



RSES Submissions  
By email [rses@nwra.ie](mailto:rses@nwra.ie)

8<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**Our Ref:**

190127

**Re: Submission to the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy on behalf of Galway Harbour Company t/a The Port of Galway**

Dear Sir/Madam,

We have been instructed by our client, **Galway Harbour Company t/a The Port of Galway**, to make a submission on the '*Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy*' (RSES) for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, following its recent publication on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

Galway Port is an important transport facility serving both Galway City and the wider region. Coastal connectivity is a crucial element of the development of the West of Ireland. The port has significant potential for expansion for freight, fishing and cruise liner tourism. Improvement of port facilities is of strategic importance to the City and the region as a whole. Improved port facilities will assist in improving accessibility to Galway and has the potential to contribute to both tourism and enterprise.

The Galway Harbour company welcomes the inclusion of Section 4.5.4 '*Marine and Blue Economy*' in the RSES in particular the following Policy Objectives which relate specifically to expansion and upgrade of Galway Harbour.

**Table 1: Regional Policy Objective as outlined in the Draft RSES NWRA**

Regional Policy Objective:	
<b>61.</b>	<p>To support the ongoing upgrade &amp; improvement of the Region's harbours and Ports and ensure the sustainable development of this infrastructure to enable aquaculture and seafood industry expansion in a responsive manner.</p> <p>The upgrade of Galway Harbour &amp; Port continues to represent a key strategic priority for the Western Region and the 100m development of the Port under IROPI (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest). The Port currently deals largely in liquid bulk; however, the upgrade of the Port would allow for the Port to serve a dual role as a commercial port for cargo and also as a destination point for cruise tourism. The upscaling of the facility would increase Galway Ports influence (and spin off) across the wider region in terms of recreation &amp; delivery of additional visitors into Galway City &amp; beyond.</p>
<b>62.</b>	<p>To support the sustainable expansion &amp; upgrade of Galway Harbour &amp; Galway Port (under IROPI) as part of the overall vision to grow Galway as a City Region subject to environment, visual, economic viability and transportation requirements.</p>

The draft RSES notes that the North West region has a number of historical challenges impacting on its competitiveness and sustainability most notably *“the comparably low level of investment in enabling infrastructures such as ports, harbours, utilities, roads, rail and utilities”*. While the inclusion of the above policies is a significant step towards the upgrade and improvement of the Harbour area, it is considered that the RSES must also support the designation of the Port of Galway as a Tier 1 Port under the TEN-T framework. The upgrading of the Port to a Tier 1 status will be a significant enabling factor in securing funding for the extension of the Port of Galway, enabling creation of a deep-water facility and the resulting availability of Regeneration Lands at the existing port.

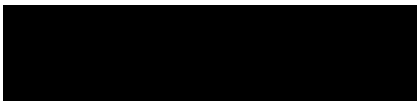
The port expansion will also require the complementary development of different types of mutually dependent infrastructure. Investment in public infrastructure is fundamental to creating the economic conditions necessary for long-term national prosperity. The lack of investment in the economy has been a major constraint to progress. It is important that the RSES is aligned with the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Planning Framework (NPF). The project will be the largest single infrastructural development in Galway City and the West of Ireland over the next 10 years and this needs to be reflected in the RSES.

The Galway Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP) included in Section 3.6(a) of the RSES will be a statutory document in its own right. Therefore, it is essential that the importance of the development of the port extension is reflected in the MASP. While the port expansion is mentioned in the MASP under the ‘Marine Sector’ heading, it is contended that the MASP must fully adopt policy aims regarding the expansion & upgrade of Galway Harbour & Galway Port. Furthermore, consideration of the Galway Harbour extension and resultant impacts must influence and align with the wider policy context in the MASP terms of the economy, infrastructure, employment and tourism.

The MASP makes reference to the regeneration of lands at Ceannt Station and the Inner Harbour as a sequential solution to the expansion of the city centre, linked with a transportation hub, reinforcing the prime role of the city centre in both the city, the Metropolitan Area and the wider region. Further to this, the RSES and MASP should specifically refer to the concurrent development/emergence of the Masterplan for the Galway Harbour Village. The Galway Harbour Village will occur as a result of the transfer of operations from the current port to the port extension. A masterplan for this mixed used development over 88,000sq. metres is nearing completion and will include significant office/residential/hotel accommodation, cultural, and tourist initiatives. The draft masterplan will compliment significantly the emergence of the port extension.

**Galway Harbour Company t/a The Port of Galway** look forward to their continued engagement in the RSES process.

Yours sincerely,



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