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COUNTRY FICHE

# IRELAND [IE]

The only Territorial Delivery Mechanisms (TDMs) implemented in Ireland in 2014-20 were 20 SUD strategies implemented through dedicated OP Priority Axes, with relatively modest budgets.

| POPULATION | STATE TYPE |
|---|---|
| 4.72 million | Decentralised |

## NATIONAL ESIF BUDGET

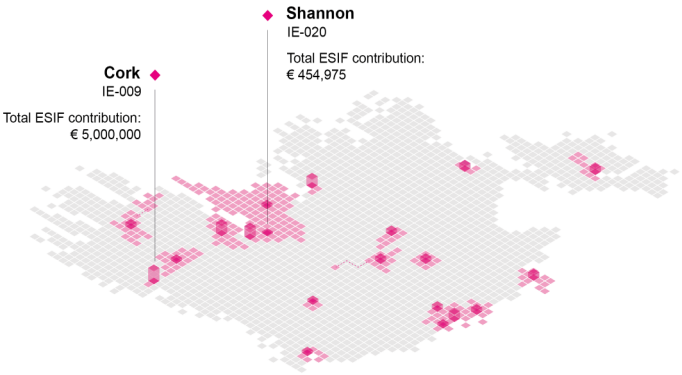
| | |
|---|---|
| EU Contribution (EUR) | € 4,385,185,880 |
| National Contribution (EUR) | € 2,832,957,810 |
| Total Contribution (EUR) | € 7,218,143,690 |

Note: including all ESIF - ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, YEI, EMFF
Source: Cohesion Open Data Platform (European Commission, n.d.)

| Territorial Delivery Mechanism type | No. | ESIF type | Share of ERDF /CF allocation | Share of decided allocations spent (end 2022) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| SUD (Art. 7) Operational Programme | 0 | - | - | - |
| SUD (Art. 7) Priority Axis | 20 | ERDF | 7.9% | 34% |
| Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI; SUD) | 0 | - | - | - |
| Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI; non-SUD) | 0 | - | - | - |
| Community-led Local Development (CLLD) | 0 | - | - | - |
| **TOTAL** | **20** | **-** | **7.9%** | **-** |

Source: allocations and spending based on Cohesion Open Data Platform (European Commission, n.d.), remaining items on STRAT-Board (JRC, n.d.).
Note: STRAT-Board data is self-reported by strategy holders. There may be inconsistencies between the data reported in STRAT-Board and other databases, such as the Cohesion Open Data Platform.

Figure 1: Geographical distribution of Territorial Delivery Mechanisms (TDMs)




**IE**

**Description**

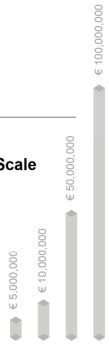
Geographical distribution of strategies per type of TDM, with an indication of the amounts of the respective ESIF contributions. For each type of TDM, strategies with the highest and the lowest amounts of funding are indicated.

Source: STRAT-Board (JRC, n.d.).
Note: There may be discrepancies between data from STRAT-Board and from other data bases.

**Legend**

= SUD (Art. 7) Priority Axis

**Scale**




## GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

Ireland is characterised by a unitary state structure with a central government overseeing the entire country. There is a devolved system, comprising local authorities and regional assemblies playing roles in various aspects of governance. The country's administrative divisions include: counties, cities, and towns each of them with their own level of autonomy. Ireland's territorial governance framework seeks to balance central control with regional and participation in decision-making processes. The country has 31 local authorities and 3 Regional Assemblies.

## COHESION POLICY CONTEXT

Both Irish ERDF programmes have a 100% commitment and project selection rate since mid-2017 for SUD projects. As for the recent national developments, the Irish National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-27 establishes a national Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (€2 billion) to drive the delivery of specific core NDP priorities thereunder. The Fund will support NDP growth enablers for the four regional growth centre cities (Galway, Limerick, Waterford and Cork) but also for cities such as Sligo, Athlone and Portlaoise and other regionally significant centres in Ireland.

## FEATURES OF THE TERRITORIAL DELIVERY MECHANISMS

### Sustainable Urban Development (Art. 7) Priority Axis

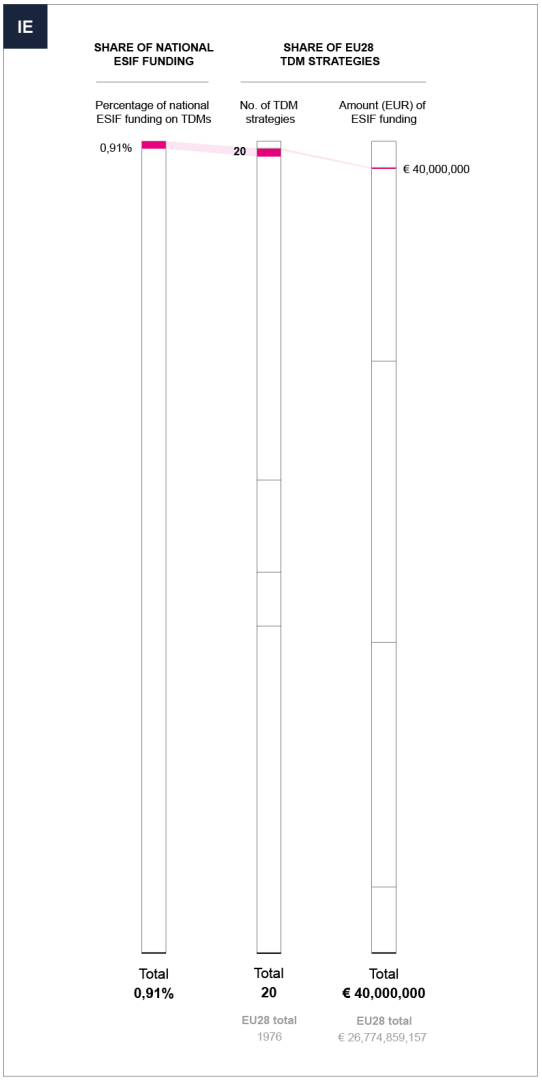
The Irish SUD strategies were executed through the Irish designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme 2014-20. The chosen urban areas a diversity of areas from the capital city, Dublin (1 million inhabitants), to smaller and medium-sized towns across Ireland. These eligible urban areas were identified based on the National Spatial Strategy, which outlined a network of key cities and towns across the country capable of acting as growth poles and distributing benefits throughout the wider region. Medium-sized urban hubs were to both bolster and benefit from the Gateways, linking to rural areas.

Both Irish ERDF OPs feature dedicated priority axes focusing on urban environment revitalisation and public transport, which shaped the focus of the SUD strategies. Interventions supported included activities such as urban regeneration, brownfield regeneration, community and cultural infrastructure development, air and noise pollution reduction, sustainable multi-modal public transport, or traffic information systems. The interventions concentrate on specific areas and projects within the selected urban areas, prioritising support to project implementation rather than overarching strategies due to the modest funding amounts and limited project numbers in each location, as compared to SUD PrAx strategies in other

countries. Project generation and selection were based on the needs of the local areas, with projects requiring to demonstrate strategic alignment with the integrated strategy for the relevant Gateway/ Hub. A Steering Committee assessed this alignment and made decisions regarding funding allocation.

In the latter stage of the programme delays were experienced due in large part to COVID-19, as access to buildings was an issue. Subsequently shortages of skilled contractors to complete work and some procurement/ supplies issues were also noted, resulting in late commitment of all funding in both of the Regional OPs. The strategies have been implemented through the Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme to increase the number of integrated urban regeneration initiatives, to improve the urban environment and revitalise urban areas. Many of the projects were impacted by COVID-related delays and rising costs, which caused problems in the finalisation of the programme. In particular local authorities had to undertake contract modifications and as a result had been asking for extensions of timetables and increases of funding.

Figure 2: Types of Territorial Delivery Mechanisms (TDMs) used, amount of strategies and the corresponding shares of ESIF* contributions




Source: STRAT-Board (JRC, n.d.). Notes: On the first vertical bar from the left, the percentage of all ESIF funding for that country allocated to TDM strategies is indicated with colour. The whole bar represents all ESIF funding for that country. On the second bar (middle), the number of each type of TDM strategy implemented in this country is indicated with the corresponding colour, with the whole bar representing all TDM strategies implemented across the EU28 (1976 strategies, as indicated in grey below the bar). On the bar on the right side, the amounts of ESIF funding for the TDM strategies are indicated with the corresponding colour. The whole bar represents the total allocation of ESIF for TDMs in the EU28. Please note that STRAT-Board data set is not always complete and correct. There may be discrepancies between it and other data bases.

## IN SUM

The Irish approach to SUD PrAx strategies entailed a high degree of integration with national policy objectives set out in the country's National Development Plan and National Spatial Strategy. However, the relatively modest funding led to focus on supporting project implementation rather than responding to place-specific development needs. The functional focus of the strategies was on the local scale, rather than on functional areas. The main takeaway from the 2014-20 period has been the opportunity to work more closely with local authorities and valorise networks and links that this collaboration has generated. This has been taken forward in the 2021-2027 period with the links between Cohesion policy investments and the country's Town Centre First Strategy. The experience of the 2014-20 period has also provided lessons in managing risk, and delays in capital projects.

### References

European Commission. (n.d.). Cohesion Open Data Platform. DG Regio. https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/

JRC. (n.d.). STRAT-Board. Joint Research Centre. https://urban.jrc.ec.europa.eu/strat-board/

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* In order to reflect the contribution of various funds to TDMs, this graph includes all ESIF funds (ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD, EMFF).