

REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (Irish Branch)

E-NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 7, April 2009

Welcome to the seventh issue of the Regional Studies Association (RSA) e-newsletter. This e-newsletter serves as a way for the Irish Branch of the Association to highlight conferences, events, publications and other developments of interest 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

WEBSITE UPDATE

The website of the Irish Branch of the RSA can be accessed at: www.regionalstudies.ie
Suggestions on the site's continued development is welcomed – as is relevant text! The Association's general website can be accessed at: www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk

REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION PRIZES FOR 2009

The Regional Studies Association has recently opened the call for nominations for a wide range of prizes. The Association administers prizes recognizing achievements in the following categories:

- Best Book
- Taught Master
- Early Career
- Editors' Choice
- Overall Contribution To The Field Of Regional Studies
- Best referees prize

The deadline for nominations is 30th July 2009. The winners will be announced during the Association's President's Lunch on the 5th October 2009 at the House of Lords.

ERDF AND COHESION FUND EXPENDITURE AVAILABLE FROM THE RSA

The European Commission have made available data, which shows how the €160 billion ERDF and Cohesion Fund budget for the 2000-2006 programming period was distributed across the 1,205 NUTS 3 regions in the EU, and across 20 2-digit expenditure categories. It seeks to detail how the funds were geographically focused and on what they were actually spent. Programmes covered include the Cohesion Fund, ERDF Objectives 1 and 2, URBAN and INTERREG IIIA. The preface and summary of the SWECO report details the contents in more detail. The links and the SWECO report is available at www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk
For further information see: <http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk>.

RSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

The RSA Annual Conference 2009, on the theme of "Understanding and Shaping Regions: Spatial, social and Economic futures" took place in Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium from 6-8 April 2009. The Best International Conference Paper Award for the Regional Studies

Association Annual Conference 2009 was awarded to the following paper: "Do Firms benefit from being present in Technology Clusters? Evidence from Firms active in the Field of Biotechnology" by Catherine Lecocq, Bart Leten, Jeroen Kusters and Bart Van Looy.

RSA INVITES TENDERS FOR 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Regional Studies Association has recently invited tenders for its 2011 Annual International Conference. For more than two decades the RSA has had an ongoing programme of international events, attracting participants from all around the world. The next major event is in 2010 when we go to Pécs in Hungary.

Proposals should be sent to Sally Hardy, Chief Executive, Regional Studies Association, PO Box 2058, Seaford BN25 4QU, United Kingdom,

Email: sally.hardy@rsa-ls.ac.uk

Tel: + 44 (0) 1323 899 698 Fax: + 44 (0) 1323 899 798.

The closing date for proposals is 31st August 2009.

3. Upcoming Events

• PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS/PAPERS

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Seminar title: "Trade in Services"

Date: 30th April 2009

Venue: ESRI, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2

Time: 16.00

A presentation by James Markusen, University of Colorado and UCD.

Seminar title: "Industrial Clusters and Competitiveness"

Date: 7th May 2009

Venue: ESRI, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2

Time: 16.00

A presentation by Paul Ryan and Majella Giblin, Centre for Innovation and Structural Change, NUI Galway.

Seminar title: "Outsourcing and Firm Productivity in Irish Manufacturing"

Date: 14th May 2009

Venue: ESRI, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2

Time: 16.00

A presentation by Fergal McCann, UCD.

Seminar title: The 2009 ESRI Geary Lecture: "The Challenge of Tax Reform and Expanding the Tax Base"

Date: 28th May 2009

Venue: ESRI, Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2

Time: 16.00

A presentation by James Poterba, National Bureau of Economic Research.

For further details see www.esri.ie

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR REGIONAL AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Seminar title: "The Region, Meaning and Power"

Date: 6th May 2009

Venue: NIRSA Seminar Room, John Hume Building, North Campus, NUI Maynooth

Time: 16.00.

A presentation by Anssi Paasi, University of Oulu.

For further details see <http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/news/>

COMBAT POVERTY AGENCY

Seminar title: "Evaluation of the Credit Union services in terms of their impact on the financial capability of low-income groups"

Date: 26th May 2009.

Venue: Combat Poverty Agency, Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8

A Presentation by Noreen Byrne, Centre for Co-operative Studies, UCC

Seminar title: "Engaging People in Active Citizenship in Dublin's Docklands: testing the key conclusions of the ETGACE (Education and Training for Governance and Active Citizenship in Europe) Research Project within an Irish context "

Date: 2nd June 2009

Venue: Combat Poverty Agency, Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8

A presentation by Dr Nicholas Rees & Dr Marianne Breen, National College of Ireland

All Combat Poverty Agency presentations take place in the Board and commence at 12.30p.m. Tea/coffee and sandwiches are provided.

For further details contact: email research@combatpoverty.ie

• UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Rural Restructuring: Local Sustainable Solutions to the Rural Challenge

Date: 8 May 2009

Venue: Blackwater Learning Centre, Knockconan, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan

There is growing recognition that rural areas – and their balanced development – are an important policy area in their own right; and that the current political climate facilitates the development of rural communities on a North, South and cross-border basis. For the past 8 months, the International Centre for Local and Regional (ICLRD) has been considering the role of rural restructuring and economic diversification, together with the growing importance of the urban-rural relationship, in the achievement of balanced spatial development. Through three case study areas, this research study reflects on what took place between the late 1980s to present day when rural diversification was mooted across a similar range of sectors with the objective of promoting the development of rural economies throughout Europe. The case study

areas are: Emyvale-Truagh-Aughnacloy (North Monaghan / South Tyrone), Duhallow (North West Cork / East Kerry) and Draperstown (Magherafelt District).

Aimed at community and local development agencies, businesses and business networks, practitioners, policy makers and academics, attendance at this event is free of charge. **For further details contact:** Eimear Donnelly at eimear.donnelly@qub.ac.uk.

Annual Conference of Irish Geographers 2009

Date: 14th -16th May 2009

Venue: University College Cork

The Department of Geography, University College Cork, in association with the Geographical Society of Ireland (GSI), will host the Annual Conference of Irish Geographers 2009. This year's theme will be Irish Geographies: prospect and retrospect. In the context of the rapid transformations that have impacted on Ireland and the 'Irish World', this conference offers an opportunity to reflect on key achievements and new directions in approaches to Irish geographies. Keynote speakers include Prof Edward Soja (UCLA) and Prof Jean Pitt (Sorbonne Paris IV). **For further details contact:** Denis Linehan at denis.linehan@ucc.ie or visit the conference website at <http://www.ucc.ie/academic/geography/pages/index.htm>.

Annual Conference on Multi-Organisational Partnerships, Alliances and Networks (MOPAN)

Date: 17-20 June 2009

Venue: NUI, Maynooth

The theme of the 16th Annual MOPAN Conference is Collaboration, Competitiveness and Cohesion. The concepts of Competitiveness and Collaboration have featured prominently in previous MOPAN conferences. The term Cohesion has become popular in Europe as a counterbalance to the economic focus inherent in the concept of Competitiveness. Thus, Cohesion incorporates the wider and longer term objectives of sustainability and balance by embracing the social, environmental and territorial dimensions of development. **For further details see:** http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/news/mopan_conference/index.shtml

• CALL FOR PAPERS

RESEARCH NETWORK ON TOURISM, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY 3rd WORKSHOP: BUSINESS AND CULTURAL TOURISM IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

Date: 14th-16th September 2009

Venue: Warsaw, Poland

Submission Date for Abstracts: 15th August 2009

The aim of the Regional Studies Association Research Network is to examine tourism diversity from the perspective of regional development in order to identify current challenges and opportunities in a more systematic manner. The Warsaw meeting is the third and final of a series that included Izmir, Turkey, Spring 2008 and Aalborg, Denmark, Autumn 2008. Across the meetings a number of different dimensions of tourism that are central from a regional development perspective have been covered:

- place branding and territorial identity
- travel services, including the rise of the budget airline short-trip culture

- on-site services, including standardisation/specialisation in hotels, second homes and rural accommodation
- attraction development, including cultural (culinary, heritage, faith-based), event (sport, music), nature (sea-side resorts, mountain areas), and activity-based (health, sport) forms of tourism
- the role of tourism within regional development strategies and organisations

Abstracts in English of up to 2500 characters should be submitted to: Marek Kozak at m.kozak@uw.edu.pl not later than 15 August 2009. **For further details see:** http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk/working/trdpp/WEBSITE_Warsaw.pdf

RSA WINTER CONFERENCE 2009: HEALTH, HOUSING, JOBS AND WELLBEING

Date: 27th November 2009

Venue: London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London, N7 6PA

Submission Date for Abstracts: 30th June 2009

As the global economy has entered a period of prolonged reduction and uncertainty, it is timely to ask questions about the implications for people's lives and livelihoods. The Regional Studies Association Winter Conference 2009 on Health, Housing, Jobs and Wellbeing presents an opportunity to discuss and debate these issues, to establish the research requirements and to address the concerns of practitioners and policymakers. Contributions are welcomed on the following themes:

- Health and welfare at the local and regional scale
- Happiness and wellbeing: definitions and indicators
- Poverty, exclusion and wellbeing
- Social impacts of housing
- The personal, social and financial costs of housing
- Funding public health, housing and care
- Social justice, quality of life and standards of living
- Healthy lifestyles and healthy living
- Jobs, employment and wellbeing

Papers in the form of 400 word abstracts should be submitted through the Regional Studies Association on-line conference portal by Tuesday 30th June 2009. To submit go to www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk and follow the Winter Conference Call 2009 for Papers link. **For further details see:** http://www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk/events/winter_conf09/cfp.pdf

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

4. Funding Opportunities

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME: INDUSTRY-ACADEMIA PARTNERSHIPS AND PATHWAYS

The Seventh Framework Programme is now seeking funding applications for cooperation programmes between one or more non-commercial research institutions (e.g. universities/research centres) and one or more commercial enterprises from at least two

different Member States or Associated countries. The budget for this action is €65million. Deadline for receipt of applications is 27 July 2009.

For further details see

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.PeopleDetailsCallPage&call_id=201

If you are aware of, or your organisation is responsible for the administration of, funding opportunities and you would like them to be included in a future edition, please email newsletter@regionalstudies.ie

5. Publications of Interest

- **BOOKS (incl. CHAPTERS)**

Title: Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness

Author(s): Forfás

Date Published: April 2009

Publisher details: Forfás

This report examines the core elements that make Irish cities competitive and highlights actions that can improve their performance and ultimately enhance Irish national competitiveness. As Forfás note, "With the rise in globalisation, cities across the world are becoming less concerned with national rankings of competitiveness and are focussing instead on improving their positions in a global league table of cities". Forfás put forward a number of recommendations which they argue are key to enhancing Irish city, and ultimately national, competitiveness. These include prioritising investment in Dublin and other main cities; improving city governance; improving urban land use and planning policy; building a city image; developing a better understanding of Irish cities; and enhancing social cohesion.

For further details see:

www.forfas.ie/publication/search.jsp?ft=/publications/featuredpublications/title,3951.en.php

Title: Ireland – Industrial Competitiveness in a Small Open Economy

Author(s): John Cassidy (UCD, Dublin), Frank Barry (Trinity College Dublin) Chris van Egeraat (NIRSA, NUI Maynooth)

Date Published: January 2009

Publisher details: In: D. van den Bulcke and A. Verbeke (eds), "Small Nations in the Global Economy: The Contribution of Multinational Enterprises to National Economic Success", Edward Elgar.

The Irish economy has boomed in recent years based on a strategy of attracting FDI, and has become a model economy particularly for EU accession countries. This chapter sets out to provide a deeper understanding of Ireland's success in the context of Porter's Diamond Model of national competitiveness. Porter's Diamond identifies four determinants of national competitiveness: factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industries, and firm strategy, structure and rivalry. Both the role of government and that of chance are seen as additional variables which influence the four determinants. He argues that the process of clustering is critical to the success of this system. In the context of competitiveness and small open economies, this chapter analyses three of the most successful international industries in Ireland through the prism of Porter's Diamond determinants. The industries highlighted are: the ITC Hardware sector, the ICT Software sector and the Pharmaceutical Sector. This chapter

argues that MNE presence as well as a government FDI-oriented strategy with strong regional and environmental planning objectives has proven to be the crucial ingredients of cluster development in Ireland, which is at variance to Porter's concept of cluster dynamics. Furthermore, purposeful cluster-development or cluster-exploiting behaviour on the part of MNEs was not involved. The authors assert that the nature of the Irish clusters suggests that in ITC hardware and ITC software sectors, subsidiaries are nodes in global networks deferring to the decisions of the parent, rather than being independent actors. Nevertheless, the authors point out, the systemic influence of MNE subsidiaries in Ireland in the parent's decision-making process should not be overlooked.

This chapter can be accessed as a working paper from the NIRSA working paper series at: http://www.nuim.ie/nirsa/research/documents/Ireland_Industrial_CompetitivenessWP.pdf

Title: Industrial Clusters in Local and Regional Economies: A Post Porter Approach to the Identification and Evaluation of Clusters in North Dublin

Author(s): Helen McGrath (Dublin Institute of Technology)

Date Published: December 2008

Publisher details: Glasnevin Publishing

In a departure from the predominantly Porter (1990;1998) influenced cluster studies that were performed on Irish manufacturing throughout the 1990s (i.e. studies which examined primarily market based relationships in the national context) this book focuses on local and regional industry concentrations and the nature of inter-firm relationships within those concentrations. It aims to provide empirical insight into industrial clustering in the Irish context and in particular inter-firm dynamics in traditional, local industrial sectors: fish processing; printing; and bakery. The book compiles and reviews the relevant theoretical and empirical cluster literature and offers a step-by-step guide as to how to identify clusters at a local and regional level.

• WORKING PAPERS/DOCUMENTS

ESRI Research Bulletin

The ESRI has recently launched a new Research Bulletin to make ESRI research findings more accessible to a wide audience. The articles are short, non-technical summaries of work published by ESRI staff in journal articles, books and book chapters and research reports. The first articles are now available on the ESRI website at www.esri.ie/bulletin, and will also be contained in the Spring Quarterly Economic Commentary. Future articles will be available for download from the website (www.esri.ie/bulletin) on publication, and an email with links to the articles will be sent four times a year to eNewsletter subscribers. Articles recently made available include:

"Why Worry About Climate Change?" Tol, Richard S. J., ESRI Research Bulletin No. 09/1/1, April '09.

"School Leavers: How Are They Faring?" Byrne, Delma, McCoy, Selina, ESRI Research Bulletin No. 09/1/2, April '09.

"Who is Paying for Regional Balance in Ireland?" Morgenroth, Edgar, ESRI Research Bulletin No. 09/1/3, April '09.

"What do We Know about Training at Work?" O'Connell, Philip J, ESRI Research Bulletin No.09/1/4, April '09.

For queries relating to the Research Bulletin, please email bulletin@esri.ie

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 South-East Regional Authority

In each edition of the RSA e-newsletter we plan to briefly profile a body working in the area of regional policy in Ireland. Thanks to Sheevaun Thompson for her assistance in preparing this profile.

Regional Authorities have been in existence since 1994 and in that time have made a significant contribution as a regional tier of government in Ireland. The mission of the South-East Regional Authority is to promote regional development in its constituent counties: Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford, and Wexford. The functions of the South-East Regional Authority are as follows:

- To co-ordinate the provision of public services in the Region
- To promote co-operation and joint action between public stakeholders in the Region
- To review local and public authority Development Plans
- To review and monitor spending of National and EU Funds in the Region
- To lobby at Government and EU level for a more equitable distribution of EU funding to ensure that the South-East receives its fair share
- To implement the National Spatial Strategy through preparation of Regional Planning Guidelines
- To address the overall development needs and investment priorities of the Region

MEMBERSHIP: The Authority comprises 36 members. 35 members were nominated by the six constituent local authorities: Carlow County Council (5 members), Kilkenny County Council (6 members), South Tipperary County Council (6 members), Waterford City Council (5 members), Waterford County Council (6 members), Wexford County Council (7 members). As a consequence of his appointment as a member of the EU Committee of the Regions, Cllr. Michael Fitzgerald was appointed a member of the Regional Authority, thereby bringing the total membership to 36.

SOUTH-EAST PROFILE: The South-East Region, straddling the provincial boundary between the ancient provinces of Leinster and Munster, is a homogenous and compact geographical entity consisting essentially of the catchment areas of four rivers - the Slaney, the Barrow, the Nore and the Suir. The region comprises the five counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. The Region has an area of 9,406 sq. kms., which is about 13.5% of the area of the state. The population of the South-East Region increased from 423,616 to 460,838 persons between 2002 and 2006, an increase of 37,222 people or 8.8%. The South-East Region is predominantly rural in character with the main urban centres being Waterford City, Kilkenny City and the towns of Carlow, Clonmel and Wexford. The region has a balanced urban structure with the main urban centre in each of its five counties having a population exceeding 17,000. In addition, it has a range of smaller towns and villages evenly distributed across the region as well as a strong rural settlement pattern.

The regional economy of the South-East is based primarily on agriculture, manufacturing and services, tourism, fishing and aquaculture. The agriculture and food sector accounts for a significant proportion of output and employment, with the region having a higher than average reliance on this sector.

REGIONAL PROFILE¹

Area of Region (square kms).	9,406
Area as % of State	3.50
Population (460,838) as % of National Population (2006)	11
Population Density (persons per sq. km.)	49
Population Change 2002-2006	+37,222 (+8.8%)
Urban Population (2006)	43%
Rural Population (2006)	57%
Dependency Ratio	57.0
Labour Force	241,500
Number in employment	220,400
Number unemployed	21,100
Unemployment Rate (State 4.5%)	8.7%
Total GVA Per Capita (State=100)	73.1%
Disposable Income Per Capita (State=100)	93.2%
IDA assisted companies in the Region	80
Employment in IDA assisted companies	10,667
Tourist numbers to the South-East (2006)	2m

INITIATIVES OF THE SOUTH-EAST REGIONAL AUTHORITY: A selection of the issues facing the South-East regional Authorities, and initiatives taken to-date, are now outlined:

Broadband infrastructure: SERPANT' and 'SERB-II' Projects: The 'SERPANT' (South-East Regional Public Access Network of Telecommunications) and 'SERB-II' (South-East Regional Broadband Phase II) projects were managed by the South-East Regional Authority on behalf of its constituent City and County Councils. The projects involved the installation of a key, state-of-the-art fibre-optic broadband telecommunications network (known as a Metropolitan Area Network or MAN) in eleven urban centres in the South-East: Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Clonmel, Wexford, Dungarvan, Cahir, Cashel, Carrick-on-Suir, Tipperary and Thomastown. The projects saw the construction of almost 135 kms. of underground ducting and fibre-optic cabling at a cost of €25 million and was part-funded under the National Development Plan, 2000-2006. The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) provided 90% of the cost with the remaining 10% being funded by the relevant local authorities. The Regional Authority, in partnership with Kilkenny and Wexford County Councils, has also agreed to procure and install wifi mesh networks around Kilkenny City and Wexford Town. A wi-fi mesh network has been installed in Wexford Town and the local authority is testing and trialing the system. The Kilkenny City network is currently being designed and planned.

Regional Planning Guidelines: In 2004 the Authority, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000, prepared Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the South-East Region. The Guidelines incorporate a regional socio-economic strategy and constitute a framework for Local Authority Development Plans and incorporate measures to implement the objectives of the National Spatial Strategy as they relate to the South-East. The RPGs will guide the future development of the region for the next 20 years and are currently in the implementation phase. The role of the Regional Authority is to monitor, coordinate, and guide the implementation of the RPGs and to maintain a regional-level overview of the process. The Guidelines address the following issues:

- Employment and Economic Development;
- Population Growth and Settlement Strategy;
- Transportation;
- Environmental Issues, Water Services and Waste Management;
- Energy and Telecommunications;
- Education and Health Care;

¹ All the key socio-economic indicators are based on the most recent available figures

- Agriculture, Marine and Rural Development;
- Recreation, Amenity and Culture;
- Heritage and Conservation;
- Inter-Regional Issues.

The RPGs must be reviewed every six years; therefore, the Regional Authority must prepare revised Guidelines by 2010. The year-long review process will commence in early 2009.

“Atlantic Gateways” Project: The ‘Atlantic Gateways’ project is a partnership project designed to promote more balanced regional development in the country. It involves a partnership between the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, the relevant Regional Authorities (and their constituent local authorities) and Shannon Development. The project is closely linked to the RPGs process. The ‘Atlantic Gateways’ report was published in September 2006, after extensive consultation and research. It outlines how the future development of four of Ireland’s cities – Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford (the ‘Atlantic Gateway’ cities) can be promoted, developed and co-ordinated in an integrated way in order to create a major national growth area with the potential to match and complement the scale and performance of Dublin and emulate the growth achieved by other international high-performing city regions. During 2008, the preparation of Corridor Frameworks for the Waterford-Limerick and Waterford-Cork corridors continued. This work is being undertaken by the relevant regional and local authorities and it is expected that these will be finalised and published in 2009.

N24 Prioritisation Study: The N24 National Primary Route forms the key east-west transport corridor for the region, linking the two “Atlantic Gateway” cities of Waterford and Limerick. The route, though, is clearly not of the standard that it should be. What is more, it does not form part of the Atlantic Road Corridor planned for major improvement under the NDP 2007-2013 and Transport 21. Against this background, the Regional Authority agreed to co-ordinate the preparation of a N24 Prioritisation Study, funded by contributions from the participating local authorities in the Mid-West and South-East regions, to advance the case being made for the various schemes proposed for the road. A Project Steering Group which included representatives of the local authorities (Waterford City Council, Waterford County Council, Kilkenny County Council, South Tipperary County Council, Limerick County Council, Limerick City Council) was established by the Regional Authority to provide overall guidance and direction during preparation of the study. The Study was published in June 2008 and, in putting forward the case for the N24 route as a whole for upgrade, called for the Bypasses of Tipperary, Carrick-on-Suir and Mooncoin and the Clonmel to Cahir (N8) Section to be prioritised for construction in the post-2010 National Roads Programme.

University of the South-East: The Regional Authority, concerned at the relatively weak economic performance of the South-East, has consistently identified and articulated the region's overall development needs and investment priorities. The Authority strongly supports the undeniable need for the establishment of a university in the South-East Region. While the region currently has a number of excellent third-level education institutes, there is a widespread view that the lack of a university is reflected in the lower-than-average participation rate, the higher-than-average graduate migration rate from the region and the lower-than-average level of research and development activity in the region. The Authority considers that these trends can best be reversed by developing the innovative potential of the region with the establishment of a university in Waterford City with links to existing third-level education facilities in Carlow, Kilkenny, Clonmel and Wexford, supported by continued investment in established third-level institutes. The Authority fully supported the application made by Waterford Institute of Technology during 2007 to the Department of Education and Science for the designation of the Institute as a University.

South-East Regional Airport: The Regional Authority has in the past been, and continues to be, supportive of the Regional Airport. The Regional Authority considers that the regional airport forms a key strategic element of the region’s transport infrastructure and, as such, is vital for the future socio-economic development of the South-East. The Authority in its RPGs identified

the development of the Regional Airport as a Critical Enabling Investment Priority. The Authority has established a broadly-based Consultative Committee to provide advice and support for the development, promotion and marketing of the South-East Regional Airport and its operations.

South-East Regional Craft Centre: The Regional Crafts Centre, otherwise known as the “Craft Granary”, is located in Cahir, Co. Tipperary. The Centre was developed in the late 1990s as a direct result of the participation of the South-East Regional Authority in an EU co-financed Project called ‘ATTAS’. The Craft Granary acts as a showcase for quality handcrafted items from the South-East through the provision of a retail outlet for craftspeople from the region to sell their goods and the availability of a gallery space to exhibit craftwork. Training courses for craftworkers are also held at the Centre. A Company has been established to oversee the management and operation of the Centre and the Regional Authority is represented on the board of the Company. The Regional Authority also makes a contribution towards the operational costs of the Centre.

“Spirit of Enterprise” Forum: The South-East Regional Authority was one of the core founders of the South-East Region’s “Spirit of Enterprise Forum” in 2006. The Forum is a collaborative, non-partisan, interactive network for relevant key statutory and non-statutory stakeholders in the region whose aim is to stimulate and increase the levels of entrepreneurship and enterprise in the South-East. The Forum convenes on four occasions annually. A Steering Group, whose membership includes the Regional Authority, provides strategic direction to the activities of the Forum. 2008 was another busy year for the Forum and many collaborative activities and initiatives took place during the year under its auspices. The second annual South-East “Spirit of Enterprise Week” took place throughout the region from the 13th – 17th October 2008. It proved an extremely successful initiative and built substantially on the 2007 pilot. Nearly one hundred events took place across the region involving fifty-seven organisations. Some of the key regional events of the Week included outside radio broadcasts on the Monday by four of the main radio stations in the Region; a regional conference “Make Business Happen” on the Thursday; and on the Friday, the Grand Final of the “Bright Ideas Challenge”.

EU PROJECTS: The South-East Regional Authority participates in a range of EU projects involving inter-regional, cross-border and transnational co-operation. Local Authorities in conjunction with City/County Enterprise Boards, Teagasc, South-East BIC, Institutes of Technology and other public agencies such as Enterprise Ireland actively support the Authority in these projects and participate as local partners. The Authority has on many occasions successfully sought funding, in partnership with various public agencies and the local authorities, in response to calls for proposals from the European Commission. The regional and local authorities will continue to work together in maximising the sourcing of funding and developing new EU projects, networks and initiatives that are of benefit to the region. The following are two EU projects in which the South-East Regional Authority participates:

- ‘DRIVE for Growth’ (Directing Research into Viable Enterprises for Growth) is a project co-funded under the INTERREG IIIB North West Europe Programme. The project, which concluded in 2008, comprised partners from Ireland, the United Kingdom and Germany and aimed to build stronger connections between research institutions and businesses, primarily to strengthen innovation in the indigenous regional business sector in the region
- ‘ESTIIC’ is an Interreg IIIC co-funded Regional Framework Operation (RFO) in which the Southern & Eastern Regional Assembly participates. ‘CEBxS’ is a project part-funded by this RFO, which concluded in 2008, in which the Regional Authority is a partner, along with five other regional partners (two in Ireland and Spain and one in Germany). The overall objective of the ‘CEBxS’ project is to examine the exploitation of broadband by city and regional stakeholders, including SMEs.

RENEWABLE ENERGY/BIO-ENERGY INITIATIVES: The Regional Authority and the local authorities in the South-East are aware of the growing importance of promoting energy efficiency and developing alternative/renewable energy sources in order to reduce the country’s

over-dependence on imported fossil fuel based energy and to assist in meeting Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the interests of combating climate change. In this context, the Regional Authority is involved in a number of initiatives in partnership with local authorities and other regional/local interests.

'REGBIE' Project: The Authority continued with the development in this renewable energy project for which approval and co-funding was approved under the European Commission's Intelligent Energy Call for Proposals. This is a transnational project which aims to support and strengthen local and regional actors in their efforts to increase the market penetration of bio-energy heating systems and to support the implementation of the EU Biomass Action Plan. The Authority is working positively on an ongoing basis with its Project Steering Committee, which is made up of local energy agencies: Tipperary Energy Agency, Waterford Energy Bureau, Carlow/Kilkenny Energy Agency, Wexford Energy Management Agency Ltd, Teagasc and Sustainable Energy Ireland. The project is proving worthwhile for all stakeholders involved.

Regional Bio-Energy Implementation Plan: The Authority has developed a Regional Bio-Energy Implementation Plan for the South-East Region. The plan is designed to make the South-East the leading Irish region in the use and promotion of bioenergy over the coming years. The objectives of the plan are to provide a structured framework for all stakeholders in the Region to utilize for coherent development and progress in the area of Bio-Energy, to gather data in relation to the scope and potential for bio-energy development in the Region based on the availability of resources and technology and to identify and reduce barriers to the development of Bio-Energy in the region. The development of this Plan was overseen by a multi-disciplinary Steering Committee with representatives from a number of different local, regional and national bodies. These include the South-East Regional Authority, Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency, Tipperary Energy Agency, Waterford Energy Bureau, Wexford Energy Management Agency Ltd., Sustainable Energy Ireland, Teagasc, the Planning Authorities, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The plan was officially launched by Mr. John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government at Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford on Friday, 7th March 2008 and is now in the implementation phase.

FURTHER DETAILS: For further information regarding the work of the South-East Regional Authority, please contact Mr. Tom Byrne, Director, on +353 52 26200; via email: dir@sera.ie; or online at www.sera.ie.

7. Regional Policy: What's New?

MUNICIPAL WASTE SURVEY – MIXED RESULTS FOR IRELAND

According to a Eurostat survey published in March, only the Danes among all EU nationalities generated more municipal waste per person in 2007 than the Irish average of 786kg. This amount is a full 150% of the EU average of 522kg. By contrast the Czechs produced a mere 294kg each –reflecting enormous variations in household consumer behaviour patterns between Western and Eastern Europe though these figures exclude agricultural and industrial waste. The Danish total is mitigated by a mere 5% reliance on landfill compared to other methods. This trait is shared with Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden in particular – all of which prioritise incineration. Ireland is one of 11 Member States which did not at the time employ incineration – though the only one in Western Europe. This also indicates significant differences in methods of waste treatment with recycling rates varying from 46% in Germany to several countries which continue to rely entirely or almost exclusively on landfill. The figure here for Ireland is an encouraging 34%for recycling which ranks joint fourth overall and a mid-table 64% for landfill. Composting accounted for 2% of treatment in Ireland - a figure dwarfed

by the 13 countries who exceed the 10% mark for this method with Austria reaching 38%. For further details: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2009/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2009_MONTH_03/8-09032009-EN-BP.PDF (Source: Irish Regions Office, 2009).

RURAL BROADBAND INVESTMENT

As part of the European Economic Recovery Plan, the European Commission has earmarked €1 billion to help rural areas get online in a bid to achieve 100% high-speed internet coverage for all EU citizens by 2010. This is part of the €5 bn. of unspent EU resources reallocated by December's European Council for energy and communications infrastructure (including €100 million for the Ireland-Wales electricity inter-connector). This funding will be used in addition to private investments and national funding to allow those rural areas which are not covered by existing plans to roll out or upgrade broadband in order to be able to fully participate in the web economy. Operations that can be supported are: new broadband infrastructure including backhaul facilities; Upgrade of existing infrastructure; and laying down passive infrastructure (e.g. civil engineering works such as ducts, and other network elements) including synergies with energy, transport and water networks. The funding (at a 75% co-financing rate) will be injected into all Member States' national Rural Development Programmes under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and distributed on the basis of their current national shares of this fund. It is the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, in Ireland's case, to select the most appropriate investment opportunities according to the established eligibility and selection rules within the national Programme which will need to be modified by 30 June to allow projects to be identified and authorised so that expenditure may take place this year. According to the IDATE Study 'Broadband Coverage in Europe 2008', Ireland currently offers broadband coverage to 87% of the population but only 73% for rural areas – on a par with the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania but below the EU25 average. For further details see: "Bridging the Broadband Gap" initiative: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/events/broadband_gap_2007/index_en.htm (Source: Irish Regions Office, 2009).

WHICH EUROPEAN CITIES DO ENTREPRENEURS PREFER?

As part of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, ECER (European Cities Entrepreneurship Ranking) have undertaken a pan-European survey of entrepreneurs' favourite cities. The survey was based on a sample of more than 140,000 entrepreneurs. A questionnaire comprising 36 questions was administered to nearly 2,400 entrepreneurs in 37 major European cities. The criteria for selection of the 37 cities was based on the first edition of the ECER Ranking (based on Cushman & Wakefield's European Cities Monitor of property in Europe); capitals with more than one million inhabitants; cities with more than 1.5 million inhabitants; as well as a small number of unsolicited applicants. The ranking of entrepreneurs' favourite cities was constructed from comparable information on the importance that each surveyed entrepreneur attached to promotion of business creation, pre-creation support, post-creation support, funding diversity and accessibility, and the environment – as well as their perception, expectations and level of satisfaction regarding these same criteria. For each city, the study produces a satisfaction score and an importance score on the five themes, on a scale of 0-100.

Cities preferred by entrepreneurs in 2009:

1. Helsinki (FI)
2. Stockholm (SE)

- 3. Munich (DE)
- 4. Malmö (SE)
- 5. Hamburg (DE)

The only Irish city to feature in the survey was Dublin, which was ranked at number 27. For further information see: <http://www.ecer.fr/>

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR DAIRY FARMERS

The European Commission is set to propose to national governments and the European Parliament. that the EU channel €1.5 billion that remains unspent in the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) towards dairy farmers, who are currently being affected by exceptionally low milk prices close to, or even below, intervention levels. Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel told EU agricultural ministers on 19 January that she believes the state of the market could force businesses, particularly farmers in marginal and mountainous areas, into liquidation. Export refunds – a price support measure halted in June 2007 for milk, butter and cheese - have recently been reintroduced as short-term measures to support the dairy sector. The Commission also reintroduced private storage for butter with effect from 1 January. Meanwhile milk quotas will increase next season under the CAP ‘health check’ reform. This reform has also identified a series of "new challenges" in response to which part of the mooted €1.5 billion would also be spent in the form of rural development projects. For further information see:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/57&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (Source: Irish Regions Office, 2009).

8. Contacting the RSA Newsletter

This is the sixth e-newsletter of the Irish Branch of the Regional Studies Association. There will be two further e-Newsletters produced during 2009 and these will be circulated as follows:

- August 2009
- November 2009.

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. For the year 2008, membership costs are: Individual £74 (€113); Student £35 (€54); Associate Membership £56 (€85); Corporate £152 (€213). Further details and application forms can be found on the RSA international website: www.regional-studies-assoc.ac.uk

10. Current Irish Committee Members

The current RSA committee for 2008 are: Micheál Collins, TCD (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 Boyle, NUI Maynooth; David Hogan, Shannon Development; Gillian Slattery, Enterprise Ireland; David Meredith, Teagasc; Ronnie O'Toole, Northern Ireland Bank; Caroline Creamer, ICLRD/NIRSA, NUI Maynooth; Sean O'Riordain, NUI Maynooth; Philip O'Connor, Dublin Employment Pact; Louis Wildenboer, John Spain Associates, and Fergal Gough, Cork County Council.

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