

## Where are we now?

### Data collection project to assess baseline engagement rates among Cork residents

Cork is a vibrant and dynamic city where education, business and social activities thrive in close quarters. As the pace of urbanisation continues to grow, the city is looking for solutions to help boost its competitiveness, promote sustainable development, and enhance the quality of life of its residents.

A number of new initiatives have been established to help promote the reputation of the city as a great place to live, work, study and invest, such as [European Smart City](#), [Cork Smart Gateway](#) and the current pursuit of [UNESCO Learning City](#) status.

These activities bring together hard infrastructure and social capital enabling Cork residents to use its resources smartly, and to collaborate with local government and fellow citizens effectively on new socio-economic ideas. However, in order to measure the success of these and future initiatives, we need quantifiable indicators to track their progress. The first step to achieve this is to establish a baseline. The International Energy Research Centre (IERC) offers expertise and shared resources to collect the relevant data from residents, identify our baseline and analyse results going forward.

The data will be collected through three surveys covering:

- **Public participation:** measuring current and preferred practices, willingness to engage and participate in public issues and understanding about existing smart projects in the city.
- **Digital skills:** measuring current and preferred usage of traditional and digital tools available.
- **Public infrastructure:** measuring current and preferred access and usage of public transport, internet, and open data.

The major research groups are:

- **Local authorities:** officials, managers and councillors in Cork city and county councils and their affiliates
- **General public:** males and females, over 18 years old, living and working in the 'Cork Area Strategic Plan' regions
- **Youth:** children from 16 to under 18 years old, who study, work and live in the 'Cork Area Strategic Plan' areas

The selected research groups reflect a comprehensive view on attitude and behaviour regarding public participation, digital skills and access and usage of public infrastructure and engagement and participation between the local authorities and residents. The timeline for rolling out those surveys is from the 15 September 2015 until 15 October 2015.

The surveys encourage voluntary participation from the public, which is crucial element of success for this research. The collected data are totally anonymous and in aggregated format. The surveys are also a good chance for people to know about what's going and how they are going to be part of positive changes for their own neighbourhoods and for Cork.

The result of this research will provide information and evidence for relevant authorities, businesses and residents to identify areas for investment planning, policy implications, intervention measures and deployment programmes.