the preparation and issuing of policy formulation and guidance in respect of national planning issues such as rural housing, retailing, flood prevention, wind energy, etc. (Bartley et al, 2007). Another national organisation, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was established in 1993, thereby restricting planning considerations at the time to essentially land-use functions.

Local Authorities are principally responsible for the implementation of planning policy in Ireland. Their remit includes the promotion of sustainable development to improve the quality of life through the protection of the environment and heritage, the provision of infrastructure, and achieving balanced regional development and good local government. At an operational level, the planning system is subdivided into 88 local planning authorities; 29 County Councils, 5 County Borough Corporations, 5 Borough Corporations and 49 Town Councils. The planning system in Ireland is also unique among European countries in

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government <http://www.environ.ie/en/>

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.pleanala.ie/> for more details

that it has an independent, third party planning appeals system operated by An Bord Pleanála. Established in 1977, An Bord Pleanála is responsible for the determination of appeals made at the request of applicants or other interested bodies that relate to planning application decisions made by a planning authority.

The major policy frameworks that guide planning at the national level are the National Development Plan (NDP, 2007)<sup>3</sup> and the National Spatial Strategy (NSS, 2002)<sup>4</sup>. The basic objectives of the NDP, a seven-year strategy which sets out investment priorities for strategic investment and economic development, are to support sustainable national economic and employment growth, to strengthen Ireland's international competitiveness, to foster balanced regional development and to promote social inclusion. It is also important that the NDP follows the EU programming periods and it is directly related to EU Structural Funds investment in Ireland. The NSS, adopted in 2002 as a 20-year spatial planning framework for the nation state, aims to promote and direct balanced regional development and sustainable growth. The strategy proposes that areas of sufficient scale and critical mass will be built up through a network of urban gateways and hubs that will link Ireland more effectively into the economic 'hot-spots' acknowledged by territorial strategy devised for Europe by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and its successors (Bartley et al, 2007)<sup>5</sup>. The NSS strategy emphasises continued growth in the Greater Dublin Area but also enhanced and significant growth in the regions outside Dublin, with an emphasis on nine 'gateway' cities and nine 'hub' towns. The NSS is implemented at the regional level through the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and at local level through City and County Development Plans (CDPs). The linking of the national economic plan (the NDP) with a national spatial plan (NSS) which occurred in 2007 accorded a new 'management' status to planning and expanded its scope beyond land-use. Planning was to be a key coordination tool in the drive to stimulate, enable and support pro-active cross-sectorial efforts at all levels (national, regional and local) to identify and harness the potential for socio-economic development of all regions across the island of Ireland.

Under the Local Government Act (1991) eight Regional Authorities were set up in Ireland with a responsibility for promoting coordination and cooperation among Local Authorities, reviewing development requirements of a region, reviewing Local Authority development plans and monitoring spending and progress of the National Development Plan and EU funds. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 introduced the

---

<sup>3</sup> National Development Plan 2007-2013 'Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All' [www.ndp.ie](http://www.ndp.ie)

<sup>4</sup> National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020 'People, Places and Potential' [www.nss.ie](http://www.nss.ie)

<sup>5</sup> Bartley, B. and Kitchin, R. (Eds) (2007) *Understanding Contemporary Ireland*. Pluto Press, London

requirement for the development of Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) in respect of the whole of the combined area of each region. The RPGs are operationalised in the form of policy documents that aim to implement the strategic planning framework set out in the NSS, and other key national policies such as transport, energy and climate change, and thereby inform and direct the City and County Development Plans (CDPs)<sup>6</sup> of each of the Local Authorities within its jurisdiction.

The implementation of the actual planning system in Ireland is the responsibility of the Local Authorities. At this level, the planning system is broken down into three main functions: (1) specifying spatial visions, policies and objectives by making development plans; (2) deciding on planning permissions (development control/management) to ensure that development proposals are consistent with the content of development plan; and (3) planning enforcement (policing development activity to secure compliance with the terms of planning permissions). In terms of the preparation and adoption of a Development Plan it must be noted that the functions of a Local Authority are separated into reserved (political policy) and executive (management) functions. The preparation, adjustment and adoption of a CDPs is a function 'reserved' to the politicians who have been elected to the local authority by the public while the local authority manager and appointed staff are responsible for the implementation or execution of the plan and other day to day business.

## Greater Dublin Area (Region) and Regional Planning Guidelines

The focus of this study, Territorial Performance Monitoring (TPM), is on the planning system in Ireland but with a particular emphasis on the planning system within the GDA. It is important to note at this point that there is a distinct difference between the planning system that operates within the GDA and the other 4 participating regions in this project: Flanders; North Rhine-Westphalia; Navarra and Catalonia. These regions all have a large range of legislative competencies for territorial policies in areas such as housing, demographics, economic development, transport, environment quality and planning, climate change, energy, water and waste management etc. Compared to other European states, the regional and local government system in Ireland are relatively weak with a much more limited range of functions and powers. Local Authorities do not have

---

<sup>6</sup> The main instrument for regulation and control of development is the Development Plan. Each planning authority is required to publish notice of its intention to review its plan, not later than four years after the making of a development plan. A new plan must be made every six years (ie. two years after the notice of the intention to review the plan has been published). The plan states the authority's policies for land use and for development control and promotion in its area. The authority, in exercising control, must consider the provisions of the Plan, and try to secure its objectives.

a role in policing, public transport or personal social services and powers in respect of education, health and agriculture are also very limited. The main social function relates to housing. The lack of financial autonomy within Local Authorities, with all funding coming from central government, also severely curtails their scope for independent action. In general, core competencies on most policies are managed by various Government Departments at the national level. The Regional Authorities (including the GDA) have an even more limited range of functions and powers with core responsibility being the development of the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs)<sup>7</sup> and review of CDPs to ensure successful alignment with national policies such as the NSS and associated guidance documents. Unlike other regions in this project, the GDA, therefore does not have specific policies and strategies for the macro-challenges of this project (demographics, globalisation, climate change and energy) but instead develops a series of guidance and recommendations that aim to align local implementation within the region in a coherent manner with national policies. The discussion below on the 'resilience of the planning system' will also therefore focus on the emerging planning system that is being put in place in Ireland as a whole rather than specifically the GDA as a region in isolation. Indeed, with the unique and complex distribution of roles, function and powers that prevail in the new joined-up multilevel, multi-scaled planning networks it is increasingly difficult and meaningless to analyse planning at any one scale in isolation, particularly the regional level which oscillates between roles of lead network advocate in some circumstances to hierarchical conduit between the other two levels in other cases. This will be evident in the material outlined in later sections on the individual macro-challenges.

The GDA consists of seven Local Authorities; Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, South Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow and incorporates two of the Irelands NUTS III regions; Dublin Regional Authority (DRA) and the Mid East Regional Authority (MERA). It is a legal requirement through the Planning and Development Act, 2000 that Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) are prepared for the combined GDA<sup>8</sup>. This policy document, jointly produced by the DRA and the MERA, provides guidance and recommendations that enable Local Authorities within the region to prepare development plans that meet the requirements and targets set out for the overall region within the NSS (see Figure 1). The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced a series of legislative changes to the role of the RPGs and it is

---

<sup>7</sup> The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) aim to give regional effect to the National Spatial Strategy and to guide the development plans for each county. The RPGs inform the Development Plans in each Council area and have effect for six years.

<sup>8</sup> Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

now a requirement for all CDPs to produce an evidence based 'core strategy' demonstrating how their housing and settlement strategies are compliant with those of the RPGs and NSS. Prior to the introduction of this new legislation, Local Authorities were only required to "have regard to" the RPG guidelines and recommendations.

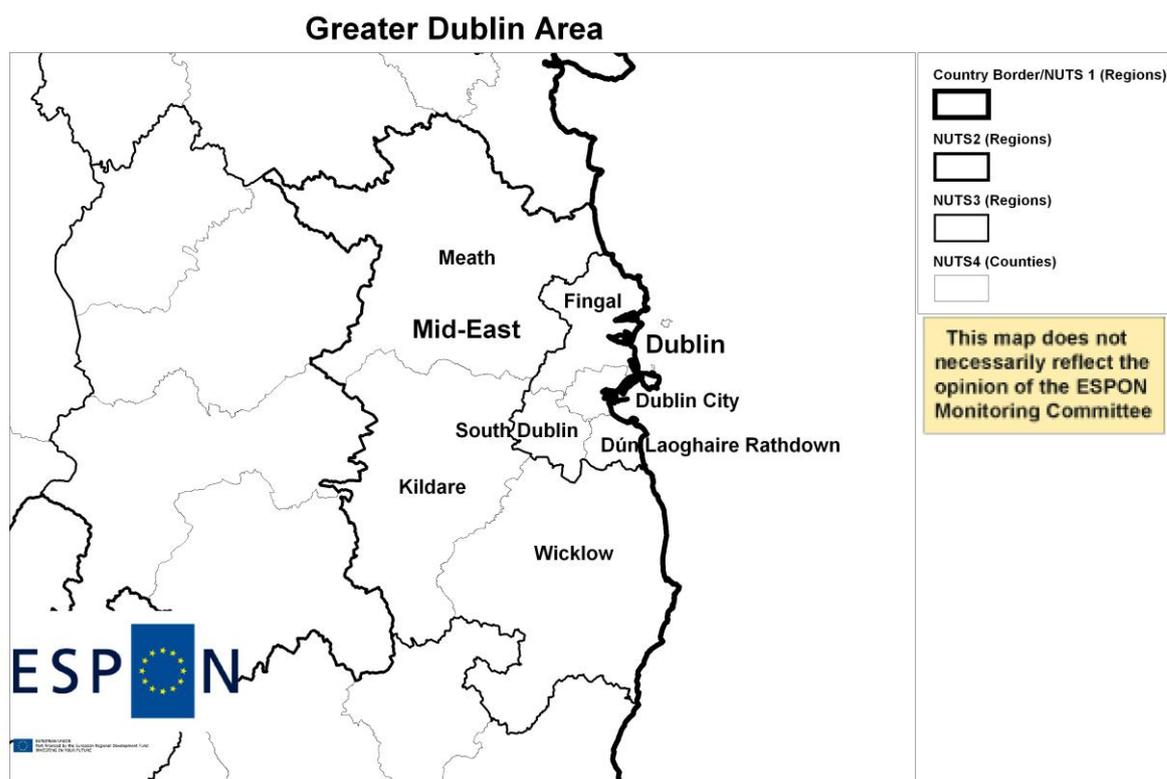
It is important to note that the RPGs are not only aimed at guiding development plans (population and housing), they also provide an overarching policy framework intended to inform decision making across a range of policy sectors such as transport, communications, environment, energy, climate change, water and waste-water and social activity. In this sense, the role of the Regional Authorities and RPGs is primarily a coordinating one. While this is helpful in encouraging a cross-sectoral approach in directing appropriate development and investment, it lacks a key governance capacity by not having direct control of resources for both decision-making and investment. As a result of this, the actual successful implementation of policy and recommendations is ultimately the responsibility of the seven Local Authorities in the region. The Regional Authorities, with the exception of population and housing targets, purely provides a higher level of strategic guidance and is dependent on voluntary levels of hierarchical and network coordination in many aspects of the planning system.

**Figure 1: Hierarchical Planning System**



Note: DEHLG became DECLG in 2011

**Map 1 Greater Dublin Area**



## 2. Resilience of the Planning System

### 2.1. Vision

#### ***Does the planning system make use of visions of regional territory?***

Yes. The vision of the planning system in Ireland is essentially the National Spatial Strategy (NSS).

Published in 2002, in fulfilment of a government commitment in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006, the NSS is a 20-year framework that sets out to promote and direct balanced regional development and sustainable growth. The strategy encourages continued growth in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) but also highlights the need for strengthening in regions outside the capital with specific growth in nine strategically placed, national scale urban areas, acting as 'gateways' and nine strategic large sized towns acting as 'hubs'.

Central to the vision of the NSS is its role as a key guidance tool for the allocation of funding under the current NDP 2007-2013. The NDP sets out a roadmap for Ireland's future by targeting investment in economic

infrastructure, social inclusion measures, social infrastructure, human capital and enterprise, science and innovation. The Plan is focussed on fostering regional development and investment, which will be coordinated within the spatial policy framework of the NSS.

The NSS provides the basis for which all areas of the country will have the opportunity to pro-actively capitalise upon their potential for socio-economic development. The NSS is meant to be facilitative and enabling, allowing for creative input and negotiation at all scales about vision content and the sources and bases for potential development. Thus, apart from some very limited prescriptive provisions (the specified gateways and hubs) the NSS vision is an open frame of reference that anticipates the provision of vision content on a negotiated bottom-up basis through creative inputs and pro-active innovation and initiatives from the regional and local levels.

The vision for the GDA, as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs), is very much a sub-vision of the NSS (and NDP) and aims to promote and coordinate the spatial framework as set out for the region within the national strategy. The regional vision also takes into account key government policies on sustainable transport, climate change and energy. At the local authority level, City and County Development Plan (CDP) visions are also clearly linked to that as set out for the region and the national level.

***Is it an explicit vision or it is a combination of different contributions, mainly sectorial?***

The vision of the planning system is explicit but includes a series of sectorial contributions stemming from the investment priorities within the NDP and integrated within the spatial framework set out in the NSS.

***Is there a predominance of a specific sector / discipline / field or is it comprehensive and inter-sectorial?***

The national vision is comprehensive and relates to wide number of sectors. This is the case also for the GDA sub-vision with an emphasis on economic, infrastructure and settlement policies being interdependent. This is complemented by new attention on green infrastructure, climate change, energy, flood risk management and social inclusion.

***Are the contents of the vision (objectives, spatial concepts and/or policy goals) regularly updated based on changes in the spatial dynamics of the region or new challenges?***

The overall vision of the NSS was “refreshed”<sup>9</sup> in 2010 to take into account the experience since 2002 and the new environment, budgetary and economic challenges that Ireland has encountered since the inception of the strategy.

The RPGs for the GDA are not regularly updated but there is a requirement within the Planning and Development Act 2000 to review and update the RPGs after a 6 year period. At this point new objectives and targets may be developed as a result of new data and evidence being available. The current RPGs are developed to provide a strategic planning framework for the long-term sustainable development of the area over the 12 years between 2010 and 2022. This plan is, therefore, an update of the original 2004 document. The vision, core strategies, principals and objectives have been reviewed and updated but largely draw on objectives and the strategic vision set out in the original document (RPGs, 2004-2016). There is, however, a noticeable shift in emphasis towards economic development concerns. This reflects the change in the economic circumstances in Ireland and suggests that there is a certain level of flexibility for the planning system to focus on new challenges. The introduction of the ‘Core Strategies’<sup>10</sup> to the latest CDPs also reflects the requirement for tighter and more coherent housing development and a closer alignment with NSS policy. This would be seen as a considerable update to previous plans and addresses issues of excess housing supply in many parts of the country (albeit less significant within the GDA). The current RPGs and related CDPs (new CDP are required every 6 years with review after 4) also now include objectives relating to climate change, energy efficiency and increased use of renewable sources, again this would have been largely absent from previous plans and suggest capacity to adapt and address new challenges.

---

<sup>9</sup> Implementing the National Spatial Strategy: 2010 Update and Outlook – Harnessing Potential, Delivering Competitiveness, Achieving Sustainability, October 2010  
<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/NationalSpatialStrategy/PublicationsDocuments/FileDownload.24144.en.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> The Core Strategy of local authority development plans must outline the location, quantum, and phasing of future development, the detail of transport plans, retail development and policies for development in rural areas (in accordance with Ministerial guidelines). The key objective is to secure a strategic and phased approach to zoning which will facilitate efficient and coordinated infrastructure provision. Planning Authorities must vary development plans not later than one year after the making of the RPGs to provide for the inclusion of a Core Strategy within their existing development plans. See <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload.1605.en.pdf> for more details.

***Are the contents of the vision shared (among stakeholders, different bodies of the administration, NGOs, citizens)?***

Despite initial appearances to the contrary, the NSS is not a rigid top-down spatial plan. It emerged from an unusually detailed consultative process including road-show workshops. Its credibility has also increased since it aligned with the funding allocation of the NDP. Because the spatial vision for Ireland is promulgated through the NSS and NDP there is an expectation that stakeholders at all levels now have to share the vision and its elaboration. In order for stakeholders (Local Authorities, Sectorial interests, Private bodies, NGOs, etc.) to gain access to NDP funding they must subscribe to the vision of the NSS. The fact that the substantive content of the vision and particularly the content of sub-regional visions is open to negotiation with stakeholders also makes it easier to achieve a consensus about shared ownership of emerging sub-visions.

Under Section 24 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft versions of the RPGs vision (objectives) must be shared with a prescribed list of bodies from a wide variety of sectors (see Appendix 1). Prescribed bodies are welcome to make submissions and the final version of the vision/objectives encapsulates the broad consensus of prescribed bodies. When reviewing the draft GDA RPGs in 2009, members of the Regional Authority (elected representatives) proposed a total of 44 motions seeking amendments to the draft plan. Amendments focussed on a wide range of areas of the plans objectives from settlement hierarchy, employment distribution, tourism and climate change objectives (Walsh, 2010)<sup>11</sup>.

***Is there flexibility to update the overall objectives of the region (vision) depending on new challenges or must the objectives be adhered to for the lifetime of the plan?***

The spatial planning process has built-in review and refresh capacities, and this allows new objectives to be adopted based on national guidance on new challenges.

---

<sup>11</sup> Walsh, Cormac (2010) *Coordinating the Spatial Impacts of Sectoral Policies? Practices of and Potentials for Strategic Spatial Planning in the Dublin City-region*. NIRSA Working Paper Series No 61 – October 2010 [http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/research/documents/wp61\\_cormac\\_walsh.pdf](http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/research/documents/wp61_cormac_walsh.pdf)

## 2.2. Objectives

***Is the planning system based on a number of different objectives that feed into the overall vision? If so, what are they? e.g economic development, transport, environment***

Yes, the planning system now has to have specific objectives that feed into and elaborate the broad vision as set out in the NSS. The national objectives are set out for the GDA through the RPGs and then CDPs must have a set of more precise objectives that are consistent with regional and national policy.

At the GDA level the RPGs articulate the regional vision through a number of broad objectives under eight different strategies. Each strategy has a number of objectives (policies) that aim to deliver the overall vision of the RPGs: Economy (2); Settlement (1); Rural (2); Climate Change (1); Physical Infrastructure (5); Green Infrastructure (6); Social Infrastructure (2) and Flood Risk Appraisal (1). Each of these individual objectives also has a series of recommendations that provide guidelines for the delivery of objectives through the implementation of CDPs within the region<sup>12</sup>.

***Is the planning system able to formulate direct/indirect lines of intervention in relation with the vision (in particular in the case of a macro-challenge has to be dealt with)?***

Yes, directly through Government / Ministerial Directives on specific issues and indirectly by influencing prospective funding via the NDP.

***Are measures usually content-wise coherent with the general vision?***

Yes, they are. They have to be because it's a multi-scale set of visions (national, regional and local) taking the lead from the NSS. This was not always the case but the introduction of The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010<sup>13</sup> introduced a series of legislative changes to strengthen the role of the RPGs and it is now a requirement for all CDPs to adhere to the regional vision.

---

<sup>12</sup> See page 32 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> The core principal objectives of this Act are to amend the Planning Acts of 2000 – 2009 with specific regard given to supporting economic renewal and sustainable development. The Act envisages a closer alignment of the National Spatial Strategy with Regional Planning Guidelines, Development Plans and Local Area Plans, while also clarifying the key obligations required of Planning Authorities under the Birds and Habitats Directives. The Act also aims to improve the throughput and performance of An Bord Pleanála and strengthen the enforcement controls of Planning Authorities <http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload.25759.en.pdf>

Although the objectives set out within the RPGs are linked to the general vision, they are quite broad and serve only as a set of applicable recommendations that aim to develop the region in line with the overall vision. The Settlement Strategy (population and housing) would be an exception to this and Local Authorities are now required to develop a detailed evidence-based 'core strategy' outlining how and where future population and housing will be directed.

***Is there a time-plan for delivering objectives and can it be reviewed and adjusted if required?***

The strategies and objectives outlined must be delivered over the 12-year period of the plan with a review after 6 years. At the review stage the RPGs can be amended if required.

***Is there any form of prioritization in the time plan and in the organization of the objectives?***

There does not seem to be any prioritization in the time plan for specific objectives, although the Settlement Strategy and the Economic Strategy are clearly the core drivers.

***Have the objectives a budget and a feasible capacity?***

The delivery of the national vision is based on the implementing the objectives set out in the NDP in a coherent manner within the spatial framework as set out within the NSS. There is a budget set out within the NDP with almost 90 per cent of funding coming from domestic sources, mainly the Irish Exchequer. It must be noted that since the NDP was published the national fiscal situation has deteriorated dramatically and it is envisaged that this will have an impact on both levels of both the timing and levels of funding for projects.

The regional authorities are not delivery bodies and therefore do not have any specific budget for the actuation of objections.

At the Local Authority level, budgets are based on funding available through capital grants from central government and also through raising local development levies although this is at a small scale. In general, the funding for implementation of objectives is provided from national budgets.

***Are stakeholders involved in the definition and the actuation of the objectives? Which (typologies of) stakeholders?***

A number of prescribed stakeholders are involved in both the definition and the actuation of these objectives. This is done through the consultation phase with prescribed bodies and then through the implementation of the recommendations throughout the lifetime of the plan.

- The regional and Local Authority (both elected members and the executive)
- Government Departments and their agencies
- Providers of physical and social infrastructure
- The National Transport Authority
- The private sector
- Civil society

### 2.3. Monitoring

***Does the planning system have any monitoring tools for the assessment of on-going policies?***

At the national scale the NDP is subjected to an ex-ante, ongoing (including mid-term) and ex-post evaluation. The NSS is also reviewed and recently produced The Development Gateway Index which reports on the development of the nine National Spatial Strategy (NSS) Gateways measuring the extent to which these gateways are progressing as drivers of regional economic development.

Although not directly involved in the actuation of objectives on the ground the regional authorities are however responsible for ensuring that the objectives are implemented within the time frame of the plan and are required to provide annual updates on implementation progress to the Technical Working Group, Implementation Steering Group of the RPGs and regional members. At the moment there are no specific monitoring tools available for the regional authorities in the GDA. A large inventory of performance indicators have been highlighted as being useful in measuring the implementation of the plan, but it has been clearly stated within the documentation that all reporting will be dependent on the

resources available to the DRA during the life time of the plan. It has been recommended that an annual report is produced which will address all of the core strategies outlined within the plan using indicators that are regularly published and that more in-depth individual issue reports will be produced following the publication of less regular data e.g. Census 2011. The Dublin Regional Authority (DRA) and the Border Regional Authority (BRA) are currently engaged in a research project within the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) to develop a monitoring tool that will specifically focus on indicators that are suitable for measuring progress and implementation of the objectives. This is due to be operational in August 2011.<sup>14</sup>

***Does any assessment process have the capacity to influence policy makers through feedbacks?***

The annual assessment of RPG implementation will have the capacity to provide feedback to influence policy makers. As this process is new it is unclear as to how successful it will be.

## 2.4. Communication

***Are the contents of the planning system widely debated?***

Not at the moment as the priority is on the fiscal situation in Ireland. In the lead up to the introduction of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 there was a major debate about changing the planning system to make it more consolidated and coherent especially in light of the part played by planning in the economic crisis. A major media debate has focused on the excessive zoning of land and the over-supply of housing development that took place in the mid to late 2000s gave rise to considerable debate about the planning system and its role in the housing and banking crisis.

***Is the participative and communicative processes efficient and inclusive?***

---

<sup>14</sup> See page 192 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf> and the All-Island Research Observatory [www.airo.ie](http://www.airo.ie)

This aspect of the planning has improved considerably over the past decade as the planning system has become more progressive and inclusive under the new legislation. More expansive provision has been provided for public consultation at all stages of the plan adoption process, including the very earliest stages of identifying key issues for consideration.

***Are strategic challenges widely debated?***

Yes, particularly in terms of competitiveness or in the context of Ireland's vulnerability as a strategic trading and distribution hub or bridge between the USA and the EU.

## 2.5. Horizontal Coordination

***What is the capacity of the planning system to provide horizontal integration in order to address a spatial challenge (among different sectors and stakeholders, e.g. in the field of transport, environment, energy, research & development, service of general interest, housing, etc)?***

In principle this is possible as the planning system has been re-oriented and elaborated recently with this as a key objective. The linking of the funding through the NDP and the NSS spatial framework was to address this horizontal objective through a new partnership ethos. The capacity has been put in place and has not yet fully materialised. The linking of the NSS and NDP in 2007 was a major step in introducing multi-level governance allied to multi-scale spatial planning; however, it is hard to discern its impact on levels of horizontal integration among different sectors and stakeholders in light of the crisis management priorities that have come to the fore since the financial crisis of late 2008 and having regard to the natural time-lag to be expected with institutionalising the new process.

***In case of specific challenges is the planning system able to provide answers combining different sectoral measures and coordinating the activities of different stakeholders?***

Yes, it has the potential to do it now. The planning system is playing a lead role in local authorities now to mobilise and manage sectoral

developments that are consistent with the broader NSS vision and regional sub-vision.

In terms of planning dynamics and is there a predominance of any the following fields?

- spatial planning
- sectorial competences/directives
- developing strategies

Spatial planning has been assigned a key lead coordination role in relation to integration of sectorial activities and development initiatives. The expanded scope and ambition of planning as a public management tool for coordination was viewed as a necessary accompaniment to the confusion that could accompany the new strategic and explorative approach to vision-based development. The aim was to release hitherto inhibited sectors and territories to be innovative and entrepreneurial in identifying and mobilising to capitalise upon potentials for socio-economic development. The prospective creative flux could be managed by the coordinating facility inherent in an integrated spatial planning system linked closely to policy and funding regulated by national overseers.

## 2.6. Vertical Integration

***What is the capacity of the planning system to provide vertical integration (among different levels) in order to answer to spatial challenges?***

As outlined above, the regional planning system of RPGs was introduced to bridge the gap between the central and local government. The newly established link is designed to secure and enhance vertical integration between local planning and key national planning policies such as the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), The National Development Plan (NDP), and other national priorities such as the 2009 National Transport Policy, Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future<sup>15</sup> and other policies relating to the macro-challenges such as energy and climate change. The RPGs implement the strategic planning framework set out in the NSS, NDP and Smarter Travel documents and subsequently inform and guide the CDPs of each of the Local Authorities in the GDA.

---

<sup>15</sup> Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 Department of Transport (2009) [http://www.transport.ie/upload/general/Smarter\\_Travel\\_5\\_feb\\_2009.pdf](http://www.transport.ie/upload/general/Smarter_Travel_5_feb_2009.pdf)

All three planning levels, national, regional and local, were essentially in place following the introduction of the RPGs in 2004 but have only recently been strengthened by the introduction of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 which mandated legally this consistency and integration to occur.

## 2.7. Cooperation and participation – Public/Private partnerships and cooperation

### **Is the planning system enabling the cooperation and the partnerships between public and private partnerships in case of specific aspects of spatial challenges?**

Before the economic crisis hit, the development of public/private partnerships was expected to become more widespread under the new logic of strategic planning and the aspiration to capture the development potential of targeted areas as set out within the NSS and NDP.

The Regional Authorities are not directive or delivery authorities and therefore do not have any specific partnership with private bodies for the delivery of infrastructure or services. The Regional Authorities act as a coordinating body and attempt to develop a more integrated and joined up approach linking Local Authorities with national and regional bodies, both public and private. At the national level, bodies such as the National Roads Authority (NRA) are involved in a number of different public/private partnerships for the delivery of transport infrastructure such as motorways. At a more local level, Local Authorities are involved in public/private partnerships with developers and construction companies for the delivery of social housing and other key infrastructure needs such as waste-water as set out with CDPs.

### ***Is there the capacity to shareholding with public and/or private stakeholders the general vision and the specific objectives? Are there privileged interlocutors?***

Yes, there are a key list of stakeholders involved in the development of the vision and also importantly in the elaboration and delivery of the objectives. The privileged interlocutors would be the government departments, key state agencies and representative bodies mandated by

the business community (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)).

## 2.8. Cooperation and participation – NGO’s cooperation and citizens participation

### ***Is the planning system supporting the cooperation with NGOs/Citizens and other stakeholders in case of specific aspects of spatial challenges?***

Traditionally, citizen participation in local government and the planning system has been through the electoral system, with councillors representing each local electoral area. Although this democratic system is in place, local communities have felt alienated from local government and decision-making. As a result of this, structures for participation in local government in Ireland have undergone change over recent years with the establishment of Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)<sup>16</sup> and County Development Boards (CDBs)<sup>17</sup>. This has led to the community and voluntary sector being invited as full partners to participate in strategic planning at local authority level. Local and Regional Development Partnerships (NGO’s) are also now more involved in the planning system and decision making at the local level. Also, the planning legislation since 2000 has required Local Authorities to provide more opportunities for inclusion of communities and citizens at all stages in the plan-making and adoption process.

## 2.9. Awareness and Effectives of the Macro Challenges – Climate Change

### **Local Articulation of the macro-challenge**

The onset of global warming is now fully acknowledged, with increases in air and ocean temperatures already happening. The Intergovernmental

---

<sup>16</sup> Introduced on 1999, Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) assist the council in the formulation, development and review of policy; reflect the major functions or services of a local authority within the broader context; have a minimum of one third of their membership drawn from sectors relevant to the committees' work.

<sup>17</sup> County/City Development Boards were established in each county and city in Ireland in early 2000. The CDBs are led by local government and are also representative of local development bodies together with the State agencies and social partners operating locally. For the first time, CDBs brought together the key players at local level to engage in a process of long-term planning for each county or city.

Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007)<sup>18</sup> has suggested that the warming of the climate is unequivocal and is clearly linked to increases in greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. Increased levels of greenhouse gases result in increased amounts of energy trapped in the atmosphere, this in turn leads to increases in average air and ocean temperatures, melting of snow and ice, rising sea levels, large fluctuations in precipitation rates and increased levels of extreme weather. Such a scenario affects agriculture, water supply and quality, increase risk of flooding, de-stabilises ecosystems and marine life amongst others.

Over the next 15 to 20 years it is expected that climate change impacts in European regions will be primarily related to extreme weather conditions. The recent European Commission report, *The Climate Change Challenge for European Regions (Regions 2020)*<sup>19</sup>, suggests that Mediterranean regions will be subject to droughts and peak summer temperatures, while winter floods and summer droughts will become more common in continental Europe, and biophysical conditions in Western Europe will change with an increase in storms and heavy rainfall as well as milder winters. The report also developed an index of climate change vulnerability for regions in Europe. Regions were ranked based on a number of factors such as increases in population affected by river flooding, population in areas below 5m, potential drought hazard, vulnerability of agriculture, fisheries and tourism, taking into account temperature and precipitation changes. Regions under highest pressure were generally located in the south and east of Europe. Within this index Ireland was represented by its two NUTS II regions, the Border Midlands and West (IE01) and the Southern and Eastern (IE02). Both regions were ranked amongst the lowest 5 per cent vulnerable to climate change suggesting somewhat limited impact on a comparative European scale. The Southern and Eastern region of Ireland contains the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), the focus of this study. The index score for this region was 18 on a scale from 0 to 100, with 100 being the most vulnerable. It must be noted that this does not however suggest that Ireland and the GDA will not face significant climate change challenges in terms of adaptation and mitigation. Government departments and planning authorities (national, regional and local) in Ireland are fully aware of the challenges of climate change and have developed a series of strategies to deal with international and EU mitigation targets and are starting to develop measures of adaptation for future climate change impacts. This is

---

<sup>18</sup> Climate Change 2007 Synthesis Report – An Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change <http://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm>

<sup>19</sup> European Commission, *Regions 2020, The Climate Change Challenge for European Regions*

primarily lead through national policies and implemented at the regional and local level through the RPGs and City and County Development Plans. The effects of climate change are already being felt in Ireland. Levels of greenhouse gases are rising on a global basis and increases have also been detected in Ireland and the consequences of such are evident in the temperature record. Ireland is now on average 0.7°C warmer over the period 1890 -2007 and six of the ten warmest summers have occurred since 1995 (Comhar, 2009)<sup>20</sup> . Ireland's emissions profile has changed considerably since 1990 with the contribution from transport more than doubling. This has decreased, however, in recent years, partly due to the economic downturn. Emissions figures for 2009 show that agriculture is the largest source of emissions at 29 per cent, with energy representing 21 per cent, transport representing 21 per cent, industrial and commercial sector representing 14.8 per cent, residential representing 12.2 per cent and waste representing 2 per cent. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)<sup>21</sup>, responsible for monitoring of GHG emissions and the administration of EU Trading Scheme, future impacts of climate change in Ireland will be both direct and indirect with impacts from other parts of Europe and the rest of the world also affecting Ireland. It is likely that the main impacts of climate change in Ireland will be changing rainfall patterns and rising sea levels. The EPA has highlighted the main negative future impacts for Ireland as follows;

- More intense storms and rainfall events
- an increased likelihood of flooding in rivers and on the coast, where almost all our cities and large towns are situated
- water shortages in summer in the east and the need for irrigation of crops
- changes in the distribution of species
- the possible extinction of vulnerable species

The key challenge in terms of mitigation is reducing GHG emissions at a national level and complying with legally binding international and EU targets. Containing over 40 per cent of the national population and acting as the core driver to the national economy, the GDA contributes heavily to national emission estimates. A major challenge for the GDA is therefore to decouple economic growth from emissions of GHGs (RPGs, GDA)<sup>22</sup>.

In general, Ireland can expect higher levels of seasonal rainfall, wetter winters and drier summers with increasing temperatures. Projections

---

<sup>20</sup> Comhar Sustainable Development Council, Adapting to Climate Change: The Challenge Ahead for Local Government, 2009

<sup>21</sup> Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <http://www.epa.ie/environmentinfocus/climatechange/>

<sup>22</sup> See page 27 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

suggest that Ireland's winter annual rainfall will have increased by 10 per cent by the 2050s and 11-17 per cent by the 2080s. Levels of summer rainfall will also be affected with summer rain decreasing by 12-17 per cent by the 2050s and further decreasing by 12-25 per cent by the 2080s. There will also be regional differences in future climate change impacts in Ireland. The north and west are projected to have wetter conditions whereas the south and east will be on average drier. In terms of the GDA (south and east), it is projected that this region could have 20-28 per cent less rain in the summer by the 2050s and 30-40 per cent by the 2080s (Comhar, 2009).

The most significant impact of climate change in Ireland and the GDA will undoubtedly be related to the water environment. Fluctuating rainfall patterns and increasing sea levels will have an impact on agriculture and ecosystems and also result in increased levels of inland and coastal flooding and coastal erosion, thereby having a direct affect on existing population settlements and infrastructure and also on planned future developments. It is likely that all river catchments will experience increasing flows and potential flooding in winter with water flows expected to increase by 12-15 per cent by the 2050s (Comhar, 2009). Increasing sea levels and more frequent storm surges will have an impact on settlements in coastal areas. Climate change scenarios outlined by the IPCC suggest mean sea levels may rise by 0.59 meters over the next century. With five of the seven Local Authorities in the GDA having coastal zones, coastal management will be an important tool in adapting to the future impacts of climate change. Although Ireland has one of the highest rates of water availability in Europe it is likely that the impacts of climate change will in fact reduce availability in some regions. A key issue relating to water supply in Ireland is the fact that areas of greatest need tend to be farthest away from greatest levels of supply. This is particularly the case in the GDA and currently the Dublin Water Region spare capacity stands at 1 per cent, against a best practice of 10 per cent minimum availability (RPGs, GDA). Predictions of future decreases in rainfall in the GDA and surrounding region, a likely impact of climate change, coupled with proposed increased housing and population, presents a major infrastructural challenge for the region.

**Is the region aware of the macro-challenge and how does it address it?**

Government departments and planning authorities (national, regional and local) in Ireland are aware of the challenges of climate change and have

developed a series of strategies to deal with international and EU mitigation targets and are starting to develop measures of adaptation for future climate change impacts. This is primarily lead through national policies and implemented at the regional and local level through the RPGs and City and County Development Plans.

Climate change challenges in Ireland are addressed through both adhering to international targets based on levels of emissions and also through more local measures focussing on adaptation to future impacts. In an attempt to combat the increasing risk of climate change a number of international agreements have been put in-place to ensure that countries stabilise emissions in order to address the challenge of climate change. The Framework Convention on Climate Change was agreed in 1992 and ratified by 190 countries and set a series of objectives to reduce greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. Following on from this a Protocol to the Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in Kyoto, Japan in 1997 and entered into force in 2005, the protocol includes mandatory greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets for leading countries, including Ireland. The EU and Member States are linked to both the Convention and Protocol with an average emissions reduction target set at 8 per cent below 1990 levels, this is to be achieved over the period 2008 to 2012. Targets vary across EU Member States with Irelands set at no more than 13 per cent above 1990 levels for the period of the plan, this equates to no more than 62.8 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents per annum. Over the past decade Ireland's emissions have been close to 70 million tonnes per annum, as already outlined this has however reduced in recent years due to the economic downturn and Ireland is currently expected to comply with its Kyoto obligations (2008-2012) (EPA, 2011)<sup>23</sup>. The European Union has also responded to the challenge of climate change by setting ambitious mitigation targets in the period up to 2020. The main target is to limit global average temperature increase to 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels. The EU's current climate change policy, adopted in 2008, seeks a;

- 20 per cent cut in emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020, compared with 1990 levels (possibly rising to 30 per cent)
- 20 per cent increase in the share of renewable in the energy mix, and
- A reduction in energy consumption of 20 per cent through an increase in energy efficiencies

---

<sup>23</sup> Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <http://www.epa.ie/environmentinfocus/climatechange/>

The policy response to climate change emission targets in Ireland has been primarily through the publication of the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* (2007)<sup>24</sup>. Coordination and implementation of this strategy is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG). However, implementation of measures set out within the strategy are the responsibility of relevant Government Departments and agencies. This strategy follows on from the first national climate change strategy, published in 2000 and reviewed in 2002, and takes account of the public consultation process which followed the further review in *Ireland's Pathway to Kyoto Compliance* (2006)<sup>25</sup>. The strategy sets out a programme of actions for achieving the limits mapped out within the Kyoto Agreement and seeks to address this by reducing emissions through delivering guidance and policies for all relevant sectors such as energy, transport, residential and agriculture. The strategy also provides support and some guidance on adaptation measures at the regional and local level and also outlines the requirement for the development of a National Adaptation Strategy, although this has yet to be published. Although the strategy has outlined a series of recommendations and actions it is seen by some climate change experts as being purely aspirational and is limited in its scope due to the lack of any legal enforcement.

From a GDA perspective, the Regional Authorities are aware of the challenges of climate change and this is well represented within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). There is no specific regional (GDA) climate change strategy although the challenges do play a central role in the RPGs and awareness of the challenges (both mitigation and adaptation) are embedded in sections such as transportation, water provision, distribution of population and regional flood risk appraisal. By integrating guidance from the National Climate Change Strategy, key national and regional transportation strategies (Smarter Travel and Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy), national energy policies (dealing with efficiencies and increased use of renewable sources) and other DECLG guidance documents such as *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*,<sup>26</sup> the RPGs aim to "bring about major positive benefits to the region in terms of its ability to adapt to future climate change and

---

<sup>24</sup> The National Climate Change Strategy, (2007) The National Climate Change Strategy 2007 - 2012 sets out a range of measures, building on those already in place under the first National Climate Change Strategy (2000) to ensure Ireland reaches its target under the Kyoto Protocol. <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/NationalClimateChangeStrategy/>

<sup>25</sup> Ireland's Pathway to Kyoto Compliance – Review of the National Climate Change Strategy (2006) <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/NationalClimateChangeStrategy/>

<sup>26</sup> The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Local Authorities (2009) <http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

associated occurrences and contribute to the efforts to moderate the anthropogenic causes of climate change” (RPGs, 2010)<sup>27</sup>.

### **Forecasting ability?**

Climate change forecasting is primarily done at the national level and there are currently no regional specific projections, the RPGs do however support continued research in this area. In terms of emission projections, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has the responsibility for developing annual national emission projections for greenhouse gases for all key sectors of the economy. The projections are developed in collaboration with relevant State bodies and serve to inform national policy initiatives, such as the annual Carbon budget, and allow Ireland to comply with EU reporting obligations on projections (DECLG). Greenhouse gas emission projections are currently available from the EPA for the period up to 2020. Recent projections, as of April 14<sup>th</sup> 2011, suggest that Ireland will comply with its Kyoto targets for the period 2008-2012 but breach its annual obligations under the EU 2020 target, with regard to greenhouse gases, from 2016 onwards<sup>28</sup>. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) also produce a series of sectoral projections for greenhouse emissions based on the observed, low growth and high growth scenarios for the periods 2008-2012, 2012-2020 and 2020 to 2025<sup>29</sup>.

Under the Sustainable Energy Act 2002, the Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland (SEAI) also has the national role in compiling projections and forecasts on energy production and use. SEAI’s Energy Modelling Group (EMG) are involved in a series of short-term and medium-term scenarios for energy demand and supply growth. This provides analysis and policy advice on a range of climate change issues at the national and European level. The most recent forecasts are available for the period 2011 to 2015 and from 2016 to 2020 and directly relate to periods relevant to policy formulation and reporting on energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate change, air quality and security of energy supply<sup>30</sup>.

A series of additional research is also being carried out by private bodies, research institutes and consultancies, into the future levels of precipitation, temperature and sea levels. National policies and guidance documents take into account both international projections such as sea level increase from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and also climate change research studies carried out in Ireland. Climate

---

<sup>27</sup> See page 27 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.epa.ie/whatwedo/climate/emissionsinventoriesandprojections/>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.esri.ie/irish\\_economy/environmental\\_accounts/](http://www.esri.ie/irish_economy/environmental_accounts/)

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics\\_Publications/](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics_Publications/)

change modelling for Ireland is carried out by the Community Climate Change Consortium (C4I), to date the C4I project have produced a series of precipitation and temperature projections for this century. Climate change projections are also produced by IACRUS at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth and look at winter and summer outcomes for temperature and rainfall for 2020, 2050 and 2080<sup>31</sup>. Both of these research initiatives provide results that can be interpreted at sub-national level.

### ***What are the key documents that address the challenge?***

There are a number of key policy documents (national, regional and local) that address the issues of climate change in Ireland. The principal national document is the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* (NCCS)<sup>32</sup>.

- *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012*
- *The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland (2007) Government White Paper*<sup>33</sup>
- *The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020*<sup>34</sup>
- *National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2009)*<sup>35</sup>
- *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020*<sup>36</sup>
- *National Development Plan 2007-2013*
- *National Spatial Strategy*
- *DEHLG Guidance Documents on Flood Risk Management*

At the regional level climate change is primarily addressed through the following documents and strategies:

- *Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs)*
- *City and County Development Plans (CDPs)*
- *Local Climate Change Strategies and Energy Action Plans*

---

<sup>31</sup>Irish Climate Analysis and Research Units <http://icarus.nuim.ie/>

<sup>32</sup> National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012  
<http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Atmosphere/ClimateChange/NationalClimateChangeStrategy/>

<sup>33</sup> *The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland (2007) Government White Paper* <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/Energy+Planning+Division/Energy+White+Paper.htm>

<sup>34</sup> *The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020* <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/>

<sup>35</sup> *National Renewable Energy Action Plan* <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/>

<sup>36</sup> *Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020* Department of Transport (2009) [http://www.transport.ie/upload/general/Smarter\\_Travel\\_5\\_feb\\_2009.pdf](http://www.transport.ie/upload/general/Smarter_Travel_5_feb_2009.pdf)

***In general terms, is there a coherent approach?***

There is generally a coherent approach amongst the policies with all recognising the need for developing strategies to contribute towards reaching international commitments regarding climate change. There is however less of an emphasis on developing adaptation measures. Guidance to date has only been provided on a number of individual areas such as flood risk management. To date, a National Adaptation Strategy has yet to be published but is expected later this year.

***Vision of the policy bundle – is it updated?***

The current vision for climate change in the RPGs has been updated significantly since the publication of the previous RPGs in 2004. The previous RPGs had minimal reference to climate change and individual sectoral policies such as settlement, transportation and economy had no reference to climate change measures or impacts at all. Following the publication of the National Climate Change Strategy and the introduction of Ireland’s legally binding international greenhouse gas emission target, climate change has become a far more integral part of regional planning and policy. The vision in the current RPGs, following guidance from the National Climate Change Strategy, aims to create a “development infrastructure and built ecosystem more aware of, and in harmony with, natural ecosystems within the region and the impacts of climate change upon them”<sup>37</sup>. The delivery of this vision is to be measured through the successful implementation of a series of cross-sectoral policies and objectives that are seen to be positive measures in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation progression. This evidence based process is to be reviewed on an annual basis with the first review currently underway.

***Is the vision knowledge based?***

The national vision is knowledge based in the sense that it takes into account analysis that was undertaken for the review paper Ireland’s Pathway to Kyoto Compliance and Ireland’s National Allocation Plan 2008-2012.

National emission projections are also closely monitored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who has the responsibility for developing annual national emission projections for greenhouse gases for all key sectors of the economy. This in turn shapes policy accordingly.

---

<sup>37</sup> See page 27 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

## **Has it been shared with stakeholders/citizens?**

In terms of the National Climate Change Strategy, the vision and objectives set out here would have taken account of a public consultation process following a review of the first National Climate Change Strategy (2006) document titled Ireland's Pathway to Kyoto Compliance (2006). Under Section 24 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft versions of the RPGs vision (objectives) must be shared with a prescribed list of bodies from a wide variety of sectors. Prescribed bodies are welcome to make submissions and the final version of the vision/objectives encapsulates the broad consensus. The objectives and climate change vision as set out in the RPGs would therefore have been shared with stakeholders and citizens.

## **Articulation in Objectives – what measures are taken to tackle the macro-challenge?**

The National Climate Change Strategy contains a series of cross-sectoral recommendations aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and also provides a limited amount of guidance on adaptation measures to be implemented at national and local level. A variety of measures and strategies (examples below) have been introduced in recent years that target emission reduction in several sectors<sup>38</sup>;

- *Energy*: 15% of energy to be generated from renewable sources by 2010 and 33% by 2020; Biomass to contribute up to 30% of energy input at peat stations by 2015
- *Transport*: Modal shift to public transport as a result of Transport 21 investment; Rebalancing of VRT and motor tax, supported by improved mandatory labelling, Sustainable Transport Action Plan to be published, Introduction of Carbon Tax to be applied to the use of petrol and diesel for transport, and to gas and oil for residential use
- *Residential*: Revised building regulations aimed at improvements on thermal performance; Building Energy Rating certification requirements, Grants for renewable energy heating
- *Industry*: Building Regulations and Building Energy Rating, Support for eco-efficient technology and practices
- *Agriculture*: Biomass Harvesting Scheme, REPS 4 Scheme will support carbon sequestration and reduction of emissions from fertilisers, New supports for afforestation

---

<sup>38</sup> National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 see page 9

- *Waste:* Use of waste biomass in energy production, support for waste-to-energy projects under REFIT scheme
- *Public Sector:* Energy Efficiency Programme with targets of 33% energy savings across public sector by 2020

The strategy also provides guidance on and supports adaptation measures at the regional and local level, it also proposes plans to develop a National Climate Change Adaptation Framework, this will be an important step in ensuring that Ireland is positioned to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change. It is anticipated that the Framework will be published at the end of this year (2011). In terms of current adaptation measures, most work to date has been carried out in relation to flooding. The 2004 report by the Flood Policy Review Group outlined the need to devise a comprehensive approach to flooding nationally, following on from this report the DEHLG appointed the Office of Public Works (OPW) to implement flooding policy in Ireland. The OPW has developed, and is currently pilot testing, Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAM Studies) in a number of locations both nationally and within the GDA. Current works in the GDA include the FEM-FRAM (Fingal East Meath, and Dodder CFRAM studies<sup>39</sup>. This work, which includes hydrological assessments that factor in changes in the climate, aims to identify and map existing and future flood risk areas, build a strategic information base required for accurate flood risk management and identify viable structural and non-structural measures and options for managing flood risks (OPW). Additional work is also being carried out by the OPW in developing different flood relief schemes throughout the region such as deepening and widening of channels and building of flood barriers such as walls and embankments. In 2009 the DEHLG also published two key documents, *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* and the *Coastal Protection Strategy Study*<sup>40</sup>, aimed at providing Local Authorities with importance guidance on how to address these issues including potential climate change impacts. A detailed study on drainage in the GDA was also produced in 2005, The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS), and provides coherent guidance on adaptation measures relating to climate change and the likely effects on drainage, particularly in new developments.

The RPGs for the GDA address the climate change challenge through a series of direct and indirect cross-sectoral recommendations relating to transportation, water provision and distribution of population. The RPGs recommendations on climate change are summarised in the Strategic Policy CLIP1 which provides guidance for Local Authorities within the GDA

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.opw.ie/en/FRM/Projects/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

*"Planning authorities, in so far as possible,.....seek to provide for the integration of climate change considerations, based on best scientific evidence, into all policy areas relevant to them, including development plans, flood risk assessments, biodiversity and heritage plans and application of relevant particulars of associated plans and projects such as the River Basin Management Plans and ICZM. The development of Local Climate Change Strategies and/or associated Energy Action Plans by the local authorities is supported by the Regional Planning Guidelines" (RPGs, GDA)<sup>41</sup>*

At a Local Authority level all County and City Development Plans have integrated guidance and recommendations coming from both the RPGs and the National Climate Change Strategies. All future plans and settlement strategies must now undertake Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in line with the DEHLG's guidance on *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*. Local Authorities within the GDA have also developed individual Climate Change Strategies for their local area with a focus on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in areas such as energy usage, transport, housing & corporate buildings, planning, waste management and ecosystems. A series of indicators have been identified to measure the implementation of strategies however there are no specific set of long-term targets that Local Authorities are currently required to meet. Dublin City Council have also been involved in a number of EU funded INTERREG projects aimed at developing flood risk managements competencies within the city. The SAFER Project<sup>42</sup> focuses on emergency response management (partnership with Germany, Scotland and Switzerland) and the Flood ResilienCity Project<sup>43</sup> aims to deliver a structural change in the mindset of the policy makers, professionals and public in all partner regions and countries (North West European cities along rivers). This ensures that all involved recognize the importance of the 4-'A's (awareness, avoidance, alleviation and assistance) in policies to achieve Sustainable Flood risk Management.

Although there is considerable work being carried out by Local Authorities in attempting to reduce emissions, through energy reduction and more integrated and sustainable planning, and through an increase in proactive adaptation measures, there still lacks a coordinated and legislative approach between national policy commitments and guidance and local implementation. Currently there is no lead climate change agency in Ireland with statutory powers to oversee the strict implementation of

---

<sup>41</sup> See page 34 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.dublincity.ie/WATERWASTEENVIRONMENT/WASTEWATER/Pages/Flooding.aspx>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.floodresiliency.eu/en/about/>

adaptation and mitigation plans. Leading climate change researchers suggest that until this is rectified it will continue to be a problem and hamper Ireland's attempts at a) successfully reaching legally binding international and EU targets and b) developing appropriate cross-sectoral adaptation measures. To date there is no national requirement to integrate climate change into general policy or to prepare local climate change strategies – this is done on an ad-hoc and voluntary basis.

There does not seem to be any prioritisation of acts or measures identified within the National Climate Change Strategy with most measures outlined to be delivered throughout the timeframe of the plan. As yet there has been no official review of the National Climate Change Strategy and the success of its implementation to date. An annual reporting process has been implemented through the Annual Carbon Budget. The DECLG is undertaking a review of Ireland's climate-related policies and measures in light of existing and anticipated national greenhouse gas mitigation targets for the period to 2020. The outcome of this review will underpin the development of future climate policy in support of achieving national targets. It is expected that a follow on strategy will be published in 2013. Likewise, the measures and recommendations outlined within the RPGs are to be implemented throughout the lifetime of the plan with no specific prioritisation.

### **Are the objectives content wise coherent?**

The objectives set out within the RPGs and current Local Authority Climate Change Strategies are broadly content wise coherent with the National Climate Change Strategy.

### **Is there a budget for the measures?**

The NCCS outlines that it would be impossible to quantify the total cost of implementing the strategy. Where possible the Strategy identifies the Exchequer costs associated with the measures but recognises that the overall cost will impact in some way on every household. A budget has also been made available in the NDP for the purchase of carbon credits. An environmental research sub-programme has also been made available in the NDP which funds environmental research and communication initiatives in the areas of climate change research and climate change communications.

The regional authorities (GDA) are not delivery bodies and therefore do not have any specific budget for the actuation of objections. The implementation of climate change policies within the GDA will be the financial responsibility of Government Departments and Local Authorities.

### **Is there a monitoring capacity to keep the targets and objectives updated?**

At the national level climate change indicators are monitored through the EPA. A detailed annual report was to be developed to monitor implementation of the NCCS. This has yet to be produced but since then an annual Carbon Budget has been introduced. This in effect outlines the progress of measures undertaken to reduce GHG emissions. There have been four Carbon budgets since 2007. According to the latest Carbon Budget Ireland has made considerable progress in introducing measures to tackle climate change and ranks alongside Denmark and Germany as the best in Europe on a climate change tracker report by The World Wildlife fund<sup>44</sup>. This view is not shared by leading climate change researchers who suggest that the challenges of climate change are not being addressed sufficiently in Ireland and that there is a requirement for a much stronger level of leadership and commitment at the highest level within Government.

As part of a review process the RPGs have developed a list of potential indicators for monitoring the success of policy implementation. Included in this is an indicator that assesses each policy on whether it increases regional adaptability to overall impact of climate change (adaptation) and if the policy contributes towards a reduction in emissions (mitigation). Depending on successful implementation, 67 policies within the RPG are seen to be positive in terms of adaptation and 50 in term of mitigation. A key measure here is also the number of local climate change strategies or energy action plans that are in place across the GDA. Although the RPGs provide guidance on climate change and suggest recommendations at the local level, there is no statutory requirement for Local Authorities to develop mitigation and adaptation targets as yet<sup>45</sup>.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders?**

At the regional and local level there are a key list of stakeholders involved in the development of the vision and also importantly in the elaboration and delivery of the objectives such as Government Departments (Environment, Energy, Transport) Local Authorities planning departments, Office of Public Works (OPW), housing and building developers.

In terms of the NCCS, the vision and objectives set out here would have taken account of a public consultation process following a review of the first National Climate Change Strategy (2006) document titled Ireland's Pathway to Kyoto Compliance (2006).

---

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Environment/Atmosphere/>

<sup>45</sup> Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area – Appendix II

Under Section 24 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft versions of the RPGs vision (objectives) must be shared with a prescribed list of bodies from a wide variety of sectors. Prescribed bodies are welcome to make submissions and the final version of the vision/objectives encapsulates the broad consensus. The objectives and climate change vision as set out in the RPGs would therefore have been shared with stakeholders and citizens.

### **Efficiency – Horizontal and Vertical Coordination?**

The planning system has been re-oriented and elaborated recently with horizontal integration of sectors as a key objective. The linking of the funding through the NDP and the NSS spatial framework was to address this horizontal objective through a new partnership ethos. The capacity has been put in place and has not yet fully materialised. The linking of the NSS and NDP in 2007 was a major step in introducing multi-level governance allied to multi-scale spatial planning; however, it is hard to discern its impact on levels of horizontal integration among different sectors and stakeholders in light of the crisis management priorities that have come to the fore since the financial crisis of late 2008 and having regard to the natural time-lag to be expected with institutionalising the new process.

In terms of climate change there would be levels of horizontal coordination between the DECLG (responsible for the National Climate Change Strategy) and a number of other government departments such as Transport, Energy and Agriculture. There is also an Inter-Departmental Committee on Climate Change comprising key sectors such as Environment (lead), Agriculture and Transport. It is, however, unclear as to the level of successful working relationship that exists between these sectors. In more recent years climate change has slipped down the public agenda of priorities with economic matters now at the fore.

The challenges would primarily be dealt with by different sectorial competencies

(energy, transport) although the spatial framework as set out in the National Spatial Strategy would promote a much more integrated and sustainable settlement structure and as such deals with climate change issues, particularly in terms of flood risk management, drainage, and reduced emissions and levels of commuting etc.

In terms of vertical integration, national policy and guidance relating to climate change are embedded within the recommendations set out within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and subsequently informs and directs the City and County Development Plans of each of the Councils in the GDA.

### **Who has the main competence in dealing with the issues characterizing the challenge?**

The Regional and Local Authorities within the GDA generally cooperate with national climate change policy and guidance as set by the main competence for dealing with the climate change challenge in Ireland, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG)

The DECLG is responsible for the development of the NCCS and a series of guidance documents that inform Local Authorities of potential risks of climate change relating to flood management. On behalf of the DEHLG the EPA has responsibility for developing annual national emission projections for greenhouse gases (GHG) for all key sectors of the economy, in collaboration with relevant State Agencies and other bodies.

### **Cooperation and Awareness of the topic in specialised and public debates?**

In general, the awareness of climate change issues in Ireland is improving and there are regular conferences dealing with issues such as critical infrastructure and adaptation to climate change and energy efficiency policies. A recent public consultation process on the proposed Climate Change Response Bill 2010 attracted 509 responses relating to proposed targets, carbon budgeting, governance etc. Responses were primarily received from individuals but also Government Agencies, Local Authorities, Business, Representative Bodies and NGOs. The proposed Bill was not passed by Government and new legislation is currently being debated.

### **Policy Bundles**

National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012

The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland (2007) Government White Paper

The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020

National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2009)

Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020

DEHLG Guidance Documents on Flood Risk Management

Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022

## 2.10. Climate Change Threats and Opportunities

### **Climate Change Threats**

- Sea-level is projected to rise by between 18cm and 59cm this century – this will pose a threat to coastal areas of Ireland and coastal settlements in the Greater Dublin Area.
- More intense storms and rainfall events will lead to increased likelihood and magnitude of flooding of rivers and coastal areas. It is suggested that current '50 year floods' could by mid to late century happen once every decade. The Greater Dublin Area will be affected by this and adaptation measures are required for all coastal zones and river catchments.
- Drier summers in the East will result in water shortages and a need for irrigation of crops. Significant changes in stream-flows are expected by the 2050's and further enhanced later in the century. Predicted water reductions in autumn are expected by up to 70 per cent in vital water supply rivers in the east<sup>46</sup>.
- Adaptation measures are required to combat such water resource management threats – flood frequency calculations require amendment for civil engineering structures, increased levels of erosion and greater suspended loads will require management for all rivers, storm-flow drainage systems will pose greater threat to water quality, there is also a requirement for amended calculations for water supply and water quality (particularly in Greater Dublin Area), low flow conditions and higher temperatures will pose a threat to discharge consents – this may compromise successful implementation of the Water Framework Directive<sup>47</sup>.
- Increased frequency of wild fires and pest infestation.
- Agriculture in Ireland can adapt to the challenges of climate change – future threats will primarily come from wetter winters and drier summer soils, increased temperatures will also play an important role. For the eastern region of Ireland (including the GDA) water stress on grass, barley, potato and maize will occur on a much more frequent basis. Dairy farming will also be affected by summer soil moisture deficits.

---

<sup>46</sup> Climate Change in Ireland: Refining the Impacts for Ireland 2007-2013 (EPA)

<sup>47</sup> Climate Change in Ireland: Refining the Impacts for Ireland 2007-2013 (EPA)

- The challenge of climate change will pose a significant threat to the water supply in Ireland and the Greater Dublin Area. Climate change will pose a threat to the amount, seasonality and regional distribution of rainfall and will therefore not only affect availability for agriculture but also for domestic and commercial use.
- Climate Change also presents specific threats to bio-diversity in Ireland – changes in the timing of leafing, bud-burst and leaf fall can be expected as a preliminary response.
- Increased levels of GHG emissions from main sectors such as Agriculture and Transport are likely to increase without policy intervention.
- There is currently no Climate Change Bill or any legal enforcement of climate change strategies in Ireland. This is a serious threat to the future of Ireland and the GDA particularly in relation to achieving emission targets as set through Kyoto and the EU and adapting to changes that are going to happen and positioning Ireland and the GDA to be competitive in the changed world effectively.
- The lack of clear national legislation on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to ensure implementation of policy at local level is a potential threat for successfully addressing climate change challenges. To date there is no national requirement to integrate climate change into general policy or to prepare local climate change strategies – this is done on an ad-hoc and voluntary basis.
- The potential introduction of an increased target of a 30 per cent reduction in emissions by 2020, compared with 1990 levels will pose major difficulties for Ireland in reaching this target.

### **Climate Change Opportunities**

- The main opportunities for climate change in Ireland are related to agriculture. Increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will lead to increased photosynthesis and agricultural yields for most crops will increase. Crops such as maize will do very well, wheat and barley will improve however crops such as potatoes will suffer particularly in summer due to lack of moisture.
- There are opportunities for farmers to adapt to climate change by adjusting management and pasture practices. Research has been carried out to model how farmers can adapt to climate change in different parts of Ireland. Opportunities can be gained by integrating research results into agricultural practice.

- Some benefits can be achieved if global mean temperatures are limited to a 1c increase above pre-industrial levels – Longer growing season, potential for new crops, e.g soybean, increased production of existing cereal and grass crops, earlier breeding of animals and birds
- A potential climate change opportunity for Ireland relates to tourism. Currently the peak tourism season in Ireland is June and July, it is expected that the shoulder season can be extended from May to September. There is also potential for tourists to travel from regions in southern Europe to gain access to the cooler climate in Ireland.
- From a planning point of view the main benefit will be in relation to energy reduction – there is already evidence of a reduced amount of energy needed for space heating in the Dublin region on a per capita basis. This will be a positive benefit of climate change and will in turn reduce emissions and have a positive effect on energy security.
- The successful implementation of the National Spatial Strategy and settlement strategy outlined within the RPGs will promote a more consolidated and sustainable pattern of growth. This will reduce levels of long distance commuting and provide opportunities for increased energy efficiencies, reduced emissions and less demand on imported energy.
- Increased levels of flood risk management and research, the delineation of flood risk maps and an improved evidence base in this area provides an opportunity to limit the development of further settlements in 'at-risk' areas.
- A series of local level research is being carried out by the Irish Climate Analysis and Research Unit (funded by the EPA) at the moment. The results of this research will be made available to all Local Authorities in Ireland and will be customised to focus on specific climate change threats relevant to each area. This will provide an opportunity for Local Authorities to develop adaptation strategies to deal with forecasted climate change impacts.
- The introduction of universal water charging will provide clear opportunities for the conservation of an increasingly scarce resource as the century progresses.
- There is an opportunity for the introduction of clear leadership and commitment to climate change at the top level within Government in Ireland. The introduction of a proposed Climate Change Bill, the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Climate Change Strategy and the proposed National Climate Change Adaptation Framework would be positive moves in dealing with the climate change challenge in Ireland. It is as yet

unclear when such legislation and policies will become available and whether they will be actually fully supported and enforced at the sectoral and local level.

- The introduction of a Climate Change Expert Advisory Body to advise Government, and place appropriate statutory responsibilities and duties on all public bodies is also seen as an opportunity in dealing with climate change challenges.

## 2.11. Awareness and Efficiency of the Macro Challenges – Energy

### **Local Articulation of the macro-challenge**

The European Commission introduced the new European Energy Policy (EEP) in 2007 as a mechanism designed to meet the challenges of climate change, energy import dependence and rising energy prices. This policy focuses on three main challenges and objectives: sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness. The objectives set three targets to be met by 2020: a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; a 20 per cent increase in energy efficiency; and ensuring that 20 per cent of the EU's energy consumption is to be from renewable sources. Under the terms of the EEP Member States are set individual renewable energy targets. A sub-target of 10 per cent in the transport sector applies to all Members, but apart from this measure there is flexibility as to how members achieve the overall renewable target.

Ireland faces a similar set of energy challenges as our European and international counterparts. The challenge in Ireland is perhaps greater as a result of our small energy market, peripherality and dependence on imported fuel resources (DCENR, 2007)<sup>48</sup>. This is reflected in the recent EC Regions 2020 report where both of Ireland's NUTS II regions were ranked in the top 10 most vulnerable regions in Europe in terms of energy import dependence and consumption. The Greater Dublin Region (GDA) (Southern and Eastern) was ranked as the fifth most vulnerable in Europe<sup>49</sup>. To address these challenges and adhere to European commitments, Ireland's energy policy is therefore set within the European context with an overall agreed target to achieve 16 per cent from renewable sources by 2020. The White Paper "*The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020, Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland*" (2007) (DCMNR, 2007) and the *National Renewable Energy*

---

<sup>48</sup> *The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland (2007) Government White Paper* <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/Energy+Planning+Division/Energy+White+Paper.htm>

<sup>49</sup> Regional Challenges in the perspective of 2020, Regional Disparities and future challenges, Background paper on Energy, ISMERI Europa

*Action Plan (NREAP) (2009)*<sup>50</sup> that follows on from this, are both consistent with EU Policy. These documents have also set national targets of 40 per cent electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020, while in transport there is a target of 4 per cent per annum consuming bio-fuel and finally a 12 per cent renewable target for heat by 2020.

Energy usage and supply trends have changed considerably in Ireland over the last two decades, with demand increasing by nearly 69 per cent in the period from 1990 to 2009 and increasing in every sector of the economy. Transport continues to be the largest user of energy accounting for 41.4 per cent of total demand in 2009, this relates to a 151 per cent increase in demand from 1990 levels. Total energy demand from other sectors is as follows: industry 18.1 per cent; residential 25.3 per cent; commercial/public 13 per cent and agriculture 2.2 per cent. Fossil fuels accounted for 95 per cent of all energy used in Ireland in 2009, the vast bulk of this coming from oil (52.1 per cent) (which is mostly imported), gas (29 per cent) and coal (8.2 per cent). The remainder of the supply comes from peat (5.8 per cent), renewable energy sources (4.5 per cent) and imported electricity (0.5 per cent) (SEAI, 2010)<sup>51</sup>. Significant progress has already been made in terms of renewable energy with an increase of 14 per cent during 2009 and an annual average increase of 15 per cent between 2005 and 2009.

In the last number of years there has also been a change in energy usage patterns and a clear link is evident between decreasing energy use and the current economic downturn in Ireland. Energy demand decreased in 2009, down 8.9 per cent from 2008 figures. Changing economic forecasts in Ireland have also resulted in shifting projections of future energy demand. Current projections now suggest lower levels of final energy demand in the period from 2009-2020 (0.7 per cent per annum) than those experienced since 1990 (2.8 per cent per annum 1990-2009) (SEAI, 2010)<sup>52</sup>.

Energy usage and supply statistics are not available for the GDA as a region. However, national estimates provide proxies heavily weighted towards GDA transport activity (public and private), economic and industrial production and social activity. Containing 40 per cent of the national population, contributing just under half of the GVA output nationally and being the largest commuter based region in the country, the GDA is a significant consumer of national energy supply<sup>53</sup>.

---

<sup>50</sup> *National Renewable Energy Action Plan* <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/>

<sup>51</sup> Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, *Energy in Ireland 1990 – 2009*, (2010) [http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics\\_Publications/EPSSU\\_Publications/](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics_Publications/EPSSU_Publications/)

<sup>52</sup> Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, *Energy Forecasts for Ireland to 2020*, (2010) [http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics\\_Publications/EPSSU\\_Publications/](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics_Publications/EPSSU_Publications/)

<sup>53</sup> See page 40 of the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022* <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

### **Is the region aware of the macro-challenge and how does it address it?**

Yes, at the national level the energy challenge is addressed by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DECNR) through the development of specific policies to deal with both energy efficiency and the increased use of renewable sources. Key energy infrastructure challenges are addressed through the National Development Plan (NDP) (linked in with the NSS) and State Energy Companies, the ESB, EirGrid, Bord Gais and Bord na Mona. This is to be delivered in investment programmes on strategic energy infrastructure, sustainable energy and state energy companies.

Regional and Local Authorities within the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) are fully aware from a policy perspective of the energy challenge and commitments that are required to meet EU2020 targets on emissions, efficiencies and increased use of renewable. Energy is seen as a key planning and development challenge for the GDA in terms of contributing to a reduction of national dependence on imported fossil fuels, through energy efficiencies and increased usage of renewable sources, and also through ensuring that an adequate regional power infrastructure is in place to maintain security of supply, improve regional competitiveness and attract new industry, and allow for the connection of renewable sources to the grid. These challenges are explicitly stated within national policies and through regional and local policy documents.

There are no individual energy policy plans for the GDA region. However, the energy challenges for the region are addressed through the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) where a series of strategic recommendations are outlined for implementation within seven Local Authorities in the region.

### **Forecasting ability?**

Forecasting abilities in relation to energy are produced by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). The SEAI Energy Policy Statistical Support Unit (EPSSU)<sup>54</sup> has a lead role in developing and maintaining comprehensive national and sectoral statistics for energy production, transformation and end use. The statistics are used for advising national policy development and informing investment decisions. Under the Sustainable Energy Act 2002, SEAI also has the national role in compiling projections and forecasts on energy production and use. SEAI's Energy Modelling Group (EMG) are involved in a series of short-term and medium-term scenarios for energy demand and supply growth, this provides analysis and policy advice on a range of climate change issues at the national and European level. The most recent forecasts are available

---

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics\\_Publications/](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics_Publications/)

for the period 2011 to 2015 and from 2016 to 2020 and directly relate to periods relevant to policy formulation and reporting on energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate change, air quality and security of energy supply. The SEAI do not provide forecasting or detailed statistics on energy usage and supply at the GDA level.

EirGrid<sup>55</sup>, Ireland's Independent Transmission Systems Operator (TSO) and operator of the wholesale power market, provides some forecasting in relation to future demand for electricity on a regional basis in Ireland. The majority of the GDA is within the 'East' region and can therefore be used as a proxy for electricity demand in the region. EirGrid have projected that electricity demand for the 'East' will increase by 80 per cent by 2025, representing 30 per cent of national demand. Projections at the regional level are the basis for policy development and recommendations for infrastructure investment in the region. It must be noted however that these projections are currently under revision<sup>56</sup>.

### ***What are the key documents that address the challenge?***

The energy challenge, increased efficiency and use of renewable, is primarily addressed at the national level within key policy documents published by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DECNR). A number of other documents are also pertinent in addressing the challenges:

- *The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland (2007) Government White Paper*
- *National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2009)*
- *The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020*
- The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012
- DECLG Guidance Documents<sup>57</sup>

There are also a number of sectoral policy documents that address the issue such as *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009*, this document aims to ensure that future population and economic growth takes place in sustainable compact urban and rural areas which discourage dispersed development and long distance commuting.

At a regional level the GDA Regional Planning Guidelines takes into account guidance from key national energy and climate change policies

---

<sup>55</sup> EirGrid plc is a leading Irish energy business, dedicated to the provision of transmission and market services for the benefit of electricity consumers. It is a state-owned commercial company.

<http://www.eirgrid.com/>

<sup>56</sup> See page 133 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.envIRON.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

(see above). The *GDA Transport Strategy 2011-2030*<sup>58</sup> has also developed a plan for the region with a series of objectives that will address the national energy challenge such as: minimising the impact of transport on air quality; reducing GHG associated with transport and improving efficiency in the use of natural resources.

Following guidance from the RPGs, Local Authorities within the region are addressing the challenges through City and County Development Plans and also through a number of specific Energy Actions Plans and Climate Change Strategies.

***In general terms, is there a coherent approach?***

At a national level there seems to be a coherent approach with the key national policies on energy efficiency and renewable energy being clearly linked with the National Climate Change Strategy and other sectoral policies relating to transport, agriculture, housing development, building regulations and settlement strategy. In terms of energy security and infrastructure there is a coherent strategy between national policies and the role of EirGrid and Grid25. Grid25 is EirGrid's plan to develop and upgrade the electricity transmission network up to 2025. Through enhanced investment Grid25 works towards providing the necessary infrastructure for Ireland and the GDA to be competitive on a global scale and also enables the use of renewable energy sources within the network, thereby reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels and contributing towards reaching EU and national targets. What is less clear is how coherently these policies link up in practice.

The challenges of energy within the GDA are addressed in a coherent manner with all regional and local development plans being aware of the national targets relating to energy efficiency and increased use of renewable sources. Policies and objectives have been developed accordingly in an attempt at contributing positively towards key national targets in 2016 and 2020. A move towards a region that is more energy efficient and less reliant on imported fossil fuels is a central theme throughout the RPGs for the GDA.

***Vision of the policy bundle – is it updated?***

The energy vision within the GDA, at the regional and local level, is clearly linked to national policy on energy efficiency and use of renewable energy. Resulting from this, the vision can be seen to be based on and responding to national 2020 targets and EU 2020 targets. The vision also clearly outlines the need for increased investment in the energy infrastructure

---

<sup>58</sup> Transport Strategy available at <http://www.2030vision.ie/>

within the region in the lifetime of the plan. The vision is also updated in the sense that the importance of energy efficiency and increased use of renewable energy was not as much of a priority in the previous regional plan as in the current RPGs.

### **Is the vision knowledge based?**

The vision is knowledge based in the sense that policy development is based on key statistical information produced by the SEIA Energy Policy Statistical Support Unit (EPSSU)<sup>59</sup> who has the lead role in developing and maintaining comprehensive national and sectoral statistics for energy production, transformation and end use.

### **Has it been shared with stakeholders/citizens?**

In terms of the key national energy policies, detailed levels of consultation has been carried out with Local and Regional Authorities; semi-state bodies; private bodies; NGO's and citizens. For instance the Government White Paper, *the Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020: Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland*, was informed by the outcome of the consultation process on the Government's Green Paper on Energy Policy. Over 100 submissions were received relating to all aspects of energy policy. *The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020* also undertook a consultation process with 42 submissions received from a wide variety of sources. A draft version of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan was subject to a period of public consultation and was made available through the Department's website; 58 submissions were received and all submissions were reviewed.

Under Section 24 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft versions of the RPGs vision and associated objectives must be shared with a prescribed list of bodies from a wide variety of sectors. Prescribed bodies are welcome to make submissions and the final version of the vision/objectives encapsulates the broad consensus. The objectives and energy vision as set out in the RPGs would therefore have been shared with stakeholders and citizens.

### **Articulation in Objectives – what measures are taken to tackle the macro-challenge?**

There are a wide variety of measures undertaken to address the energy challenge in Ireland and the GDA. The key national energy policy

---

<sup>59</sup> [http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics\\_Publications/](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics_Publications/)

documents, as listed above, provide the basis for developing appropriate measures to be undertaken at regional and local level. Follow on guidance is provided through the RPGs, and Local Authorities in the region are encouraged to adopt City and County Development Plans that are both aware and provide positive contributions towards addressing the challenge.

The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2009) outlines 38 individual measures to promote the use of energy from renewable sources<sup>60</sup>. These include legislative, fiscal, regulatory, infrastructural, technical and soft measures that are aimed at a wide targeted group including all sectors (agriculture, industrial, transport etc), Local Authorities, general public, homeowners, developers of renewable energy and generators and suppliers of electricity from renewable sources. The Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources will have primary responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan, working closely with the SEAI, Eirgrid, the CER, the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and all other relevant Departments, Agencies and state entities, as well as the renewable energy sector itself. A listing of 25 key existing policy measures that influence the development of renewable energy sources in Ireland are available in the SEAI document Renewable Energy in Ireland (2010 update) – carbon tax, emissions trading, renewable energy grid connectors, greener homes scheme phase II, renewable heat deployment programme (re-heat), bio-energy action plans, electric and hybrid vehicles, energy research etc<sup>61</sup>.

The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020 contains 90 measures aimed at securing a more sustainable energy future for Ireland<sup>62</sup>. Specific measures are targeted at energy efficiency in the public sector, business, residential sector, transport, energy supply, research and development and also through a series of cross sectoral measures. The action plan is closely monitored by an Interdepartmental Implementation Group and regular update reports are made regarding progress towards 2020 targets. Updated Action Plans are due in 2011 and 2014, in accordance with European Commission requirements.

Many of the measures outlined within the national energy policies have already been implemented and are contributing towards achieving the

---

<sup>60</sup> See Page 13 *National Renewable Energy Action Plan* <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/>

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix II in Renewable Energy in Ireland 2010 Update [http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics\\_Publications/SEI\\_Renewable\\_Energy\\_2010\\_Update/RE\\_in\\_Ire\\_2010update.pdf](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics_Publications/SEI_Renewable_Energy_2010_Update/RE_in_Ire_2010update.pdf).

<sup>62</sup> See Page 12 National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020 <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/Energy/Energy+Efficiency+and+Affordability+Division/National+Energy+Efficiency+Action+Plan.htm>

national targets on efficiency and use of renewable sources. In general, there is no real prioritization of acts or measures apart from being undertaken and established within the timeframe of the plans and working towards achieving 2020 targets.

Strategic energy recommendations within the RPGs suggest the reinforcement of energy infrastructure to secure future supply; that Local Authority Development Plans support national targets on energy efficiency and renewable sources; the establishment of research on wind energy potential within Local Authorities and the development of Climate Change Strategies and Energy Action Plans at Local Authority level. The awareness of future energy challenges and the need for the establishment of a sustainable and integrated settlement strategy with enhanced public transport infrastructure and a reduction in levels of long-distance car based commuting is a central theme within the RPGs<sup>63</sup>.

All Local Authorities in the GDA now have a specific set of energy objectives within City and County Development Plans, with targets relating to renewable energy, wind and wave energy, energy efficient building design, adoption of energy conservation within Council's own developments, and implementation of Energy Strategies. The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan also outlines a public sector target of an improvement of 33 per cent in energy efficiency by 2020. Following on from the publication of a document by the County & City Managers' Association, *Local Authority Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Measures: Best Practice and Current Initiatives*<sup>64</sup>, work is currently underway in all Local Authorities to achieve these targets. Local Authorities in the GDA have also produced detailed Wind Energy Strategies, in accordance with guidance provided by the DECLG, to allow Councils to positively control the development of wind-farms, whilst protecting environmental and material assets. It must be noted that although the GDA has significant demand for energy it is not an area with the best potential for renewable energy production. It is estimated that capacity for renewable energy production in the GDA (based on estimates for the Grid25 "East" region) is only 4 per cent of national renewable energy production<sup>65</sup>.

A number of Local Authorities have also developed Climate Change and Energy Action Plans to address the challenges. Currently, Dublin City offers the most progressive example and has published a number of strategies, *Dublin City Sustainable Energy Action Plan and the Climate Change Strategy for Dublin City*<sup>66</sup>, in conjunction with Codema<sup>67</sup>. Codema

---

<sup>63</sup> See page 132 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.aiea.ie/aiea\\_local\\_authorities/aiea\\_local\\_authorities\\_climate\\_change\\_strategies](http://www.aiea.ie/aiea_local_authorities/aiea_local_authorities_climate_change_strategies)

<sup>65</sup> See EirGrid and also page 132 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.codema.ie/report-article/date/2009/06/23/climate-change-strategy-for-dublin-city-2008-2012.html>

is the leading energy agency for Dublin and acts as the sustainable energy advisor for Dublin City Council and as of January 2009 now acts as an advisor for the other three Dublin Local Authorities; Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin County Council.

### **Are the objectives content wise coherent?**

The objectives are content wise coherent in the sense that national strategies and local energy action plans all address issues of energy efficiency and increased use of renewable resources.

### **Is there a budget for the measures?**

It is unclear exactly what budget is available for the delivery of all objectives. The NDP has provided funding for an Energy Programme that will encompass some €8.5 billion in investment in energy over the period of the Plan<sup>68</sup>. This will be funded in part by the Exchequer and by the Energy State Sponsored Bodies. The current fiscal situation in Ireland and the commitment of the Government to delivering the National Recovery Plan may however have an impact on the delivery of outlined infrastructure requirements in the short term.

The regional authorities (GDA) are not delivery bodies and therefore do not have any specific budget for the actuation of objections. The implementation of energy action plans within the GDA will be the financial responsibility of Government Departments and Local Authorities.

### **Is there a monitoring capacity to keep the targets and objectives updated?**

As outlined previously, monitoring of national policy is primarily carried out by SEAI through the production of comprehensive national and sectoral statistics for energy production, transformation and end use. The main national policies have specific monitoring and review processes in place and will in turn feed into reviews of current policy.

In terms of the GDA, there is no specific monitoring system in place. The RPG's have outlined a number of key indicators that can be used to measure the successful implementation of energy policy in the region throughout the lifetime of the plan. Key indicators relate to national

---

<sup>67</sup> Codema is the leading energy agency for Dublin. For over 10 years, we have been committed to improving the energy efficiency of Dublin homes and workplaces, while also creating sustainable solutions for the city's infrastructure. We act as energy adviser to the four Dublin local authorities and also work with the private sector in developing an energy-smart city. <http://www.codema.ie/index.html>

<sup>68</sup> See National Development Plan 2007-2013

energy figures, the adoption of energy and climate change strategies within Local Authorities and the county level coherence to DECLG publications and guidance on sustainable energy provisions.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders?**

At the regional and local level there are a key list of stakeholders involved in the development of the vision and also importantly in the elaboration and delivery of the objectives such as Government Departments (Transport, Energy, Housing), State Energy Companies, Local Authority planning departments, housing and building developers.

In terms of the key national energy policies, detailed levels of consultation has been carried out with Local and Regional Authorities, semi-state bodies, private bodies, NGO's, and citizens. For instance, the Government White Paper, *the Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020: Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland*, was informed by the outcome of the consultation process on the Government's Green Paper on Energy Policy. Over 100 submissions were received relating to all aspects of energy policy. *The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020* also undertook a consultation process with 42 submissions received from a wide variety of sources. A draft version of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan was subject to a period of public consultation and was made available through the Departments website, 58 submissions were received and all submissions were reviewed.

As outlined previously, under Section 24 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft versions of the RPGs vision and associated objectives must be shared with a prescribed list of bodies from a wide variety of sectors.

### **Efficiency – Horizontal and Vertical Coordination?**

The planning system has been re-oriented and elaborated recently with horizontal integration of sectors as a key objective. The linking of the funding through the NDP and the NSS spatial framework was to address this horizontal objective through a new partnership ethos. The capacity has been put in place and has not yet fully materialised. The linking of the NSS and NDP in 2007 was a major step in introducing multi-level governance allied to multi-scale spatial planning; however, it is hard to discern its impact on levels of horizontal integration among different sectors and stakeholders in light of the crisis management priorities that have come to the fore since the financial crisis of late 2008 and having regard to the natural time-lag to be expected with institutionalising the new process.

In terms of energy there are levels of horizontal coordination between the DECNR (responsible for the main national policies on energy efficiency and use of renewable sources) and a number of other government departments such as Environment, Transport, Housing and Agriculture.

The challenges are primarily dealt with by different sectorial competencies although the spatial framework as set out in the National Spatial Strategy now promotes a much more integrated and sustainable settlement structure and as such deals with energy issues, particularly in terms of decreased levels of private car based commuting, increased use of public transport and provision and increased development of renewable sources such as wind farms.

In terms of vertical integration, national policy and guidance relating to energy are embedded within the recommendations set out within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and subsequently informs and directs the City and County Development Plans of each of the Councils in the GDA.

### **Who has the main competence in dealing with the issues characterizing the challenge?**

The Regional and Local Authorities within the GDA cooperate with national energy policy and guidance as set by the main competence for dealing with the energy challenge in Ireland, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR). The main objectives of this department, in terms of energy, are developing a competitive energy supply industry, ensuring security and reliability of supply and developing conservation and end-use efficiency. National energy policy is developed through horizontal cooperation with a number of other key national Semi-State bodies and agencies such as the Electricity Supply Board (ESB); Bord Gais Eireann (The Irish Gas Board); Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI); Bord na Móna plc and EirGrid. Cooperation is also evident through other traditional sectors and policy has clear recommendations for the transport, agriculture, residential, the public sector and the general public. SEAI are really the leaders in this field and compile the energy statistics and act as the lead advisors to government on policy issues in renewable and sustainable energy.

### **Cooperation and Awareness of the topic in specialised and public debates?**

Awareness of the challenges of energy and the need for efficiencies and use of renewable sources is primarily driven by the SEAI. Energy

conferences and workshops are run throughout the year. In the last year the primary events held were the "Energy Show 2011", "Financing Retrofit: Public Sector: New Instruments for Delivering Energy Efficiency Targets" and "Ireland's Engagement with the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)". The Energy Show is Ireland's premier energy conference with attendance of almost 4,000 professionals. Seminars focussed on wind energy, bio-energy, electric vehicles, building energy management solutions, energy efficiency retrofits and SMEs and energy. SEAI also run a number of energy public energy campaigns such as the Power of One<sup>69</sup> and the Sustainable Energy Communities Programme<sup>70</sup>. The awareness of energy challenges in Ireland and the GDA is increasing with SEAI receiving over 800 calls a day for advice on energy efficiency in homes.

Irish energy policy is also widely debated and critically discussed in the media, through research bodies such as the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and in forum's such as Energy Ireland.

### **Policy Bundles**

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Energy in Ireland 1990 – 2009, (2010a)

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Energy Forecasts for Ireland to 2020, (2010b)

*The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland (2007) Government White Paper*

*National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2009)*

*The National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020*

The National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

National Development Plan 2007-2013

Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022

Local Authority City and County Development Plans

County & City Managers' Association, *Local Authority Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Measures: Best Practice and Current Initiatives*

Commission of European Communities, Regions 2020, The Climate Change Challenge for European Regions

Regional Challenges in the perspective of 2020, Regional Desparities and future challenges, Background paper on Energy, ISMERI Europa

---

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.seai.ie/Power\\_of\\_One/](http://www.seai.ie/Power_of_One/)

<sup>70</sup> A Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) is a community in which everyone works together to develop a sustainable-energy system. To do so, they aim as far as possible to be energy-efficient, to use renewable energy and to develop decentralised energy supplies. This integrated approach allows for a balance of demand and supply, which gives the community greater energy autonomy. [http://www.seai.ie/SEC/SEC\\_Programme/](http://www.seai.ie/SEC/SEC_Programme/)

## 2.12. Energy Threats and Opportunities

### Energy Threats

- Security of supply is crucial for the economy of Ireland and the GDA. Currently 90 per cent of Irish energy requirements are imported (EU average is 55 per cent). Along with the peripheral location of Ireland and small market scale, this current reality leaves Ireland vulnerable to supply disruption and imported price volatility. The fact that Ireland has not yet harnessed significant quantities of renewable resources will further exacerbate this future threat. This threat is equally pressing for the GDA as the rest of the country.
- Ireland's import dependency has grown considerably since the 1990s due to increased demand but also due to a decline in indigenous fossil fuel resources. In 2009 the production of indigenous gas decreased by 83 per cent from 1990 levels and indigenous peat by 59 per cent. This reduction in indigenous fossil fuel resources will in turn have future impacts on import dependency and pose a further threat to Ireland's energy security. Professor J Owen, CEO of SEAI, has recently commented on the scale of Ireland's energy security problems:

"Security of energy supply is emerging globally as a key concern. Nowhere is this issue more relevant than in Ireland where our reliance on oil accounts for over half of all energy consumption. Energy security is now a key strategic issue for Ireland"<sup>71</sup>

- The introduction of the proposed single European electricity market in 2014 may pose some difficulty for Ireland - if the Irish market requires radical change to conform with the new EU trading scheme it may involve substantial cost, estimated at €100m by the ESRI. There will also be a threat to the current Irish Single Electricity Market (SEM) – it is expected that this will be inconsistent with the new EU market and may have to be abandoned
- Demand for energy (electricity) in the East is estimated by EIRGRID to increase significantly by 2025 (80 per cent). To combat this threat there is a requirement for the appropriate reinforcement and expansion of the energy network. This is a critical part of securing the region's future and central to regional competitiveness.

---

<sup>71</sup> [http://www.seai.ie/News\\_Events/Press\\_Releases/2011/Energy\\_security\\_is\\_a\\_key\\_national\\_strategic\\_issue.html](http://www.seai.ie/News_Events/Press_Releases/2011/Energy_security_is_a_key_national_strategic_issue.html)

- The GDA has the highest demand for energy in Ireland but is not an area with the greatest renewable generation potential. The region will be primarily dependent on renewable energy generation in other regions, particularly the West.
- A potential threat has been highlighted as the continuation of a dispersed and unconsolidated pattern of population and housing growth. This will lead to increased levels of 'car-based' long-distance commuting (increased transport energy costs and energy demand) and have a negative impact on proposed increased usage of more energy efficient public transport.
- Existing energy infrastructure is at risk from climate change. Many of Ireland's power stations, oil refineries and storage facilities are located on the coast and therefore at risk of rising sea levels and storm surges. Critical infrastructure and below ground facilities are at increasing risk of flooding. Extreme floods will affect dam safety and operating procedures for hydro power stations. Demand for electricity may increase to power air conditioning during heat waves and to pump water for water supplies, waste water treatment and irrigation during droughts<sup>72</sup>.
- Local Authorities are not in a position to implement their own energy development plans as they don't have the financial resources to do so. Their remit within CDPs is to create suitable and favourable conditions for the development of new renewable technologies through recommendations and policies.
- The current fiscal situation in Ireland may have an impact on the delivery of outlined energy infrastructure requirements in the short term.
- A number of issues are also preventing the uptake and implementations of energy efficiency measures such as financial barriers including lack of access to capital and high cost of capital, and lack of information about the true costs and benefits of energy efficiency measures. These potential threats are being addressed by SEAI and Government awareness campaigns.

### **Energy Opportunities** <sup>73</sup>

- The delivery of the overall renewable energy Directive target (16 per cent by 2020) is a clear opportunity in reducing Ireland security supply issues. Clear and efficient government guidance and support

---

<sup>72</sup> Ireland at Risk – Critical Infrastructure: Adaptation for Climate Change

<sup>73</sup> Key energy opportunities have been highlighted by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) with particular reference to Ireland's Low Carbon Opportunity document

on energy efficiency and energy renewable policy will greatly assist in reaching these targets.

- Ireland (to a lesser extent the GDA) is relatively rich in wind, wave and tidal resources. Containing 13 per cent of EU coastal resource, Ireland has the potential to be a centre of activity in ocean energy development. As technology develops Ireland is in a unique position to exploit these indigenous energy sources and reduce dependency on imported fossil fuels. Depending on investment in electrical interconnection between Ireland and Western Europe, there may also be potential for Ireland to become a net exporter of clean energy. Significant employment opportunity also exists, a recent study suggest that meeting the 2020 renewable targets will create in excess of 10,000 jobs<sup>74</sup>.
- The development of clean energy in Ireland can lead to entrepreneurial opportunities for Irish business in future years
- At the GDA level all Local Authorities have now produced Wind Energy Strategies to highlight suitable locations within counties - this will provide an adequate evidence base to feed into the planning and development of wind farms.
- There are some potential opportunities for strengthening Ireland's energy security through proposed indigenous gas developments at the Corrib Gas field – this is likely to improve dependence on imported gas and make a positive contribution to imported energy dependency
- Significant opportunities arise in updating and enforcing mandatory regulations in relation to the building sector – thermal insulation of walls, floors etc; ventilation systems; boiler thermal efficiencies etc
- A large proportion of Irish homes were built prior to the introduction of building regulations. While this may be seen as an opportunity lost it also presents a significant opportunity in increasing energy efficiency by undertaking retrofitting programmes. The National Energy Retrofit Programme builds on existing energy saving programmes in both the domestic and non-domestic sectors. Through the involvement of a host of stakeholders the programme will focus on delivering energy savings, cost reductions and smaller carbon footprints for energy customers.
- The successful implementation of the National Spatial Strategy and settlement strategy outlined within the RPGs will promote a more consolidated and sustainable pattern of growth. This will reduce levels of long distance commuting and provide opportunities for increased energy efficiencies, reduced emissions and less demand on imported energy.

---

<sup>74</sup> Jobs and Investment in Irish Wind Energy, Irish Wind Energy Association, June 2009.

- In terms of transport, a major opportunity to reduce emissions is through behavioural shifts – this entails the user of smaller, more efficient cars and fewer car journeys. Relevant policy, such as the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP), aim to promote car sharing and provide incentives to increase use of public transport.
- GRID25 has been introduced with an objective to support enterprise development in regional locations. This is critical and aims to ensure that regional centres can support new energy intensive investment projects and thereby provides significant competitiveness opportunities.

## 2.13. Awareness and Effectiveness of the Macro Challenges – Globalisation

### **Local Articulation of the macro-challenge**

Ireland has benefited greatly from globalisation in recent decades and is now ranked as one of the most globalised economies in the world. According to the Ernst & Young Globalisation Index 2010<sup>75</sup>, Ireland is now the second most globalised economy in the world, moving up one place from the 2009 index. This globalisation index is based on openness to trade, capital movements, exchange of technology and ideas, labour movements and cultural integration. In January 2009 the European Commission Regions 2020 also produced a globalisation vulnerability index of regions in Europe up to 2020<sup>76</sup>. The index concluded that regions located in the North-West periphery of the EU appeared to be in a rather favourable position relative to other areas of Europe. Ireland was ranked amongst the most favourable with the Southern and Eastern NUTS II region (GDA) ranked as the 10<sup>th</sup> least vulnerable in Europe. Key advantages for these regions are expected to be as a result of high levels of educated workforce, high level of employment, high level of employment in advanced sectors and high levels of labour productivity. The Greater Dublin Area (GDA) is now a truly globalised region and its economic development is tied in with the experience of the evolving Irish economy over the last number of decades. Ireland has changed considerably since the 1980s from a relatively poor, peripheral nation on the edge of Europe. Ireland moved away from protectionist policy in the 1950s with an aim to take advantage of the changing and increasingly more mobile nature of business, and actively sought foreign direct

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.ey.com/IE/en/Newsroom/News-releases/Press-release-2011---Ireland-overtakes-Singapore-to-become-the-worlds-second-most-globalised-nation>

<sup>76</sup> Commission of European Communities, Regions 2020, Globalisation Challenges for European Regions [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/working/regions2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/regions2020/index_en.htm)

investment (FDI) in the economy. Initially, Ireland attracted US-owned, low skilled export oriented manufacturing plants with key advantages for locating, being a low cost and educated workforce, government subsidies and importantly access to the European market. The introduction of low corporation tax was a key incentive in attracting further investment, an initial rate of 10 per cent for manufacturing was introduced in 1981 to be increased to a 12.5 per cent rate in the mid-1990s for all corporate trading bodies. By the 1990s, Ireland embraced free-market and neoliberal principles and aggressively courted foreign direct investment (FDI), with the result that there was a rapid shift to high-skilled manufacturing, a phenomenal growth in the service sector, and the development of a domestic consumer society. This immediately gave Ireland and particularly the GDA, the economic core of the country, a competitive advantage over other European countries in attracting FDI.

From the early 1990s, the country entered a period of economic expansion where its GDP growth per annum was double or more that of its European neighbours, and its wealth levels, in terms of average income, rose to amongst the highest of any developed nation (in 2003 the OECD estimated that in terms of GDP per capita, based on Purchasing Power Parities, Ireland was ranked 4th in the world) (ESRI, 2005)<sup>77</sup>. This was accompanied by low interest rates, a large expansion of the workforce, a consistently low unemployment rate, and a sustained growth in population, fuelled by return migration, immigrants seeking work, and natural increase, that saw the population increase by 16.8% between 1996 and 2006<sup>78</sup>. Throughout this period the GDA played a key role and was the location for most of Irelands export sectors. To understand the success of the GDA during this period it is possible to measure regional Gross Value Added (GVA), the most appropriate economic performance indicator available at a regional level, with the national figure. Based on the Indices of GVA per Person as Basic Prices with the State representing 100, the GDA was 120.2 in 2000 and 125 in 2008. Equating this to the equivalent indices at the EU27 level shows the relative strength of the GDA in European terms with the 2000 figure at 157.4 and the 2008 figure increasing to 181.9 (CSO QNHS, 2011)<sup>79</sup>.

Whilst investment from FDI and related exports growth over the 1990s and 2000s continued, in more recent years the main driver of the economy was primarily linked to domestic growth with a particular

---

<sup>77</sup> Economic and Social Research Institute (2005) *Irish Economic Overview*.

<http://www.esri.ie/content.cfm?t=Irish%20Economy&mid=4>

<sup>78</sup> Drawn from A Haunted Landscape: Housing and Ghost Estates in Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, Kitchin, Gleeson, Keaveney and O'Callaghan [http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/research/working\\_papers.shtml](http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/research/working_papers.shtml)

<sup>79</sup> Central Statistics Office, Quarterly National Household Survey 2011

[http://www.cso.ie/qnhs/calendar\\_quarters\\_qnhs.htm](http://www.cso.ie/qnhs/calendar_quarters_qnhs.htm)

emphasis on an inflated property market and on a domestic consumer society. As the domestic economy grew, the international competitiveness of the country weakened as costs of doing business increased, reforms to improve competitiveness were delayed – particularly in relation to the non-traded sector where prices increased almost double that of EU averages for many years (Forfas, 2010)<sup>80</sup>. The value of Ireland's exports grew by just 2 per cent per annum over the period from 2002 to 2005 while global trade grew by an average of 6 per cent. Increasing levels of international competition for FDI led to a decline in Ireland's share of new investments and therefore presented Ireland and the GDA with a new set of challenges primarily in terms of international competitiveness. As the global crisis deepened, the Irish property bubble burst, and the vast overexposure of Irish banks to toxic property loans became apparent.

The effects of the global downturn and crash of the Irish property sector has had significant affect on the county and the GDA. The level of GDP in 2010 was some 11 per cent below and the level of GNP some 15 per cent below their respective levels of 2007 in real terms. Whilst the GDA remains relatively strong in terms of employment (on a national basis) it has certainly experienced a change in its economic structure. As of Q1, 2011 there were 744,400 people at work in the GDA, this represents 41.2 per cent of national employment. At the peak of the boom employment levels within the GDA were recorded at 884,100, the collapse in recent years representing an 18.7 per cent decrease in overall employment levels within the region from Q3 2007, this compares with a national decrease of 19 per cent. Within the GDA itself the decline in employment has been more severe in the Mid-East (Kildare, Wicklow and Meath) with employment decreasing by 21.7 per cent from the peak whereas the decrease within Dublin has been significantly lower at 12 per cent. The unemployment rate within the region now stands at 12.5 per cent compared to the national figure of 14.1 per cent (Q1, 2011). Both the national and regional rates are now considerably higher than other EU member states including project partners with the exception for Spain: EU27 9.5 per cent, Spain 20.3 per cent, Germany 6.5 per cent and Belgium 7.9 per cent<sup>81</sup>. At the peak of the boom the largest sectoral employers in the region were the public sector (22.5 per cent), financial and business services (20 per cent), wholesale and retailing (14.3 per cent) and construction (10.6 per cent). The economic crisis has had a greatest impact on the construction industry with levels of employment in

---

<sup>80</sup> Annual Competitiveness Report 2010 – Volume 1: Benchmarking Ireland's Performance  
<http://www.forfas.ie/publication/search.jsp?ft=/publications/2010/Title,6563,en.php>

<sup>81</sup> All data sourced from the Central Statistics Office – Quarterly National Household Survey  
[http://www.cso.ie/gnhs/calendar\\_quarters\\_gnhs.htm](http://www.cso.ie/gnhs/calendar_quarters_gnhs.htm) and National Accounts  
[http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/pr\\_natacc.htm](http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/pr_natacc.htm)

the region decreasing by 150 per cent over the two and half year period. It is now clear that domestic lead growth linked to the inflated property bubble and cheap credit was not a sustainable basis for economic growth and development in Ireland. Key economic advisory groups in Ireland<sup>82</sup> now highlight that the generation of export led growth is the viable strategy to secure long term growth and prosperity. This in turn means that the economy in Ireland and the GDA will be more dependent on its performance in the global economy, the key to ensuring success here is a restructuring and improvement in regional and national competitiveness.

Globalisation represents both a challenge and an opportunity for the GDA. In general, the GDA is better placed to take advantage of the globalised world than other regions in Ireland with specific advantages being critical mass (population, workforce), enterprise, communications and the education/skills base within the region. The internationally traded sector in the region is strong and represents approximately 14 per cent (121,700) of all employment in the region. The vast majority of this employment is linked to key enterprise agencies such as the Industrial Development Authority (IDA)<sup>83</sup> and Enterprise Ireland<sup>84</sup>. It has been estimated that 56 per cent of this employment was provided by foreign owned companies in 2008, the remaining coming from indigenous, export oriented companies (Forfas). The GDA currently has 424 FDI companies in the area, 54 per cent of all national FDI with names such as Citibank, Dell Direct, Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Facebook, AON and Wyeth Biopharma located in the region. 85 per cent of all GDA FDI companies are within the Dublin area with the remainder in the Mid-East region. The companies are involved in a wide range of sectors such as business services, chemicals, construction, financial services, ICT, medical technologies and pharmaceuticals. ICT services are by far the largest FDI sector in the region followed by financial services and the food and drink sectors. Ireland and the GDA is now also seen by many as the 'Internet Capital of Europe' with recent major investments by companies such as Facebook, EA Games, LinkedIn, Big Fish Games, Accenture and ZeniMax<sup>85</sup>. The internationally trading sector in the GDA has remained quite strong throughout the recession and the IDA have made 75 investment announcements relating to new investments or expansions of existing investments in the region since 2009<sup>86</sup>.

---

<sup>82</sup> Forfas <http://www.forfas.ie/> and the National Competitiveness Council <http://www.competitiveness.ie/>

<sup>83</sup> Industrial Development Authority <http://www.idaireland.com/>

<sup>84</sup> Enterprise Ireland <http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.idaireland.com/news-media/featured-news/delivering-on-digital-how/index.xml>

<sup>86</sup> Analysis based on data sourced through IDA website <http://www.idaireland.com/search-companies.xml>

Although the GDA, in particular the Dublin City region, is at an advantage nationally, there are a number of key areas that have been highlighted by the national enterprise and innovation advice agency, Forfás, as requiring intervention to address the short and long-term competitiveness of the region;

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** A key challenge in terms of FDI investment in Ireland is the protection of the current 12.5 per cent corporate tax rate – current discussion on the future of this rate may affect the timing of companies coming to Ireland. It is as yet unknown as to what impact a change in the corporate tax rate would have on current and future FDI in Ireland and the GDA. There is also a need for a diversification of the reach of FDI with an emphasis on BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). In tandem with this a new emphasis must also be placed on growing the indigenous industry base relative to the FDI/Export market.
- **Sustainable Transport – Access and Connectivity:** Public transport in the Dublin region is at an advantage nationally but requires investment to be comparable to other European and Worldwide city regions. Improvements in internal and external connectivity are also required to ensure ease of access to markets and customers and enable a broader international reach. Access to employment is also an issue with a high dependence currently on long distance car based commuting.
- **Infrastructure – Energy and Water:** Energy infrastructure requires improvement to maintain security of supply and provide the necessary conditions to allow growth of existing industry and attraction of new industries. The potential risk of insufficient water and waste water capacity has also been highlighted for enterprise and industries in the region. Investment and advances in infrastructure is therefore required.
- **Infrastructure – Broadband:** Relative to other European cities, Ireland and to a lesser extent the GDA has a sub-standard broadband and telecommunication infrastructure in place. Increased investment and research into the potential options for retro-fitting the city and key employment locations with fibre connections is required. An enhancement of residential connectivity is also required to provide the necessary conditions for increased levels of 'home-workers'.
- **Education, Skills and Innovation:** The region must maintain its current education quality and ensure that education requirements adapt and meet the necessary industry needs. An importance has

also been stressed on the need for more graduates with foreign language skills. Increased partnership between universities and industry is essential to encourage commercialisation of research and advancement of skill capabilities and the promotion of innovation within the region.

- Quality of Life: The region must be a good place to live and attractive to an international labour force, it must be culturally rich and have good access to key public services, green spaces and amenities that are available in other city-regions.

### **Is the region aware of the macro-challenge and how does it address it?**

At a national level the Government is fully aware of the challenges of globalisation and is attempting to address these through a series of national policy documents coming from the Department for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI)<sup>87</sup> and Forfás, Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation.

IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) were established as agencies of Forfás and have played a leading role in developing the economy in the past and continue to do so by developing strategies to tackle the current challenges. IDA Ireland has the responsibility for the promotion of inward investment into Ireland, Enterprise Ireland is responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets and SFI invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading edge technology and competitive enterprises. A number of key independent advisor groups are also in place such as the Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ASC), Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and the National Competitiveness Council (NCC). All of the above provide advice and recommendations to the DJEI and wider Government in its attempt at tackling the changing nature of global business and economy. The mission of the DJEI is to drive Ireland's competitiveness and productivity by creating the conditions where enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation can flourish and quality employment opportunities are grown and maintained.

The key national strategy to address the challenges of globalisation and the national economic situation is currently *Building Ireland's Smart*

---

<sup>87</sup> Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The mission of this department is to drive Ireland's competitiveness and productivity by creating the conditions where enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation can flourish and quality employment opportunities are grown and maintained.  
<http://www.djei.ie/>

*Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, 2008*<sup>88</sup>. This strategy sets out an ambitious set of actions to reorganise the economy with an aim of building a 'Smart Economy' with a thriving enterprise sector, high quality employment, secure energy supplies, an attractive environment and first class infrastructure.

At a regional level the GDA is aware of the challenges of globalisation and addresses them through the implementation of a series of policies and recommendations outlined with the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). These are aimed at ensuring that the GDA can compete on a global scale for international business and investment, enhancing the role of the GDA as the economic driver of the country, continuing to play a leading role as the focus for knowledge generation, dissemination and innovative activity and to also promote balanced economic development in the region. The overall economic strategy for the region draws from several key national policy documents as well as specific regional guidance relating to competitiveness and more local economic development strategies. The region has set out a series of 18 strategic recommendations to address the issues highlighted above<sup>89</sup>.

### **Forecasting ability?**

The main source of economic data is the Central Statistics Office who provide statistics on GNP, GDP and regional GVA. There are no forecasts available in relation to economic data<sup>90</sup>.

The ESRI provide a medium term review, a comprehensive analysis of the prospects for the Irish economy over a seven year time horizon and is produced every second year. The most recent release was published in 2008 and forecasts results to 2015. Results from this review feed into national and regional policy<sup>91</sup>.

The Department of Finance produce a series of medium term economic forecasts for GDP, GNP, employment and unemployment. These forecasts are central to the recent National Recovery Plan 2011-2014<sup>92</sup>.

Forfás has also produced a series of forecasting measures. This is not necessarily quantitative but provides a forecast of eleven key forces of change that will impact on Ireland up to 2025. The document focuses on: demographics; technology/innovation/entrepreneurship; education and

---

<sup>88</sup> Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, 2008. This document sets out an ambitious set of actions to reorganise the economy over the next five years and to secure the prosperity of current and future generations. It sets out a framework to address the current economic challenges and to build a 'Smart Economy' with a thriving enterprise sector, high-quality employment, secure energy supplies, an attractive environment, and first-class infrastructure. [http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications\\_2008/](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_2008/)

<sup>89</sup> See page 76 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>90</sup> [http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/pr\\_natacc.htm](http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/pr_natacc.htm)

<sup>91</sup> ESRI Medium Term Review 2008-2015

[http://www.esri.ie/news\\_events/latest\\_press\\_releases/medium-term\\_review\\_2008-2/index.xml](http://www.esri.ie/news_events/latest_press_releases/medium-term_review_2008-2/index.xml)

<sup>92</sup> Department of Finance <http://www.finance.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=-1&CatID=9&UserLang=EN&m=19>

skills; quality of life; globalisation; infrastructure; governance and regulation; energy supply and security; climate change; natural resources; and conflict. The document is called *Sharing Our Future: Ireland 2025*<sup>93</sup>.

Dublin City Council Office of International Relations and Research lead the Dublin City Regions participation in international projects and use a number of international indices and forecasting tools such as: 'Prices and Earnings' by UBS; 'European Competitiveness Index' by Huggins; 'European Cities Monitor' by Cushman & Wakefield; 'Worldwide Centres of Commerce' by MasterCard; 'Competitiveness Cities in the Global Economy' by OECD; 'Cost of Living Index' by Mercer; 'Global Financial Services Index'; 'European Regional Growth Index' by Jones Lang La Salle; 'Urban World: Mapping the economic power of cities' by McKinsey Global; 'LSE Cities'; 'Globalisation Index' by Ernst and Young; and the 'European Economic Attractiveness Index' by Bak-Basel.<sup>94</sup>

### ***What are the key documents that address the challenge?***

At a national level the main documents that address the various challenges of globalisation are:

- The National Recovery Plan 2011-2014<sup>95</sup>
- Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, 2008
- Sharing Our Future: Ireland 2025 – Strategic Policy Requirements for Enterprise Developments
- Annual Competitiveness Report 2010 – Volume 1: Benchmarking Ireland's Performance
- Annual Competitiveness Report 2010 – Volume 2: Ireland's Competitiveness Challenges<sup>96</sup>
- Making it happen: Growing Enterprise for Ireland 2010<sup>97</sup>
- Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness, 2009<sup>98</sup>
- Getting Fit Again: Short Term Priorities to Restore Competitiveness, 2009<sup>99</sup>
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2022 (NSS)
- National Development Plan 2007-2013 (NDP)

---

<sup>93</sup> Sharing Our Future: Ireland 2025 – Strategic Policy Requirements for Enterprise Developments <http://www.forfas.ie/publication/search.jsp?ft=/publications/2009/Title,4403,en.php>

<sup>94</sup> Dublin City Council Office of International Relations and Research <http://www.dublincity.ie/YOURCOUNCIL/ABOUTTHECOUNCIL/COUNCILDEPARTMENTS/Pages/OfficeofInternationalRelationsandResearch.aspx>

<sup>95</sup> The National Recovery Plan 2011-2014 <http://budget.gov.ie/RecoveryPlan.aspx>

<sup>96</sup> Annual Competitiveness Report 2010 – Volume 2: Ireland's Competitiveness Challenges <http://www.competitiveness.ie/publications/featuredpublications/title,7075,en.php>

<sup>97</sup> Making it happen: Growing Enterprise for Ireland 2010 <http://www.forfas.ie/publications/2010/title,6807,en.php>

<sup>98</sup> Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness, 2009 <http://www.forfas.ie/publications/2009/title,3951,en.php>

<sup>99</sup> Getting Fit Again: Short Term Priorities to Restore Competitiveness, 2009 <http://www.competitiveness.ie/publication/nccSearch.jsp?ft=/publications/2009/title,4252,en.php>

Within the GDA the challenge of addressing globalisation and competitiveness is primarily dealt with through recommendations set out within the Economic Development Strategy in the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). The regional policies are drawn from key national policies, listed above, and a series of region specific economic strategies and action plans:

- Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region, July 2009<sup>100</sup>
- Regional Competitiveness Agenda for the East, 2009<sup>101</sup>
- Developing an Enterprise Strategy for the Dublin Region, 2009<sup>102</sup>
- An employment and skills strategy for the Dublin Region, 2009<sup>103</sup>
- Mid East Regional Authority Economic Development Strategy

The development plans of Local Authorities also have economic development strategies to address many of the challenges of competitiveness and set out spatial plans for future economic investment that ensure appropriate location and development quality.

### ***In general terms, is there a coherent approach?***

In general, there would be a coherent approach to addressing the challenges of globalisation and competitiveness on a national basis and also within the GDA. All key documents attempt to address the national economic situation and highlight the need to improve competitiveness in order to perform better in the globalised economy. There is clear coherence between the key infrastructural investments outlined within Building Ireland's Smart Economy, the NDP and the NSS. The current fiscal situation in Ireland and the commitment of the Government to delivering the National Recovery Plan may however have an impact on the delivery of outlined infrastructure requirements in the short term. However, as previous ESPON research has suggested there are some tensions between the balanced development approach of NSS and the Competitive City approach outlined in *Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness* and the *Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region*. As that report suggests:

---

<sup>100</sup> Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region, July 2009  
[http://www.dublincity.ie/Press/PressReleases/PR2009/Press\\_Releases\\_July\\_2009/Pages/DublinEconomicDevelopmentActionPlan.aspx](http://www.dublincity.ie/Press/PressReleases/PR2009/Press_Releases_July_2009/Pages/DublinEconomicDevelopmentActionPlan.aspx)

<sup>101</sup> Regional Competitiveness Agenda for the East, 2009  
<http://www.forfas.ie/publications/2010/title.5369.en.php>

<sup>102</sup> Developing an Enterprise Strategy for the Dublin Region, 2009  
<http://www.dra.ie/dynamicdata/dublin-regional-enterprise-strategy.php>

<sup>103</sup> An employment and skills strategy for the Dublin Region, 2009  
<http://137.191.231.240/YourCouncil/LordMayorDublin/Pages/TowardsEmploymentSkillsStrategyforDublinPresentation.aspx>

Some interviewees suggested that there was a tension between the “balanced development” objectives of the NSS and the “competitive city” rationale of the Dublin region. Other respondents, however, did not see this issue as so significant, suggesting that there was a subtle difference between the two approaches and that the upcoming refresh of the NSS would aim to realign these priorities (ESPON CAEE, p.41)<sup>104</sup>.

### ***Vision of the policy bundle – is it updated?***

Key economic advisory groups in Ireland now highlight that the generation of export led growth is the viable strategy to secure long term growth and prosperity. This in turn means that the economy in Ireland and the GDA will be more dependent on export led growth and its performance in the global economy. A key to ensuring success is an improvement in regional and national competitiveness – addressing aspects such as costs, transport accessibility, education, skills and infrastructure. The policy bundles, mostly post 2008, are specifically developed to address the current challenges within the Irish economy and also provide clear recommendations for a return to competitiveness. The key national policy document, Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, has set out a specific vision: *“To build a Smart Economy that exhibits economic security, high quality employment, strong environmental and social performance and secure energy supplies and is in the strongest possible position to benefit from the recovery of the global economy”*. The overall vision of the policy bundles would therefore have been updated in relation with the way of interpreting the challenge<sup>105</sup>.

The economic vision of the GDA in term of globalisation and competitiveness is as follows: ‘Ensure that the GDA can continue to compete on a global stage – attracting to Ireland, several types of activity for which no alternative locations exist elsewhere on the island but only in the metropolitan regions of other countries’. The vision set out for the region has been updated since the previous regional guidelines with an emphasis now on supporting and maximising national economic growth and recovery<sup>106</sup>.

---

<sup>104</sup> The Case for Agglomeration Economies in Europe (CAEE) – Dublin Case Study, NIRSA. The Dublin case study report is one of the four city studies in the CAEE project. This project forms part of the ESPON 2013 programme and is a “targeted analysis based on user demand”.

<sup>105</sup> See page 39 Building Ireland’s Smart Economy: A framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, 2008.

<sup>106</sup> See page 40 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022 <http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

## **Is the vision knowledge based?**

There are a wide variety of national indicators that are used to develop policy to deal with the challenges of globalisation and competitiveness. Key statistics and policy analysis would be developed by advisory groups such as Forfás, the National Competitiveness Council and the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and policy would be based on national statistics and international benchmarking.

The National Competitiveness Council produces an Annual Competitiveness Report that benchmarks Ireland's competitiveness performance against 18 other economies and the OECD and EU average<sup>107</sup>. Benchmarking is available for 135 statistical indicators including education and skills, innovation, R&D, regulation, taxation, costs and a variety of other indicators that measure Ireland's success at competing in global markets.

Forfás produce the Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact (ABSEI), a survey of all manufacturing and internationally traded services firms in Ireland with 10 or more employees<sup>108</sup>.

At a regional level, Forfás also developed a comprehensive analysis of the competitiveness of the GDA identifying key regional assets, areas of enterprise potential and future challenges. Economic trends for the region have also been identified via the ESRI Medium Term Review, 2008-2015.

## **Has it been shared with stakeholders/citizens?**

Under Section 24 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft versions of the RPGs vision and associated objectives must be shared with a prescribed list of bodies from a wide variety of sectors. Prescribed bodies are welcome to make submissions and the final version of the vision/objectives encapsulates the broad consensus. The RPGs also go through a public consultation process with an initial 8 week consultation process followed by a 10 week public display of objectives at a later stage. This process is broadly similar for local CDPs. The economic and regional competitiveness objectives and vision as set out in the RPGs would therefore have been shared with stakeholders and citizens. The steering committee for the RPGs also contains a number of key national enterprise agencies such as the IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

---

<sup>107</sup> Annual Competitiveness Report 2010, Volume 1: Benchmarking Ireland's Performance  
<http://www.competitiveness.ie/publications/featuredpublications/title,6560,en.php>

<sup>108</sup> Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact 2009  
<http://www.forfas.ie/publications/2010/title,7019,en.php>

## **Articulation in Objectives – what measures are taken to tackle the macro-challenge?**

At the national level the Government has introduced a series of policies with objectives through *Building Ireland's Smart Economy* mainly aimed at<sup>109</sup>:

- Moving Ireland up the value chain by developing an exemplary research, innovation and commercialisation ecosystem thereby creating 'The Innovation Island';
- Building on Ireland's significant strengths in terms of the multinational presence and Ireland's stock of highly-skilled workers by incentivising greater investments in high-value research and development areas which will provide quality jobs;
- Investing in the green economy;
- Building on the Government's unprecedented investment in research and development with a plan to create a similarly R&D-intensive indigenous enterprise sector through the provision of considerable supports for start-up companies and the attraction of entrepreneurs from overseas to Ireland.

These objectives are to be delivered through a series of action areas such as: (1) securing the enterprise economy and promoting competitiveness; (2) building the 'Ideas' economy and establishing 'The Innovation Island'; (3) enhancing the environment and securing energy supplies; (4) investing in critical public infrastructure; and (5) efficient and effective public services and smart regulation.

Key objectives have also been outlined in various Forfás reports specifically aimed at addressing competitiveness challenges by supporting a stable macroeconomic environment, improving cost competitiveness (adjusting incomes and prices, reducing property prices, tackling non-traded services prices – professional services, energy, waste and local authority charges), increasing productivity (improving Ireland's skills base and delivery of training, promoting investment in R&D, incentivising capital and technology deepening, prioritising infrastructure investment – transport, water, energy, telecommunications).

The Industrial Development Authority (IDA Ireland) has also outlined a set of key actions for the period 2010 to 2014. The actions aim to put Ireland in the best possible competitive position to take advantage of worldwide trends that will reshape global business by 2020. Key actions are driving company transformation (technology uplift, skills uplift, R&D, energy

---

<sup>109</sup> See page 39 *Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal*, 2008.

efficiency), winning employment-intensive services FDI, winning new forms of FDI, driving regional economic development, attracting investors from new high growth markets, winning business from emerging companies, building brand Ireland abroad and online, embracing open innovation, strengthening Ireland's value proposition and encouraging closer and more sustained cooperation between all the key stakeholders in the Irish system.

At the regional level the RPGs have set out 18 strategic recommendations (ER1 to ER18) to address the challenges of globalisation/competitiveness and thereby create a suitable environment for the attraction of business and enterprise. The challenges outlined within the RPGs have been identified in conjunction with Forfás, Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation. An example of policy recommendations are as follows<sup>110</sup>;

- (ER1) Deliver the GDA as an attractive international destination for business, with the city region and identified strategic economic growth centres as focal points for regional and critical massing and employment growth
- (ER5) Develop the GDA as a regional leader in the 'Smart Economy' and the Dublin Gateway as a 'Smart City'
- (ER10) Work with employment and enterprise agencies to identify and deliver strategic employment sites for development at suitable identified locations as advocated in this strategy, such as Intellectual Enterprise Zones, SDZ's and IDA business supported sites and examine regional consistencies in land use zoning for enterprise. Current employment related land use objectives in Development Plans should be reviewed to take account of the RPG settlement strategy
- (ER11) Continue emphasis on enhancing sustainable transport connectivity through the region and the city, including the operational programme of works advocated under Transport 21
- (ER12) Continue emphasis on the development of broadband infrastructure and services in conjunction with DECNR and the private sector for the GDA
- (ER16) Seek proactively the delivery of new sustainable water supply, waste water treatment and waste management infrastructure without which the future development of the GDA will be impossible

---

<sup>110</sup> See page 76 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022  
<http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

At the local level all CDPs have produced economic development strategies that ensure sufficient services land is available to facilitate the growth of investment (inward and local economic development), facilitate a wide range of locations within counties for different types of business and technology parks, facilitate and support the work of County Development Boards and City and County Enterprise Boards and liaise with key enterprise and research agencies such as IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland to identify suitable opportunities for the promotion of R&D and innovation<sup>111</sup>.

The Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region aims to “position the Dublin City Region, the engine for Ireland’s economy, as a significant hub in the European knowledge economy through a network of thriving spatial and sectoral clusters providing a magnet for creative talent and investment”<sup>112</sup>. The action plan is based on three main drivers: 1) developing strong city leadership; 2) creating a vibrant place; and 3) nurturing, attracting and retaining creative people. The plan also sets out specific economic corridors and clustering sectors across the region with logistics, food production, manufacturing, biotechnology, Hi-Tech/ICT, digital media and creative industries outlined in a spatial framework.

### **Are the objectives content wise coherent?**

In general there would be a coherency with the policy objectives coming from the national and regional levels - the key focus being on improvements in cost competitiveness, infrastructure, innovation and skills. The Implementation of objectives is the responsibility of a wide number of different stakeholders and government departments, many dependent on central funding streams through the NDP.

### **Is there a budget for the measures?**

The regional authorities are not delivery bodies and therefore do not have any specific budget for the actuation of objections. Key agencies responsible for the delivery of objectives would be funded through central government and the NDP. As outlined earlier, the current fiscal situation in Ireland and the commitment of the Government to delivering the National Recovery Plan may however have an impact on the delivery of outlined infrastructure requirements in the short term.

---

<sup>111</sup> Analysis based on review of all CDPs within the Greater Dublin Areas

<sup>112</sup> Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region, July 2009

[http://www.dublincity.ie/Press/PressReleases/PR2009/Press\\_Releases\\_July\\_2009/Pages/DublinEconomicDevelopmentActionPlan.aspx](http://www.dublincity.ie/Press/PressReleases/PR2009/Press_Releases_July_2009/Pages/DublinEconomicDevelopmentActionPlan.aspx)

### **Is there a monitoring capacity to keep the targets and objectives updated?**

The National Competitiveness Council produces an Annual Competitiveness Report that benchmarks Ireland's competitiveness performance against 18 other economies and the OECD and EU average. Benchmarking is available for 135 statistical indicators including education and skills, innovation, R&D, regulation, taxation, costs and a variety of other indicators that measure Ireland's success at competing in global markets.

As part of a review process the RPGs have developed a list of potential indicators for monitoring the success of the economic development strategy. Work is currently underway to develop a specific tool to measure implementation of the policy recommendations.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders?**

At the regional and local level there are a key list of stakeholders involved in the development of the vision and also importantly in the elaboration and delivery of the objectives such as Government Departments, advisory groups, key state agencies, City and County Enterprise Boards, County Development Boards, National Training and Employment Authority, Universities and representative bodies mandated by the business community (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, IBEC).

### **Efficiency – Horizontal and Vertical Coordination?**

The planning system has been re-oriented and elaborated recently with horizontal integration of sectors as a key objective. The linking of the funding through the NDP and the NSS spatial framework was to address this horizontal objective through a new partnership ethos. The capacity has been put in place and has not yet fully materialised. The linking of the NSS and NDP in 2007 was a major step in introducing multi-level governance allied to multi-scale spatial planning; however, it is hard to discern its impact on levels of horizontal integration among different sectors and stakeholders in light of the crisis management priorities that have come to the fore since the financial crisis of late 2008 and having regard to the natural time-lag to be expected with institutionalising the new process.

Key strategies such as Building the Smart Economy and the IDA Horizons 2020<sup>113</sup> programme refer to the requirement for investment in line with the spatial framework set out in the NSS. National policy guidance from key advisors groups would also take a 'whole of enterprise' approach and provide recommendations for required investments and improvements in a wide range of sectors such as transport, education, energy and telecommunications.

In terms of vertical integration, national policy and guidance relating to improvements in competitiveness and the challenges of globalisation are embedded within the recommendations set out within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and subsequently informs and directs the City and County Development Plans of each of the Councils in the GDA.

### **Who has the main competence in dealing with the issues characterizing the challenge?**

The main competence in dealing with the issues characterizing the challenge is the Department for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. A number of bodies and agencies are also under the aegis of this Department: City and County Enterprise Boards, Competition Authority, Enterprise Ireland, Forfás, IDA Ireland, InterTrade Ireland (All-Island Trade & Business Development Body) and Science Foundation Ireland.

### **Cooperation and Awareness of the topic in specialised and public debates?**

The awareness of the topic is widely debated on a national and international forum. This is particularly done in relation to Ireland's competitiveness or in the context of Ireland's vulnerability as a strategic trading and distribution hub or bridge between the USA and the EU. The issue of Ireland's corporate tax rate and potential changes are also currently being debated by EU financial ministers.

### **Policy Bundles**

The National Recovery Plan 2011-2014

Building Ireland's Smart Economy: A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal, 2008

Forfás, Sharing Our Future: Ireland 2025 – Strategic Policy Requirements for Enterprise Developments

National Competitiveness Council, Annual Competitiveness Report 2010a – Volume 1: Benchmarking Ireland's Performance

---

<sup>113</sup> Industrial Development Authority – Horizons 2020 <http://www.idaireland.com/news-media/press-releases/tanaiste-launches-ida-ire/index.xml>

National Competitiveness Council, Annual Competitiveness Report 2010 – Volume 2: Ireland’s Competitiveness Challenges  
 Forfás, Making it happen: Growing Enterprise for Ireland, 2010  
 National Competitiveness Council, Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness, 2009  
 Forfás, Getting Fit Again: Short Term Priorities to Restore Competitiveness, 2009  
 National Spatial Strategy (NSS)  
 National Development Plan (NDP)  
 Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region, July 2009  
 Forfás, Regional Competitiveness Agenda for the East, 2009  
 Developing an Enterprise Strategy for the Dublin Region  
 An employment and skills strategy for the Dublin Region, 2009  
 Mid-East Regional Authority Economic Development Strategy  
 Economic Development Action Plan for the Dublin City Region, July 2009

## 2.14. Globalisation Threats and Opportunities<sup>114</sup>

### **Globalisation Threats**

- The economy of Ireland and the GDA is burdened by very high levels of private debt and increasing levels of public debt – this is major threat to the future economic recovery of the country and poses serious sustainability issues for the State’s finances.
- A key threat in terms of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a potential increase in the current 12.5 per cent corporate tax rate that is in place in Ireland. It is likely that any increase on this change could affect the current level of FDI in Ireland and GDA and pose future difficulties in attracting new investments.
- The growth of new global markets in developing regions may pose a threat to the competitiveness of both Ireland and the GDA in future years. The need for a diversification of the reach of FDI with an emphasis on BRIC counties has been highlighted.
- A potential threat also relates to the reliance of future export success based on a small number of sectors – the broadening of the export base has been highlighted as a key issue that needs to be addressed.

---

<sup>114</sup> Based on GDA RPGs and several FORFAS and National Competitive Council policy documents – see Policy Bundle for details.

- A potential threat is the development of a two speed economy where the export economy is growing and the domestic economy is stagnant. There is a need to improve the competitiveness of the domestic economy, this is essential to generate jobs and reduce unemployment. A key challenge is increasing the level of internationally traded indigenous firms and levels of export activity.
- Levels of unemployment, falling levels of labour force participation rates and increasing levels of out migration present a significant threat to the strength of the labour force and the potential for economic growth and overall competitiveness of Ireland and the GDA.
- Productivity levels in Ireland (excluding foreign owned companies) are well below the OECD average – this will pose threats to Ireland’s return to competitiveness in the future unless addressed. The lack of any specific part of Government being responsible for driving productivity and monitoring progress is seen as a further obstacle.
- The onset of climate change is a potential threat to national economic competitiveness. Action is required to developed early and appropriate actions to deal with mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Continued investment is required to improve physical, educational and research infrastructure to improve the current and future competitiveness of the Ireland and key investment locations such as the GDA. Current fiscal cutbacks pose a significant threat to the delivery of key infrastructures such as water, waste, energy, telecommunications, research and education.
  - Requirement for improvements in broadband performance across the GDA – focus on uptake, performance and availability is required with a particular emphasis on the delivery of fibre connections.
  - Requirement for improvements in regional power infrastructure. Developments are necessary to cater for forecast demand in the GDA. If no action is taken there will be no capacity to cater for new customers or new industry investment. A potential threat in terms of energy is also linked to Ireland’s dependence on imported fossil fuels and national energy security problems – this is now seen as a key strategic issue for Ireland.
  - Requirement for improvements in regional water and waste water infrastructure to support regional growth and allow for new industry developments – this is particularly the case in

- the GDA but also in other regional centres in Ireland such as Athlone, Galway, Letterkenny, Mallow and Wexford
  - Congestion and poor transport networks are considered a competitiveness weakness and require improvements -
- In terms of education and skills issues a number of key areas have been highlighted as potential threats to industry (indigenous and foreign) in Ireland reaching their potential. Industry in Ireland has highlighted the need for an up-skilling of labour force and graduates in key areas such as maths, science and technology<sup>115</sup>
  - there is a need for an improvement in the quality of the learning experience at primary and secondary level education: improvement in learning of maths and science, development of critical thinking, problem solving and independent learning skills
  - increase of STEM skills pipeline: graduates who are competent in ICT, engineering, maths, science, financial and multi-lingual skills
  - Improvement in mathematical proficiency – increased number taking higher level maths at Leaving Certificate. This will lead to more science, maths and technology graduates
  - Increased alignment of training and up-skilling programmes with identified business skill requirements
- A potential threat has been highlighted as the continuation of a dispersed and unconsolidated pattern of population and housing growth, this is particularly relevant to the GDA. This will lead to increased levels of 'car-based' long-distance commuting and transport congestion and lead to a further weakness of regions competitiveness in terms of transportation.

## **Globalisation Opportunities**

- Ireland and in particular the GDA has a long track record as a location for foreign direct investment (FDI). Ireland's stock of FDI is five times greater than the OECD average and the rate of return to US owned companies in Ireland is third in the EU-15. With 985 FDI companies from 33 countries already established in Ireland (125,432 employees) there are many opportunities for continued levels of FDI in the future<sup>116</sup>.

---

<sup>115</sup> The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Statement of Activity 2011 <http://www.skillsireland.ie/>

<sup>116</sup> IDA Ireland

- Membership of the EU, including access to an internal market of almost 500m people is a key enterprise opportunity for Ireland and is an important advantage in attractive FDI from non EU countries.
- Ireland's cost competitiveness has decreased in recent years. Decreasing the cost of doing business in Ireland relative to trading partners is a key aspect in improving competitiveness. Recent evidence suggests that decreased costs in Ireland are leading to increased levels of investment in labour intensive investment projects (both services and manufacturing) than levels of investment achieved in 2003. This suggests that continued adjustments and downward price adjustments may lead to further investment opportunities in the future.
- With the youngest population in Europe (35% under 25), the highest birth rate per 1000 population at 16.5% (EU27 10.7) and a far higher annual population growth rate per annum than elsewhere in Europe, Ireland and the GDA is in a unique position to take advantage of clear demographic and labour force advantages over the coming decades.
- Ireland and in particular the GDA have a young, educated and English speaking workforce at its disposal. With the highest levels of third level attainment in the country and a number of internationally renowned educational institutions and universities, the GDA is in a good position to build on its current international position as an attractive location for R&D investment and commercialisation of world class research.
- The National Competitiveness Council has highlighted the importance and opportunity of a move towards an adoption of a more 'entrepreneurial' approach to governance rather than the more traditional 'managerial' approach which is primarily focussed on the effective provision of services. The 'entrepreneurial' approach supports the partnership of different administrative institutions and a range of public and private stakeholders aimed at promoting economic development and improving competitiveness
- With a strong base of companies and research capabilities across a range of sectors and activities, Ireland and the GDA are well placed to take advantage of the increasing convergence of technologies. Development of skill sets in mathematics, science, engineering and electronics will provide Ireland and the GDA with clear opportunities in taking advantage of emerging trends.
- The successful implementation of the settlement strategy within the RPGs, a more consolidated and sustainable pattern of demographic and housing growth, will lead to a reduction in commuting and provide opportunities for increased energy efficiencies, reduced

emissions and less demand on imported energy. This will enhance the overall competitiveness of the region and attractiveness to international investment.

## 2.15. Awareness and Effectiveness of the Macro Challenges – Demographics

### **Local Articulation of the macro-challenge**

The demographic challenge within Europe is a major concern and it has been estimated that, without changes in demographic and migratory flows, one third of Europe will face considerable population decline in the region of 20 per cent by 2050. Population growth in Europe has slowed to less than 0.5 per cent per year since 2000. This compares to 1.88 per cent per year for Ireland (2002-2011). The recent DEMIFER project<sup>117</sup> classifies Europe into seven types of regions, the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and Ireland are classed as being within the most favourable grouping – ‘Young potential regions’. The classification indicates both a young age profile and high level of natural increase and high net migration. It is important to note that demographic patterns in Ireland have changed in very recent years with migration levels changing from net migration to increasing levels of emigration. However, Ireland is currently estimated to have the highest birth rate in Europe (Ireland 16.5 per 1000 populations, EU27 10.7 per 1000 population) suggesting that despite large number now leaving the State that population numbers are continuing to grow. This is evident through the provisional results from the 2011 Census outlining that the GDA has increased in population by 8.33 per cent since 2006 representing a population increase from 1,662,536 in 2006 to 1,801,040 in 2011<sup>118</sup>. The provisional results also detail that all counties in Ireland experienced positive natural increase<sup>119</sup> in the inter-censal period 2006-2011 with the highest rates of increase in GDA counties such as Fingal, South-Dublin, Kildare and Meath. In a follow on study to the DEMIFER report (Summary Report 1: DEMIFER, ESPON Ireland)<sup>120</sup>, ESPON Ireland outlined that the GDA can in fact be further broken down into a number of separate demographic classifications (based on 2006 data). Employing the methodology used in the DEMIFER project, ESPON Ireland has sub-divided the 34 Local Authorities in the Republic into six distinct demographic

---

<sup>117</sup> Demifer – Demography and Migratory Flows Affecting European Regions and Cities  
[http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu\\_Projects/Menu\\_AppliedResearch/demifer.html](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/demifer.html)

<sup>118</sup> Analysis undertaken using provisional results from the 2011 Census  
[http://www.cso.ie/census/2011\\_preliminaryreport.htm](http://www.cso.ie/census/2011_preliminaryreport.htm)

<sup>119</sup> Births and Deaths combined give the Natural Increase in the population

<sup>120</sup> ESPON Ireland, Summary Report 1: DEMIFER, 2010 <http://espon-ireland.ie/>

profiles. The seven Local Authorities within the GDA are within the following profiles in Table 1.

Table 1: ESPON Ireland Demographic Profiles

| <b>Profile Name</b>            | <b>Description</b>  | <b>GDA Local Authorities</b>        |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Standard Profile</b>        | closely resembles the profile of the State as a whole in terms of age structure and rate of natural increase  | Wicklow                             |
| <b>Urban Aging</b>             | Low rate of population change (1996-2006), negative net migration, higher than average share of population aged 65 plus   | Dublin City, Dun-Laoghaire-Rathdown |
| <b>Sub-urban Families</b>      | Very high level of natural increase counterbalanced by net out-migration  | South Dublin                        |
| <b>Peri-urban Rapid Growth</b> | Highest rates of population increase, very high rates of net migration to areas of new residential development. Expected that high rates of population increase will be sustained in future years, driven by natural increase | Meath, Fingal and Kildare           |

The DEMIFER project highlights the extent to which Ireland continues to be in a favourable position with respect to demographic developments. Ireland and the GDA will need to make provision for an ageing population in future years, but in the medium term Ireland remains at a comparative advantage to other regions and countries in Europe. Taking the DEMIFER report and ESPON Ireland demographic profile of the GDA into account the main demographic challenges within the region are varied and differ within individual Local Authorities.

At present the key demographic challenge for Ireland and the GDA is ensuring that increasing population and housing is directed in a consolidated manner and is aligned with guidance set out within the

national spatial planning framework, the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). The NSS sets out the future spatial strategy for Ireland and aims to deliver an internationally competitive, socially cohesive and environmentally sustainable settlement structure. A key focus of the NSS is to ensure that future population growth within the GDA is consolidated within the metropolitan area of the region and that growth in the hinterland is concentrated in strategically placed, strong and dynamic centres. This in turn aims to increase the use of public transport and reduce the growth of long distance commuting. In 2009 the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) released the *State of the Regions* report<sup>121</sup> which analysed development trends in Ireland. The report suggested that development patterns had not been following NSS guidelines and reiterated the need for increased development and demographic growth in areas such as Gateways, Hubs and key towns.

Population growth patterns throughout the Celtic Tiger property “boom” period did not always adhere to guidance set out within the NSS and over the last decade the GDA witnessed a large scale movement of young people and ‘first-time’ house buyers to Local Authorities such as Kildare and Meath and further into the commuter belt. This unconsolidated pattern of growth, counter to recommendations within the NSS, resulted in small hamlets and settlements outside the metropolitan area significantly increasing in terms of population growth. Over this period there was also a continued growth in rural one off dwellings, a 7.6 per cent increase in the period from 2002 to 2006. The main demographic challenge for the GDA is therefore to realign City and County Development Plans and future population growth in a much tighter manner with guidance from the NSS and regional targets as set out in the RPGs.

Following on from a decade of high levels of residential development and population growth - both natural increase and migration - the GDA now also faces a number of service specific related challenges to provide and improve the overall quality of life for its population. Local Authorities that have experienced large growth in new housing and subsequently have a younger population profile, require increased investment to ensure the delivery of education facilities, childcare facilities and other amenities (Fingal, Kildare and Meath). The de-population and ageing of some areas within the GDA (parts of Dublin City and DLR, small hinterland towns) is also having an impact on the financial viability of services within areas. Results from the 2006 Census also highlighted that the GDA has become a more ethnically diverse region with some electoral divisions recording immigrant population increases ranging from 20 per cent to 46 per cent.

---

<sup>121</sup> National Spatial Strategy State of the Regions Report, April 2009  
<http://www.mwra.ie/Publications/documents/StateofTheRegionsReportFinalPublishedversion5May2009.pdf>

The establishment of areas of high levels of ethnicity also presents potential challenges for the GDA in terms of service delivery, education and integration. The adoption of a life-course approach informed by demographic analysis and the awareness of future social and community infrastructure need and delivery is a key challenge that the GDA and Local Authorities need to address.

### **Is the region aware of the macro-challenge and how does it address it?**

The GDA is aware of the demographic challenges it faces and addresses these primarily through a series of policies and recommendations within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). Directing future population and housing growth in a consolidated manner, in line with guidance in the NSS, is primarily addressed through the Settlement Strategy within the RPGs. The strategy provides specific population targets for each Local Authority for 2016 and 2022 and then sets out the minimum proportion of growth that must be directed to the metropolitan part of the GDA. Individual occupancy rates are then applied to each Local Authority for the period to 2016, slightly lower than 2006 rates, and then a further decline for the period from 2016 to 2022. The proportion of housing growth expected in the metropolitan part of the GDA by 2016 varies within each Local Authority: Dublin City (100 per cent); Dun Laoghaire Rathdown (94 per cent); Fingal (85 per cent); South Dublin (99 per cent); Kildare (35 per cent); Meath (11 per cent) and Wicklow (42 per cent)<sup>122</sup>. The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced the requirement for an evidence-based "Core Strategy"<sup>123</sup> to be incorporated as part of all Development Plans. This change in legislation now provides for a clear demonstration of how development plans and housing strategies are consistent with the RPGs.

The challenge of the delivery of services and the development of sustainable communities for existing and new areas of demographic growth is also addressed through strategic recommendations within the RPGs under the 'Social Infrastructure and Sustainable Communities' theme<sup>124</sup>. At the Local Authority level, City and County Development Boards (CDBs) develop strategies to improve the coordination and delivery of public services within local communities. Importantly, the CDBs

---

<sup>122</sup> See page 85 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022  
<http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>123</sup> The Core Strategy of local authority development plans must outline the location, quantum, and phasing of future development, the detail of transport plans, retail development and policies for development in rural areas (in accordance with Ministerial guidelines). The key objective is to secure a strategic and phased approach to zoning which will facilitate efficient and coordinated infrastructure provision. Planning Authorities must vary development plans not later than one year after the making of the RPGs to provide for the inclusion of a Core Strategy within their existing development plans.

<sup>124</sup> See page 168 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022  
<http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

now allow the community and voluntary sector to participate in strategic planning for service delivery at local authority level. The DECLG and RPGs also support and guide increasing levels of cooperation between Local Authorities and service providers (Education, Health) at plan development stage.

### **Forecasting ability?**

The Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ireland official statistical agency, is responsible for the development of population forecasts. At a national level the CSO have released population forecasts for the period from 2011 to 2041. The forecasts are based on assumptions relating to future trends in fertility, mortality, migration and labour force participation. Two sets of assumptions were chosen for fertility, one for mortality and three for migration trends up to the year 2041. Forecasts are available for population classified by age and sex at five year intervals for the period 2011 to 2041. Forecasts at this level of detail are only available at national level and not produced at the regional or county level<sup>125</sup>.

The CSO also produce a series of regional population forecasts for the period from 2011 to 2026. The assumptions used in relation to regional fertility and mortality trends and international migration to and from each region are consistent with those used in the national forecasts (described above). In addition two internal migration scenarios are used, namely 'recent' and 'traditional'. Both of these scenarios take into account traditional internal migration flows and the then more recent migration flows. This is particularly relevant to the Dublin region which traditionally had a positive net in migration flow from other regions whereas recently this trend has reversed with the Dublin region experiencing net outward migration. Forecasts at the regional level (GDA) are available for population by broad age-band (0-14; 15-24; 25-44; 45-64; 65 plus) at 5 year intervals for the period 2011 to 2026<sup>126</sup>.

Within the GDA, the RPGs use a series of forecasts and population targets that have been developed by the DECLG based on time-series census data from the CSO and take into account more recent trends in natural population increase and levels of net migration. The DECLG forecasts also differ from those set out by the CSO (as above) as they take into account future development patterns that are influenced by NSS policy<sup>127</sup>. The most recent DECLG forecasts (2009) are set out for 3 specific dates and are in-line with the 6 yearly cycle for the review of RPGs: 2010; 2016; and 2022. The forecasts produced by the DECLG therefore act as the

---

<sup>125</sup> [http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/po\\_lab\\_project.htm](http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/po_lab_project.htm)

<sup>126</sup> [http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/reg\\_pop\\_projections.htm](http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/reg_pop_projections.htm)

<sup>127</sup> National Population Projections and Regional Population Targets 2010 to 2022, Jan 2009

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

critical milestones for the review process of the current RPGs and are incorporated into housing strategies and form the basis for infrastructure and facility planning for the short to medium term. It must be noted that these forecasts will be updated following the release of population results from the 2011 census.

Within the GDA, some Local Authorities also undertake pieces of research on population trends and projections for the development of policies aimed at improving future public services. Advanced work has been undertaken within Fingal County Council with population projections now available at electoral division level. This work is being used to formulate policy on future community and service provision. It is unclear if similar projections have been developed for other Local Authorities and is entirely dependent on expertise and staffing capacity.

### ***What are the key documents that address the challenge?***

The key documents that directly address the demographic challenges within the region are primarily the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs), City and County Development Plans (CDPs), City and County Development Board Strategies and a series of DEHLG Guidance documents:

- *Regional Planning Guidelines Review – Gateway and Hub Population Targets*<sup>128</sup>
- *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*<sup>129</sup>
- *Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines*<sup>130</sup>
- *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*<sup>131</sup>
- *Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria in Development Plans*<sup>132</sup>
- *Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System*<sup>133</sup>

### ***In general terms, is there a coherent approach?***

---

<sup>128</sup> Regional Planning Guidelines Review Gateway and Hub Population Targets, August 2009

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

<sup>129</sup> Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

<sup>130</sup> Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

<sup>131</sup> Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

<sup>132</sup> Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria in Development Plans

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

<sup>133</sup> Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System

<http://www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/PlanningGuidance/>

In terms of demographic growth and alignment with the consolidated strategy as set out in the NSS there is now a much more coherent approach. The introduction of “Core Strategies” seeks to address the issues of unconsolidated growth patterns but as they are currently being developed and reviewed for the first time it is unclear, thus far, as to the success of the implementation of the new strategies.

A potential contradiction has been raised between the settlement strategy and population targets outlined within the RPGs, focussing on new population growth in metropolitan areas and key towns, and guidance from Sustainable Rural Housing Developments Guidelines. This poses a problem for Local Authorities in the Mid-East where the Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines favours rural dwelling permissions to people ‘born and bred’ in the area and therefore provides no real grounds to refuse permissions on the basis of sustainable planning grounds such as transport, emissions, groundwater pollution or landscape impact. This makes it increasingly difficult to stem the tide of new one-off rural housing.

There is now also closer coherence between service providers and Local Authorities in the delivery of key community infrastructure (such as schools, healthcare) in areas of new demographic growth. DECLG guidance documents have now put in place a series of policy recommendations and directions to promote closer integration with service providers and Local Authorities at the development plan preparation phase. The National Development Plan has also put in place funding for the delivery of key community infrastructure throughout the lifetime of the plan. The current fiscal situation in Ireland and the commitment of the Government to delivering the National Recovery Plan may however have an impact on the delivery of outlined infrastructure requirements in the short term.

### ***Vision of the policy bundle – is it updated?***

The demographic vision for the GDA is essentially the demographic vision set out through the NSS and DECLG for the period from 2010 to 2022 and is broadly coherent with other national policies and strategies relating to transport, energy and climate change. The demographic vision of the current RPGs has been updated following the introduction of new guidelines from the DECLG regarding population and housing targets for the region for 2016 and 2022. The updated vision also takes account of the changing and challenging economic situation in Ireland and the GDA with an emphasis on a more consolidated spatial pattern of demographic growth thereby providing improvements in critical mass and cost

effectiveness in the delivery of prioritised and added value investments within constrained resources.

The vision is knowledge based in the sense that it is prepared using demographic projections produced by the DECLG for 2016 and 2022. It must also be noted that the DECLG may issue revisions to regional population projections which will require an update to future demographic and housing targets. The demographic vision of the 2004 RPGs was updated in 2007 following a similar revision process and it is expected that a similar revision will take place following the release of the 2011 census results.

The vision set out within Local Authority City and County Development Plans and City and County Development Board Strategies also takes into account evidence based research aimed at understanding the required level of future services within local areas. Much of this evidence is based on census population profiles, proposed population developments and the level of existing services within an area. The Department of Education and Science have also recently started using an evidence based approach in their decision making process to anticipate where new schools will be needed over the next number of years. This in turn shapes future policy direction.

### **Has it been shared with stakeholders/citizens?**

Under Section 24 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, draft versions of the RPGs vision and associated objectives must be shared with a prescribed list of bodies from a wide variety of sectors. Prescribed bodies are welcome to make submissions and the final version of the vision/objectives encapsulates the broad consensus. The objectives and demographic vision as set out in the RPGs would therefore have been shared with stakeholders (Local Authorities, sectors, service providers) and citizens. Future population and housing targets are agreed upon by the Regional Authorities and Local Authorities and adopted by the elected members.

Both regional and local plans allow public consultation at the pre draft and draft stage of the development plan. If major amendments are made after the draft has been on display, this may offer the opportunity for a third round of public consultation but only in relation to the changes that are being proposed. Throughout the public consultation any member of the public can make a submission.

## **Articulation in Objectives – what measures are taken to tackle the macro-challenge?**

The challenge of ensuring that future demographic growth and housing development takes place in a consolidated and sustainable manner is essentially addressed through the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), and implemented at the GDA level through the settlement strategy within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). The key new objective to ensure that the guidance outlined at regional level is adhered to at the Local Authority level is through the “Core Strategy” requirement. This new evidence based approach is the foundation element of development plans and will, for the first time, provide a direct measure whereby Local Authorities must demonstrate that proposed population levels and zoning requirements are consistent with the RPG population and housing targets set out in the settlement hierarchy. Local Authorities are now also required to provide clear plans for supplying key supporting infrastructure such as public transport, roads, water/sewage, schools and other facilities. Although the current strategies are being developed based on the DECLG population and housing projections there are however a number of aspects that are making this proposed population and housing growth unlikely in the lifetime of the plan. As housing growth and development is primarily market driven it is unlikely that targets are achievable as development has collapsed from the peak levels witnessed over the last decade, in particular 2007. The current targets set out within the RPGs have been based on ‘boom-time’ growth rates (taking into account recent trends in natural population increase and levels of net migration) and therefore targets are seen to be extremely optimistic and unlikely to be achieved in the lifetime of the plan. It is therefore likely that population and housing targets will be revised following the publication of the 2011 census. A key point to note is that following any population target revision the proportional split to the metropolitan area will continue to be a minimum requirement for each Local Authority and it is envisaged that future RPG reviews will include increases in metropolitan proportional splits for all Local Authorities within the GDA. This is seen as essential for the success of key transport and energy efficiency strategies and will remain a core principal of spatial planning in the region.

The requirement for upgrading key regional physical infrastructure is also seen as a potential problem in delivering proposed population and housing growth in alignment with the RPG strategy. Local Authority spatial strategies are predicated on the delivery of infrastructure, particularly water and waste water treatment. In some areas of the GDA, towns earmarked for substantial growth are hindered by this issue. This is particularly the case in non-metro Local Authorities where pressure is

greatest in delivering population to the metropolitan part of counties. Critical infrastructure is required to ensure that growth can take place in the appropriate locations, if this is not delivered, and the demand for housing is there, then growth may be diverted to hinterland areas counter to the recommendations within the RPGs. The RPGs have outlined strategic recommendations for the delivery of critical infrastructures across the GDA in an attempt at countering these issues.

In terms of the provision of community facilities the RPGs have outlined a number of strategic policies and recommendations to address the current challenges. The strategic policy SIP1<sup>134</sup> states that "Local Authorities work with the relevant state agencies in ensuring that an integrated approach is taken to both planning for communities who live within the GDA either in planning for growth, for change or regeneration in communities; that the needs of particular elements of society are identified and responded to and that the most vulnerable are valued as part of the community".

Specific recommendations are:

- Where significant new housing is proposed in an area or a community, an assessment of need regarding schools provision should take place; and local area plans (and/or Development Plans or Master Plans) should designate new school sites as accessible, pedestrian friendly locations
- Planning authorities should seek to work with health services with regard to provision for community based primary care centres and hospital care in key population centres, supporting their integration into new and existing communities

At a Local Authority level, CDPs also have a series of policies aimed at supporting and coordinating with key agencies such as the Department of Education and Skills (DoES)<sup>135</sup> for the zoning of suitable land for the provision of education sites to meet current and future needs. Education audits have also been produced for each Local Authority in an attempt to match school locations with changing populations in local areas. The *Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System* is a key guidance tool that sets out the principles regarding the interaction between the planning system and education. Considerable progress has been made in recent years yet there still remain some issues regarding the coordination of policies of both Local Authorities and DoES. While both are primarily concerned with the strategic planning and provision of optimally located sites for new schools, the DoES policy is also framed within the context of current investment programmes and evolving policy

---

<sup>134</sup> See page 178 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022

<http://www.rpg.ie/documents/RPGPrintA4-SinglePages.pdf>

<sup>135</sup> Department of Education and Skills [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

and practice in relation to patronage models for schools (Walsh, 2010)<sup>136</sup>. Local Authorities across the GDA have worked with DoES in identifying sites at development plan stage, however, there is currently little movement in the development of such.

Within Local Authorities, City and County Development Boards (CDBs) also prepare strategic action plans to aid the delivery of public services within existing and new communities. Action plans are very much focussed on themes running through the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016<sup>137</sup> such as children, new migrant communities, ageing populations, education etc. CDBs have a wide membership from Local Government, Local Development, State Agencies (Health, Education, Childcare, Enterprise etc) and Social Partners.

### **Are the objectives content wise coherent?**

It is too early to tell in terms of the "Core Strategies" as the Regional Authority is only in the process of reviewing them.

### **Is there a budget for the measures?**

The regional authorities (GDA) are not delivery bodies and therefore do not have any specific budget for the actuation of objections.

The current National Development Plan includes investment programmes for the delivery of community facilities such as schools, health infrastructure and primary community and continuing care facilities. It must be noted that since the NDP was published the national fiscal situation has deteriorated dramatically and it is envisaged that this will have an impact on both levels of both the timing and levels of funding for projects.

### **Is there a monitoring capacity to keep the targets and objectives updated?**

In terms of the GDA, there is no specific monitoring system in place. The RPGs have outlined a number of key indicators that can be used to measure the successful implementation of population and housing targets in the region throughout the lifetime of the plan such as: percentage of population living in metropolitan areas; average distance to health and education centres; housing completion data; population and employment

---

<sup>136</sup> Walsh, Cormac. Strategic Spatial Planning and the Provision of Schools: A Case Study of the Cross-Sectoral Policy Coordination in the Dublin City-Region, NIRSA Working Paper Series No 62 – October 2010

<sup>137</sup> <http://www.socialinclusion.ie/nationalactionplan2007.html>

densities; population growth in designated towns; mean travel time to work, school and college; Services Index<sup>138</sup>.

Key demographic statistics at the local level will be available through the 2011, 2016 and 2022 census and will be a key input to monitoring demographic and housing objectives.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders?**

At the regional and local level there are a key list of stakeholders involved in the development of the vision and also importantly in the elaboration and delivery of the objectives such as the Local Authorities, Government Departments (Transport, Housing, Energy, Education etc), City and County Development Boards.

### **Efficiency – Horizontal and Vertical Coordination?**

The planning system has been re-oriented and elaborated recently with horizontal integration of sectors as a key objective. The linking of the funding through the NDP and the NSS spatial framework was to address this horizontal objective through a new partnership ethos. The capacity has been put in place and has not yet fully materialised. The linking of the NSS and NDP in 2007 was a major step in introducing multi-level governance allied to multi-scale spatial planning. However, it is hard to discern its impact on levels of horizontal integration among different sectors and stakeholders in light of the crisis management priorities that have come to the fore since the financial crisis of late 2008 and having regard to the natural time-lag to be expected with institutionalising the new process. In recent years there has been improved horizontal coordination between Local Authorities and key Government Departments such as Department of Education and Skills, Health Service Executive, and Water Services within the DECLG.

In terms of vertical integration, national policy and guidance relating to sustainable population and housing growth and improvement of community facilities are embedded within the recommendations set out within the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) and subsequently informs and directs the City and County Development Plans of each of the Councils in the GDA.

---

<sup>138</sup> Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area – Appendix II

### **Who has the main competence in dealing with the issues characterizing the challenge?**

The Regional and Local Authorities within the GDA cooperate with national population and settlement policy and guidance as set by the main competence for dealing with the demographic challenge in Ireland, the Spatial Planning Unit within the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG). The provision of key community facilities is the responsibility of Government Departments such as the Department of Education and Science and the Health Service Executive.

### **Cooperation and Awareness of the topic in specialised and public debates?**

Traditionally, citizen participation in local government and the planning system has been through the electoral system, with councillors representing each local electoral area. Although this democratic system is in place, local communities have felt alienated from local government and decision-making. As a result of this, structures for participation in local government in Ireland have undergone change over recent years with the establishment of Strategic Policy Communities (SPCs) and County Development Boards (CDBs). This has led to the community and voluntary sector being invited as full partners to participate in strategic planning at local authority level. Local and Regional Development Partnerships (NGO's) are also now more involved in the planning system and decision making at the local level. Also, the planning legislation since 2000 has required Local Authorities to provide more opportunities for inclusion of communities and citizens at all stages in the plan-making and adoption process. This is particularly relevant in addressing demographic challenges at local community levels such as access to services and social inclusion.

### **Policy Bundles**

National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

National Development Plan 2007-2013

Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022

City and County Development Plans for the Greater Dublin Area

Regional Planning Guidelines Review – Gateway and Hub Population Targets

Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas

Sustainable Rural Housing Development Guidelines

Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities

Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria in Development Plans

Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System

## 2.16. Demography Threats and Opportunities

In contrast to many other European nations governance arrangements in Ireland remain highly centralised. The central state is primarily responsible for implementing economic and environmental policy and major infrastructural works. In terms of spatial planning, Local Authorities have some power, particularly in terms of land zoning. While decisions made at the local level in terms of planning permissions are meant to link up with the policies and targets of the National Spatial Strategy and National Development Plan, in reality this has not always been the case, as the current proliferation of unfinished estates and housing vacancy is testament to. This signals to the mis-match between national aspirations and the actuality of development as it happens on the ground; for example the drive towards concentrating settlement patterns in Gateways and Hubs was consistently undermined by excessive zoning and development at the level of smaller towns and villages. Apart from planning functions, however, Irish Local Authorities hold very little power, and decisions pertaining to strategic investments in infrastructure and economic developments lie with the central State.

Similarly, the regional level holds very little power and were initially established by the central State as a means of drawing down European Structural Funds. The primary function of the regional authority is the preparation of the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). Recent amendments to the planning system under the new Planning and Development Amendment Act 2010 have placed a stronger emphasis on the RPGs; in particular the "Core Strategy" element of development plans now requires Local Authorities to demonstrate clear and evidence based links with the RPGs. However, this has not been met by any increase in funding to the Regional Authorities, and it is as yet unclear exactly what changes this will make to the system of governance in operation around spatial planning. Thus, the Irish system is characterised by a peculiar mismatch between strategic goals and infrastructural provision being decided on at the national level, and a very localised and market led approach to development at the local level, which often stands in direct opposition to national policy goals. For example in the interviews respondents suggested that despite an evidence informed approach to population targets, zoning decisions by elected representatives (who hold ultimate power in this regard) often disregard this advice. There was a general perception amongst many planners that their ability to push an evidence-informed agenda was contingent upon their ability to make a political case for the implementation of policies that overflowed the administrative boundaries (for example functional territories approach)

that elected representatives presided over, something that is often difficult to achieve given current governance structures.

In addition, the setting up of the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) in April 2009. NAMA was set up to deal with 'toxic' property debt held by the banks. In total, €88bn worth of assets (loans worth €77bn and €9bn in rolled up interest) are to be transferred from five Irish banks (AIB, Anglo Irish Bank, Bank of Ireland, EBS and Irish Nationwide) to NAMA over the period of the business plan. In return, the banks receive government-backed bonds which they can use to borrow from the European Central Bank, the underlying logic being that by removing these 'impaired assets' from their books will allow them to inject liquidity into the Irish banking system, thus enabling economic recovery. In that NAMA now are in possession of a significant portion of development property and land, the agency will play a key role in the future of spatial development in Ireland. It is as yet unclear what NAMA will do in terms of disposing of its assets. As such, it provides both a threat and an opportunity for future demographic growth patterns, depending on how the agency evolves over the next number of years.

In general there are two over arching threats. Firstly, the possibility that current planning reforms have not gone far enough in addressing the unsustainable practices that led to the contemporary housing crisis, and that development (pending market recovery) will continue to happen in a dispersed rather than concentrated form. Secondly, that the finances required to undertake the strategic infrastructure needed to drive these settlement patterns will not be forthcoming given the current fiscal situation. Some components of these include:

### **Demographic Threats**

- Lack of key infrastructural investment in priority locations may lead to development and population growth in areas counter to guidance in RPGs and National Spatial Strategy. The current fiscal situation in Ireland may have an impact on the delivery of outlined infrastructure requirements in the short term.
- Another threat is the perceived shortfall in the coordination of strategic goals between Government Departments in terms of where to invest money in infrastructure.
- Limited fiscal autonomy of Local Authorities
- Continued growth of 'one-off' rural housing in parts of the GDA

- Increasing levels of ageing suburbs in some parts of the GDA (Dublin City and DLR). This will lead to drop off in services – schools, buses, shops etc
- Areas of recent population growth combined with the high birth rate in Ireland and the GDA will create additional need for the provision of adequate community facilities – schools, childcare etc.
- High level of housing vacancy and Unfinished Estates in parts of the GDA
- Increasing level of emigration forecast as a result of economic crisis and high level of unemployment
- NAMA will choose to dispose of their assets in a way that contradicts sustainable planning objectives

The converse of this is that the current situation offers a clear moment to rethink and reform the system. Interview respondents suggested that during the boom, because of the high level of planning applications received by Local Authorities and fast paced housing development, much of their work consisted of “fire-fighting” this influx rather than future planning. Therefore, many of them now see the current moment as offering the space to rethink and reformulate spatial planning objectives and targets to coincide with a more realistic and sustainable future vision for demographic growth in the region. This is particularly relevant to the demographic challenges outlined earlier. Respondents were keen to emphasise that the current moment requires evidence-informed spatial planning more than ever.

### **Demography Opportunities**

- Increased levels of vertical and horizontal integration through the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines and City and County Development Plans will lead to more consolidated and sustainable levels of demographic and housing growth.
- More consolidated and sustainable pattern of demographic and housing growth will lead to a reduction in commuting and provide opportunities for increased energy efficiencies, reduced emissions and less demand on imported energy.
- Slow down in housing development and drop in land prices can provide an opportunity to plan for and develop better community services
- Comparatively young age profile and high birth rate will lead to competitive advantages in terms of economic development and international competitiveness in the future

- There is a potential for land-banking (to be used for social housing, schools, strategic infrastructure etc) through the NAMA property portfolio, in order for the State to build up a stock of housing and land for future use.

### **Acknowledgements**

This text could not have been prepared without the generous collaboration of the following people, who we wish to thank for their interest:

- Colm McCoy, Regional Planning Guidelines Officer, Dublin Regional Authority
- Walter Foley, Regional Planning Guidelines Research, Dublin Regional Authority
- Jamie Cudden, Corporate Research Manager, Dublin City Council, Office of International Relations and Research
- Celine McHugh, Enterprise Policy Department, FORFAS, Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation.
- Professor John Sweeney, Director of ICARUS, Irish Climate Analysis and Research Unit
- Stephen Flood, ICARUS, Irish Climate Analysis and Research Unit
- Brendan Bartley, Ex Deputy Director, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland Maynooth
- Sorcha Walsh, Senior Planner, Wicklow County Council
- Rachel Kenny, Senior Planner, Fingal County Council
- Deirdre Scully, Senior Planner, Dublin City Council
- Dave Irvine, Senior Planner, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council
- Michael Kenny, Senior Planner, Kildare County Council
- Colin Ryan, Senior Planner, South Dublin County Council
- Cian O'Callaghan, Post Doctoral Fellow, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland Maynooth
- Cormac Walsh, Post Doctoral Fellow, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland Maynooth

## **Appendix 1: Prescribed List of Bodies**

- (a) the Minister,
- (b) the Board,
- (c) the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Development,
- (d) the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands,
- (e) the Minister for Defence,
- (f) the Minister for Education and Science,
- (g) the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources,
- (h) the Minister for Public Enterprise,
- (i) Aer Rianta,
- (j) Bord Fáilte Éireann,
- (k) the Central Fisheries Board and any Regional Fisheries Board whose area is within the region for which the guidelines are prepared,
- (l) An Chomhairle Ealaíon,
- (m) the Commissioners,
- (n) in any case where the Dublin Docklands Area is within the region for which the guidelines are prepared, to the Dublin Docklands Development Authority,
- (o) in any case where an area which is affected by the DTI Strategy is within the region for which the guidelines are prepared, the Dublin Transportation Office,
- (p) the Electricity Supply Board,
- (q) Forfás,
- (r) any health board whose area is within the region for which the guidelines are prepared,
- (s) the Heritage Council,
- (t) the National Authority for Occupational Safety and Health,
- (u) the National Roads Authority,
- (v) in any case where the functional area of the Shannon Free Airport Development Company Ltd. is within the region for which the guidelines are prepared, that Company,
- (w) An Taisce — the National Trust for Ireland,
- (x) any regional authority whose area is contiguous to the region for which the guidelines are prepared,
- (y) the regional assembly within whose region the region for which the guidelines are prepared is situated, and
- (z) any Local Authority, including town commissioners, in the region for which the guidelines are prepared.

[www.espon.eu](http://www.espon.eu)

The ESPON 2013 Programme is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Member States and the Partner States Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. It shall support policy development in relation to the aim of territorial cohesion and a harmonious development of the European territory.