

REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (Irish Branch)

E-NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1, April 2007

Welcome to the first edition of the Regional Studies Association (RSA) e-newsletter. The newsletter is a new development for the Irish Branch of the Association. Initially, it will be published three times a year – though with your support and input, we hope to make this four times a year in the future. We hope that it will serve as a way to highlight conferences, events, publications and other developments in the broad regional policy area. Contact details are included below.

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1. About the Association

The Regional Studies Association is a learned society interested in regional development, policy and research. The Association carries out a range of activities including:

- publishing a journal, newsletter and books;
- organising conferences and other meetings; and
- establishing and maintaining a branch and international section network.

It has an international membership of individuals, corporate organisations and students. The Irish Branch was formed to provide a forum to discuss regional issues in Ireland.

2. RSA News

NEW WEBSITE

The Irish Branch of the RSA has recently established its own website at www.regionalstudies.ie. Suggestions on the site's continued development are welcomed – as is relevant text!

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE-BASED SPATIAL PLANNING AND ANALYSIS

The first of two workshops took place on 15th February 2007 in the National University of Ireland Maynooth and was attended by just under 30 people representing academia, policy-makers, local, regional and central government, and special interest groups. Organised by the RSA in association with the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), NUI Maynooth and the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), the purpose of this initial event was to allow for an informal exchange of views on the need for all-island datasets, the type of datasets needed and the challenges to be overcome in developing such datasets. The programme included a short presentation session and three thematic discussion sessions. Des McCafferty of Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and former Chair of the RSA (Irish Branch), chaired all sessions. A summary of the proceedings will soon be available on the Regional Studies website – www.regionalstudies.ie. In the meantime, the PowerPoint presentations can be accessed on the ICLR D web-site at www.iclrd.org.

The second workshop will take place in late May 2007 in Belfast. The findings and recommendations of both workshops will then lead to a major conference in September 2007 (date and venue to be confirmed).

For further details contact: Dr. Chris Van Egeraat at chris.vanegeraat@nuim.ie

3. Joint Irish-Scottish Conference on Regional Issues

CONFERENCE TITLE: DEMOGRAPHY AND ECONOMIC CHANGE: THE CASES OF IRELAND AND SCOTLAND

Date: 19-20 September 2007

Venue: Glasgow (exact venue to be confirmed)

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This joint conference of the Scottish/Irish RSA Branches will explore the multifaceted themes associated with demography and economic change within the context of two small European nations: Scotland and Ireland. Whilst the precise linkages between population change and economic growth are contentious issues for demographers, economists and economic geographers alike, many observers agree that population plays a key role in long-run economic growth. This conference will develop these issues in the context of the two nations.

Those interested in presenting a paper at this conference should contact any of the following: Dr. Edgar Morgenroth, Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI) at edgar.morgenroth@esri.ie, Des McCafferty, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick at Des.McCafferty@mic.ul.ie, Dr Ross Brown, Scottish Enterprise at ross.brown@scotent.co.uk or David Newlands, University of Aberdeen at d.newlands@abdn.ac.uk

Further details of the conference will be circulate in our next newsletter

4. Other Upcoming Events

- **PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS/PAPERS**

ESRI SEMINAR

The ESRI seminars are an opportunity for research staff to present work in progress. They are aimed at other researchers and those with a particular interest in the research topic. As presentations of work in progress, they do not report final conclusions and are not for quotation. No booking required to attend.

Paper title: “Who is paying for regional balance in Ireland? The construction and analysis of regional government accounts”.

Presenter: Dr. Edgar Morgenroth

Date: 26 April 2007

Venue: ESRI, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson’s Quay, Dublin 2 (4p.m.)

There has been an ongoing debate on the nature, degree and trends of regional imbalances in Ireland which has led to substantial research output. While much is now known about these trends, the degree to which they are ameliorated by existing public policies has not been systematically examined. This paper considers two aspects of public policy; namely the fiscal system and public expenditure. In particular, regional government accounts are constructed which identify the level of taxation, subsidisation and public expenditure at the regional level. These are then used to identify the degree of regional redistribution.

For further details contact: Dr. Edgar Morgenroth at 01-863 2000 or email: edgar.morgenroth@esri.ie

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SIX COUNTRIES INNOVATION POLICY NETWORK WORKSHOP

Forfás, as a member of the Six Countries Innovation Policy Network and a partner in the RegStrat project, is organising the 6CP Spring Workshop in Ireland.

Workshop title: “From Innovation Policy Research to Local Policy Implementation: Strategic Policy Intelligence Guiding Concrete Innovation Support Measures”.

Date: 19 – 20 April 2007

Venue: RDS Members Club, Dublin

The workshop will focus on how strategic policy intelligence (tools) can, in a regional context, guide concrete innovation support measures. In what way and to what extent can ongoing innovation policy instruments absorb and implement policy intelligence? This workshop aims to bring together policy research experts and those responsible for policy implementation and to link strategic policy intelligence theory with practical research opportunities.

For further details contact: Dr. Ronnie O’Toole, Forfás at ronnie.otoole@forfas.ie

Alternatively, log on to the following link for details on workshop programme, registration and logistical details

<http://enews.nieuwskiosk.nl/template/190/bDQgvgObIezDQVCOenpNIA==.htm>

• UPCOMING CONFERENCES

THINKING SPACES FOR MAKING PLACES

Date: 10 – 12 April 2007

Venue: School of the Built Environment, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

The 2007 annual Planning Research Conference will explore the ways that planning research can inform place-making at varying scales and in varying contexts, foster evidence-based practice, and encourage innovation and creativity. Issues and topics in the spatial planning field to be covered include:

- urban design
- growth management
- urban and rural regeneration
- governance and reform.

A session focusing on trans-European research and its implications, via the activities of the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON), is being planned with the support of the UK’s Department of Communities and Local Government. **For further details contact:** Conference Secretary at prc2007@sbe.hw.ac.uk

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GISRUK 2007: GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SCIENCE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Date: 11 – 13 April 2007

Venue: NUI Maynooth

GISRUK 2007 is being hosted by the National Centre for Geocomputation in association with the Department of Computer Science, the Department of Geography and the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, all based in the national University of Ireland, Maynooth. The conference will consist of pre-conference workshops (on 10th April), plenary sessions and parallel sessions. Themes to be covered over the course of the event include:

- data capture (satellite imagery, Galileo, GPS, etc)
- scale issues
- displaying spatial data
- applications of GIS in other disciplines, etc.

For further details contact: Dr. Adam Winstanley, Conference Chair, at nirsa@nuim.ie

INNOVATING REGIONS IN EUROPE

Date: 24 – 25 May 2007

Venue: Ennis, Co. Clare

The fifth ‘Innovating Regions in Europe’ (IRE) Plenary Conference will bring together regional policy makers and innovation practitioners from over 200 IRE Member Regions throughout Europe. The IRE Network, which was created by the European Commission in the mid-1990s, aims to strengthen the global competitiveness of European regions by promoting innovation policies, and providing a unique platform for regions to cooperate and learn from each other.

Co-hosted by the European Commission and Shannon Development, this Conference will feature presentations by the European Commission on its innovation policies, and other topics will include:

- Innovation policy governance and cross-border policy cooperation
- Development on research-based clusters and growth poles
- Powering innovation policies with the help of Structural Funds
- Impact assessment of regional innovation policies
- Innovation in the service sector
- Innovative approaches for traditional sectors

Further Conference details are available at www.innovating-regions.org

REPRODUCING CITY REGIONS: RETHINKING URBANISM IN AN ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINT

Date: 19 – 20 July 2007

Venue: The Centre for Sustainable Urban and Regional Futures, University of Salford

Contemporary city-regions are the predominant sites of resource consumption and the production of wastes. Yet, to date, debates about the economy and governance of the city

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have largely been separate from debates about the ecology and technology of the city. This event aims to critically and reflexively examine how ecological constraints may reshape our own conceptual understanding of the city and what this understanding might mean for the practices and priorities of urban studies and the future development of the city-region. Places are being limited to 25 people to ensure interaction and debate. **For further details contact:** Simon Marvin at s.marvin@salford.ac.uk

• FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

In January 2007, the European Commission published three different calls for proposals under the new *Regions of Knowledge Initiative 2007-2013* (a sub-programme of the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development). This initiative aims to strengthen the research potential of European regions by encouraging and supporting the development of ‘research-driven clusters’ involving universities, research centres, enterprises and local and regional authorities. The three calls cover:

- analysis, mentoring and integration of research actors
- facilitating the emergence of new clusters and mutual information
- transnational cooperation.

Deadline for applications is 24 April 2007.

For further details see: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/capacities/regions-knowledge_en.html

If you have a submission or suggestion on any upcoming events, seminars, presentations or conferences and would like them to be included in a future edition, please email newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

5. Publications of Interest

• BOOKS (incl. CHAPTERS)

Title: Perspectives on Irish Productivity

Editor(s): Ciaran Aylward and Ronnie O’Toole

Date Published: March 2007

Publisher details: Forfas, Dublin

Chapter details:

Ch. 2: “Trends in Regional Activity in Ireland: The Role of Productivity” by Edgar Morgenroth, *Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin*.

Ch. 3: “Perspectives on Northern Ireland’s Productivity Performance” by Jose Luis Iparrauirre D’Elia, *Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland*.

Ch. 15: “Regional Policy and Agglomeration Economies in Ireland” by Eoin O’Leary, *University College Cork*.

Ch 16: “The Role for Clusters in Irish Economic Development Policy” by Eleanor Doyle and Connell Fanning, *University College Cork*.

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The book *Perspectives on Irish Productivity* is made up of short, accessible essays by some of the leading economic and management thinkers, in Ireland and overseas, on various aspects of Ireland's productivity challenge. The book contains 25 contributions, each focusing on a specific aspect of productivity. Each individual paper is categorised into one of six themed sections, with an introduction to each of these sections providing a brief summary of the major lessons of the papers. Further details from:

http://www.forfas.ie/publications/forfas070321_productivity_book/index.html

Title: Understanding Contemporary Ireland

Editor(s): Brendan Bartley & Rob Kitchin

Date Published: January 2007

Publisher details: Pluto Press, London

Published in January 2007, this book provides a detailed overview of Ireland in the twenty-first century and the remarkable economic and social transformations that have occurred since the late 1980s. Until now, there has been no one single book that provides a comprehensive, spatially-informed analysis of the Irish experience. The book is divided into four parts: planning & development, the economy, the political landscape, and population and social issues. Further details from: www.plutobooks.com

• WORKING PAPERS/DOCUMENTS

Title: Economic Integration and Structural Change: The Case of Irish Regions. ESRI Working Paper No. 176

Author(s): Edgar Morgenroth, *Economic and Social Research Institute*

Date Published: November 2006

Since the early 1990s, Ireland has experienced rapid economic growth. This paper considers the degree to which this national upturn in economic fortunes has been mirrored at the regional level. In particular, the paper focuses on the evolution of regional specialisation and how this relates to regional economic performance. A copy of this working document can be downloaded at: <http://www.esri.ie/UserFiles/publications/20070118142142/WP176.pdf>

Title: Innovative strategies & actions: Results from 15 Years of Regional Experimentation

Author(s): European Commission (Directorate-General, Regional Policy)

Date Published: October 2006

This document shares the results of 15 years of experimentation in and between Member States in the field of regional development. Produced by the European Commission, it is hoped that this document, and the supporting examples of good practice on its website (see http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm), will support regions as they design and implement the new Regional Policy Programmes 2007-2013. It is anticipated that the methods presented in this document will contribute to the stimulation of Regional Policy actions in the area of innovation. The ultimate objective is to ensure that Regional Policy programmes continue to support the process of innovation in regions, and that resulting projects will contribute to the achievement of the objectives set down by the European Union in its strategy for jobs and growth. A copy of this working document can be downloaded at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/2007/innovation/guide_innovation_en.pdf

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If you wish to have a recently published book/paper listed in this section of future newsletters, please e-mail details formatted as above to newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

6. An Introduction to the Border Regional Authority

In each addition of the e-newsletter we plan to briefly profile a body working in the area of regional policy in Ireland.

Established in January 1994, the Border Regional Authority is one of eight regional authorities set up under the *Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Authorities) (Establishment) Order, 1993*. Their key functions are:

1. Preparing Regional Planning Guidelines, & Regional Economic and Social Strategies;
2. Reviewing as appropriate the development plans of the local authorities in the region and, where relevant, the development plans of local authorities adjoining the region, to consider the consistency of plans with one another and with the overall development needs of the region;
3. Promoting coordination of public services and, when relevant, consideration by public authorities of the implications for, or the effect of, their decisions, activities or services on the region.

The region is some 12,156sq.km with a population of 468,375. The Border Regional Authority, which covers the 6 counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth, has its headquarters in Cavan town.

MEMBERSHIP: Membership of the Border Regional Authority comprises elected representatives from each of the counties within its remit, as well as one member from the Committee of the Regions. Members have been nominated by the constituent local authorities from among their own elected members. There are currently 38 members on the Border Regional Authority.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT ISSUES: The Border Region is characterised by its peripherality and poor infrastructure links. This has challenged the socio-economic and physical development of the area. Key issues facing the Region at present include:

- Accommodating projected population growth;
- Securing new employment / replacing jobs lost through sectoral adjustments;
- Facilitating government decentralisation to the Region; and
- Promoting rural diversification.

The loss of Objective 1 funding status creates further challenges, particularly in the field of infrastructure development. Overcoming these challenges calls for greater cross-border collaboration (rather than the traditional back-to-back governance which has characterised the Region) and the development of greater academic / industrial links. It is anticipated that the establishment of the Assembly in Northern Ireland and the joint funding package announced by the Irish and British Governments, coupled with the INTERREG IV and PEACE III programmes, will create major benefits for the Border Region.

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REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES (RPGs): Under Chapter III of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, Regional Authorities were empowered to prepare a set of strategic policy guidelines i.e. Regional Planning Guidelines covering a 12-20 year period. The RPGs, which in the case of the Border Regional Authority were prepared and adopted in 2004, relate to the role of the Region in delivering the *National Spatial Strategy (NSS), 2002-2020* through the promotion of integrated and coherent development.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE REGION: A critical priority for the Border Region in the future is to improve North-South Connections. The RPGs represent an important spatial framework for the constituent Local Authorities, Government Departments and their agencies, as well as the private sector, to co-ordinate and pool their investments to gain greater synergies for the Region. Priority areas of investment, as identified in the RPGs, are telecommunications, roads infrastructure, tourism, priority development of the Gateways and Hubs, education, and energy supply & infrastructure. The *National Development Plan (NDP) 2007 – 2013*, with its emphasis on the NSS and RPGs, will be instrumental in delivering more balanced regional development. The Border Regional Authority will have a role in the monitoring of the NDP to ensure that the targets set for the development of the Region are achieved.

Further Details on the Authority and its work can be accessed via their website: www.border.ie. Alternatively, the Authority can be contacted at 049-436 2600 or by email at: borderregion@eircom.net

7. Regional Policy: What's New?

50th ANNIVERSARY OF TREATY OF ROME

A website has been established by the various European institutions to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome. The website includes information on the events being hosted to mark this occasion, general information on EU achievements, and information on the various institutions. Further details can be downloaded at: http://europa.eu/50/index_en.htm

COHESION POLICY 2007-2013

Europe's Cohesion Policy and its instruments will constitute one-third of the EU budget between 2007-2013 (i.e. €350billion). Its overall aim will be to promote growth-enhancing conditions for the Union's economy by focusing on the three objectives of convergence, competitiveness and cooperation. According to the Community strategic Guidelines on Cohesion Policy, and in line with the renewed Lisbon Strategy, programmes co-financed through the Cohesion Fund should seek to target resources on the following priorities:

- improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving their environmental potential;
- encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, incl. new information and communication technologies;
- creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises, and increasing investment in human capital.

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While priority will be given to less developed Member states and regions, Ireland will receive monies under the objective of competitiveness. Monies will be allocated under two headings: 'phasing-in' which will apply to the BMW Region and 'competitiveness' which will apply to the S&E Region. Details of the resources allocated to each Member state can be downloaded at http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/deci_en.htm

REGIONAL THINKING 'ONLY WAY' TO SECURE INVESTMENT

(© 2007 The Irish Times, Interview by Ciarán Brennan; dated 3 January 2007)

Companies have often been told to think globally and act locally. Yesterday, IDA chief executive Seán Dorgan was advising every location in Ireland to think and act regionally, rather than locally, if they wished to succeed. "For most of the investment IDA competes for, the competition is from city regions with a population base of over a million people and in Ireland, only Dublin has a population of this size", he said.

"Regions have to come together, act regionally, think regionally rather than thinking locally. That is the only way we will achieve really good, high-quality investments outside of Dublin". Despite huge investment under the National Development Plan, the infrastructure deficit remains an issue in some areas. "I don't think we have lost any significant investment because of the quality of our infrastructure but it is difficult to sell some regional locations for the really high quality investments because of limitations in infrastructure". With a new NDP due to be launched soon, it is imperative that Ireland continues to invest strongly in infrastructure and actively encourages knowledge-driven activities, he said. "If we fail to provide essential infrastructure quickly, Dublin may falter and regions fail", said Mr Dorgan.

Providing competitive and robust energy supplies and encouraging students to study science, engineering and business were crucial to future success, as Ireland has transformed itself into an advanced knowledge-driven economy, he said.

Mr Dorgan said he was not concerned by a continuing fall in direct expenditure in the economy by IDA-supported companies, particularly for Irish materials and services. "It is just a change in the nature of the global economy because of global sourcing and the Irish economy because we are positioned differently", he said.

"The second point is that, increasingly, companies come into Ireland for brain power rather than the components and the brain power is in research and development and higher-value-added activities which may not have a huge knock-on spend directly in Ireland but are still creating a value here."

IDA Ireland had a good pipeline of potential investments for the coming year, Mr Dorgan said. "All the indications are good. Even in the first few months we would expect to see a good few announcements for locations around the country", he added.

IRELAND LAGGING IN R&D SPEND

R&D expenditure in Ireland, as a percentage of GDP for 2005, is below the EU27 average and well below the EU target. A recent report by Eurostat, published in January 2007, records Ireland's R&D expenditure as 1.25% of GDP whereas the EU27 average is 1.84% and the EU target is 3% by 2010. Throughout Europe, R&D intensity (i.e. expenditure as a percentage of

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GDP) remains significantly lower than in other major economies and, while rising on an annual basis, this too is at a slower rate than the major economies of Japan, America, China. For further details on this study, log on to <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/07/6&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

GUIDE TO CROSS-BORDER (TRANSFRONTIER) COOPERATION

In November 2006, the Council of Europe published a Practical Guide to Cross-Border Cooperation. This Guide is specifically targeted at the promoters of cross-border projects and is available in both French and English. For further details, log on to <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.eu/>

8. Contacting the RSA Newsletter

This is the first e-Newsletter of the Irish Branch of the Regional Studies Association. There will be a further two e-Newsletters during 2007 and these will be circulated as follows:

Mid-July

Mid-November

If you have any queries regarding the newsletter, or any comments, suggestions or submissions for future editions (incl. details on upcoming events, publications of interest, job vacancies), please email newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

PLEASE NOTE: the closing date for receipt of submissions is the first day of the month of the next issue.

9. Membership of the RSA

Membership of the Association is open to all individuals and organisations with an interest in the analysis and development of regional policy.

The benefits of membership include nine issues of the international journal *Regional Studies*, four issues of *Regions: The Newsletter of the Regional Studies Association* (overall body), three issues of *Spatial Economic Analysis*, discount on other Routledge publications, access to Association events, and ability to participate in any local branch or section activities.

Membership is based on the calendar year. Details of membership rates (individual, associate, student or corporate), together with a registration form, can be downloaded at www.regional-studies-asoc.ac.uk/members/benefits.asp

10. Current Irish Committee Members

The current RSA committee for 2007 are: Micheál Collins, TCD/IPA (Chairman); Chris Van Egeraat, NUI Maynooth (Vice-Chairman); Patrick Collins, NUI Galway (Hon. Secretary); Edgar Morgenroth, ESRI (Hon. Treasurer); John McDonagh, NUI Galway; Des McCafferty, Mary Immaculate College, UL; Stephen Walsh, DIT; Mark Scott, UCD; Caroline Creamer, ICLRD/NIRSA; Davis Hogan, Shannon Development; Gillian Slattery, Enterprise Ireland; David Meredith, Teagasc; Ronnie O'Toole, Forfas.

The following are the contact details of the Association. We strongly encourage communication by e-mail.

RSA Chairman Micheál Collins: chairman@regionalstudies.ie

RSA Secretary Patrick Collins: secretary@regionalstudies.ie

Newsletter: newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

11. Joining/Leaving the RSA (Irish Branch) Mailing List

If you wish to have your details added to the RSA mailing list please e-mail the following address with the word "ADD" in the subject line: mailinglist@regionalstudies.ie

To have your details removed from the RSA mailing list please e-mail the following address with the word "REMOVE" in the subject line: mailinglist@regionalstudies.ie

The RSA updates its mailing list approximately once every six weeks.

A pdf copy of this newsletter is available on the RSA website at www.regionalstudies.ie