

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS

2016



Fourth Progress Report

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Commentary

This is the fourth report of 2016 from the Monitoring Committee established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the *Action Plan for Jobs 2016* (APJ 2016).

It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the fourth quarter of 2016. It also includes an update on measures described in the Plan as “Ongoing 2016”, and a summary overview of the implementation of the APJ 2016 across the full year. This includes measures from previous quarters that remain delayed.

The Government published the fifth in its multi-annual Action Plan for Jobs series in January this year. This Plan, which contains 304 actions / 555 measures to be implemented in 2016 by all 16 Government Departments and by 46 agencies under the remit of these Departments, will build on the progress made since 2012 to improve supports for job-creating businesses and remove the barriers to employment creation across the economy. These actions are in addition to the over 2,300 actions already implemented under Action Plan for Jobs 2012-2015, and reported on in previous quarterly reports (see www.djei.ie). As the final review of the implementation of the Action Plan for Jobs 2016 in its entirety, this report also provides a synopsis of the implementation of the Plan as a whole over the year. It shows that 514 of the 555 measures committed to have been delivered giving rise to an overall implementation rate of 93%.

As detailed below, 1 measure from Q1, 12 measures from Q2, 10 measures from Q3, 16 measures from Q4 and 1 “Ongoing Measure” have not been completed as scheduled.

Addressing Unemployment

The latest official statistics on employment and unemployment in Ireland (QNHS) show that total employment increased by 57,500 in the year to Q3 2016, bringing total employment to 2,040,500. There was an increase in full time employment of 44,800 and an increase in part-time employment of 12,800. Since 2012 when the first Action Plan for Jobs was launched nearly 190,000 more people are at work.

The rate of unemployment in December 2016 was 7.2%, down from 8.8% in December 2015 and from a high of 15.2% in early 2012.

The Government’s stated aim is to reach full employment (unemployment of 6%) by 2020.

Actions due in Quarter 4

In Q4 of 2016, Departments and agencies were to deliver 178 measures under the Action Plan. 17 of the measures have not been delivered, giving a completion rate of 91%.

Measures not delivered as planned in Q4

As stated above, 17 of the Q4 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *Develop and roll out a demonstrator 'grand challenge' clustering approach that will invite industry, research institutions and other relevant stakeholders to collaboratively engage in identifying challenges and developing solutions to key national and international societal and/or economic challenges; Design a cluster strengthening initiative to promote the development of self-sustaining clusters of scale, international visibility and longevity targeted for rollout on a demonstration basis in 2017. Set out the methodologies and approach to develop metrics, baseline data, data collection, control group etc., to facilitate effective evaluation of the regional enterprise initiatives competitive fund - Action 23.*

A Challenge-centric approach to innovation is an increasingly important concept, and because of their highly complex nature, they require engagement from a range of research disciplines and collaboration with enterprise. Innovation 2020 acknowledges that targeted initiatives of different scales are required to cultivate and grow quality interdisciplinary research that can deliver optimal impact.

Initial discussions to explore the potential for a competitive funding mechanism aimed at stimulating solutions driven collaborations are ongoing; and with enterprise to assist in identifying relevant grand challenges.

The inherent complexity has meant that progress is slower than anticipated and will continue to be progressed over 2017.

In addition, Enterprise Ireland continues to work with public sector bodies to address challenges (on a smaller scale) by connecting with businesses to procure research and development on innovative solutions. The Agency is currently scoping out a number of options to develop the 'connectivity' area. The expectation is that as a

consequence of this a number of clusters will organically emerge and provide a strengthened basis for growth.

Enterprise Ireland continues to work with a number Clusters that have already been supported under previous initiatives.

- *Support the Knowledge Development Box by amending the Patents Act, 1992 to allow for the reintroduction of substantive patent examination in Ireland to ensure qualification for all Irish granted patents under the Knowledge Development Box; Progress the legislative amendments to patent law in the Houses of the Oireachtas through to enactment - Action 31. The Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Bill 2016 was published in November 2016 and is progressing through the Houses of the Oireachtas. Seanad Committee Stage will resume on 25 January 2017.*
- *Develop a new certification scheme, underpinned by legislation, to enable the Controller of Patents to consider applications for inventions that claim to be novel, non-obvious and useful in line with the OECD nexus approach and that qualify for the Knowledge Development Box in line with the Finance Bill 2016; Progress drafting of the Bill through to publication and, subject to time availability in the Houses of the Oireachtas, progress the Bill through all stages in the Houses to enactment - Action 32. The Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Bill 2016 was published in November 2016 and is progressing through the Houses of the Oireachtas. Seanad Committee Stage will resume on 25 January 2017.*
- *To continue to increase the supply of ICT graduates, provide a higher incentive for 500 additional places on Level 8 ICT programmes in 2016. Review implementation of the ICT Skills Action Plan 2014-2018 in 2016 and what additional measures can be taken; Undertake an audit of the ICT Skills Action Plan in 2016, including an audit of capacity in ICT discipline areas in higher education institutions - Action 67. Review of the ICT action plan is underway and it is planned to finalise a new ICT Action Plan by the end of Q1 2017.*

- *Undertake an analysis of data on ICT capacity in the Higher Education Sector; As per headline action - Action 71. Review of the ICT action plan is underway and it is planned to finalise a new ICT Action Plan by the end of Q1 2017.*
- *Review all enterprise RDI supports to ensure that these supports meet the needs of small and early stage firms as well as the needs of larger, established firms; Review the full range of state financial aid for RDI, both direct and indirect (tax credits, Knowledge Development Box), in terms of the level of support available and eligibility rules, to ensure that the needs of small and young firms are being catered - Action 84. The overall aim of this study is to identify how best to increase RDI activity in firms that leads to the development of new products, processes and services that will deliver greater economic impact, focusing both on increasing RDI spend in a cohort of firm already doing R&D as well as increasing the overall number of firms doing RDI.*

Indecon International Economic Consultants were appointed to undertake this study in Q2 2016.

Data analysis is a substantial component of this project which is now near completion and will provide the evidence base to identify how best to streamline, strengthen or introduce new supports that respond to the needs of SMEs and large companies in Ireland. This data analysis has been complemented by consultation with industry, through a workshop which was held on 25 October, and a review of international RDI supports to ensure that Ireland's offering remains competitive.

- *Ensure the implementation of Regulating for a Better Future across Departments, building upon recent progress and completing outstanding actions. Actions will focus on enhancing national competitiveness and securing Ireland's ongoing economic recovery; Undertake a public consultation, finalise and publish a policy on airport charges regulation and make preparations for any necessary changes to legislation - Action 130. The review of airport charges regulation was completed in December*

2015. Public consultation was undertaken between July and September 2016. Work is underway at present on the preparation of a policy statement on airport charges.

- *Establish and implement a framework for the provision by port companies of port services that are efficient, effective and adequate for the needs of our trading economy, positioning the sector so that it is capable of providing the type of port facilities the market requires; Commence construction on the Ringaskiddy project which will inter alia facilitate the transfer of port activities from the Upper to Lower Harbour area - Action 132.* Construction now due to commence in 2017.
- *Develop and introduce a smartphone GeoSMART Inspection application to assist the interaction between inspectors and employers and allow for real time data sharing; Roll out the app to inspectors - Action 135.* The smartphone application has been developed and verified as secure. Completion of the pilot phase and user acceptance testing is now scheduled for Q1 2017.
- *Develop a strategy for the replacement of the outdated Dangerous Substances legislation with a streamlined, lower cost and enterprise friendly system for the licensing of petroleum storage and dispensing facilities; Initiate process to introduce legislative changes to revoke existing legislation and implement new regime - Action 137.* The Dangerous Substances Working Group met on 9 December 2016. All invited stakeholders took part and actions bringing the process forward were agreed. Next meeting scheduled for mid-February 2017.
- *Undertake an assessment of the impact of the EU Chemicals Policy (REACH) on the Irish economy and the experience of companies of the registration /authorisation processes and, following consultation with industry stakeholders and the relevant national authorities, identify the steps to be taken to enhance Ireland's capacity to engage and influence the REACH process at EU level; Present report to Minister - Action 138.* The inaugural meeting of the Steering Group took place on 9 December 2016. The Group will reconvene on 20 January 2017 when it will further discuss a

coordinated response to the EU level evaluation of the REACH regulation 1907/2006 being undertaken by the European Commission as part of its Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT).

- *Prepare the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies to set a long-term regional framework to ensure the optimal economic and social development of our regions; Publish draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies in line with the proposed National Planning Framework - Action 142.* Background preparation work is underway, but publication must be subsequent to NPF publication and is therefore delayed to Q3 2017
- *Implement the enterprise engagement strategy for higher education to include entrepreneurial education as an important part of the national framework for enterprise engagement; Implement the recommendations from the HEInnovate report - Action 193.* HEInnovate report has been finalised and arrangements are being made for publication. The findings and recommendations from the report are being considered in the development of the new System Performance Framework for Higher Education and the new Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement.
- *In light of the expiry of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy 2010-2015, carry out a scoping exercise, in cooperation with all relevant Department and State agencies, to examine the possible format, structure and opportunities relating to a new strategy. The implementation of same will be a priority in 2016 and subsequent years; Finalise successor Strategy to the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy, 2010-2015 - Action 224.* A scoping exercise is on schedule to be completed. Finalisation of the successor strategy will be a priority measure for completion in 2017.
- *Place Construction Industry Register Ireland on a statutory footing; Facilitate, in conjunction with Construction Industry Federation and industry stakeholders and statutory agencies, the transition from the existing voluntary Construction Industry*

Register Ireland to a statutory register within a reasonable timeframe and - Action 279. It is proposed to bring forward a Memorandum for Government in early 2017 seeking approval for draft Heads of Bill to be referred for pre-legislative scrutiny to the Oireachtas Committee. The proposed Bill will support quality in the construction industry by raising standards while ensuring fair competition for compliant operators and will be an important element in the delivery of Construction 2020 – A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector. Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) continues to be available to industry operators and consumers on a voluntary basis.

- *Islamic Finance continues to grow. IDA will review and further develop Ireland's value proposition for this important sub-sector; As per headline action - Action 295.* This action is delayed indefinitely as the Financial Services Division in IDA focuses on opportunities directly related to Brexit. This does not include Islamic Finance at this time.
- *Commission an economic analysis of the current value of the audio visual industry in Ireland, to assess the scale, strengths and contribution of the sector in terms of economic activity and employment levels and its potential to expand further; Publish report - Action 301.* A contract to deliver the study was signed in October 2016 and delivery of the report is expected in Q3 2017.

Action Plan for Jobs 2016: Delivery of “Ongoing 2016” Measures

As noted above, this Fourth Progress Report is the final one dealing with 2016 and thus provides an update on the actions described in the Plan as “Ongoing 2016”. All but 1 of these 93 measures has been delivered over the course of the year, giving a completion rate of 99% for those “Ongoing 2016” measures.

The “ongoing” measure not delivered on schedule for the Q4 Report is:

- *Progress the identified enterprise need for Research Technology Organisation support in the area of Advanced Manufacturing to include the delivery of manufacturing RDI in addition to the provision of training and services for the benefit of both indigenous and multinational companies; As per headline action - Action 216. A joint agency proposal for an Advanced Manufacturing Centre (AMC) is currently being reviewed by DJEI.*

Update on actions delayed from Quarters 1, 2 and 3

Update on actions delayed in Quarter 1

As reported at the end of Q1, there were 14 actions delayed. The following measure from this report has now been delivered:

- *Examine the appropriateness of the sub-minima rates which currently apply, with regard, in particular, to their impact on youth employment rates and participation in education; as per headline action – Action 79. The Low Pay Commission submitted its report on the sub-minima rates of the National Minimum Wage to the Minister on 31 October 2016.*

This means that 13 of the 14 previously delayed measures are now complete.

(Please see APJ 2016 Q1 Progress Report for text of undelivered Actions:

<https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Action-Plan-for-Jobs-2016-First-Progress-Report.html>)

Update on actions delayed in Quarter 2

As reported at the end of Q2, there were 15 actions delayed. In the Q3 report 3 previously delayed measures were marked as now complete.

This means that 3 of the 15 of the previously delayed measures are now complete.

(Please see APJ 2016 Q2 Progress Report for text of undelivered Actions:

<https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Action-Plan-for-Jobs-2016-Second-Progress-Report.html>)

Update on actions delayed in Quarter 3

As reported at the end of Q3, there were 15 actions delayed. The following 4 measures from this report have now been delivered:

- *Publish six-monthly progress reports on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan; As per headline action - Action 7.* The first Progress Reports on the implementation of the eight Regional Action Plans for Jobs have been finalised and were published in December 2016. Work is underway on the preparation of the second Progress Reports.
- *Systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of Springboard+ to further strengthen the contribution of the programme to supporting learners and skills development, job creation, reducing unemployment and meeting the skills needs of emerging industries; Analyse the findings and outcomes from Springboard+ 2016 - Action 52.* Some of the key findings of the report are:
 - 80% of Springboard+ participants (2011 – 2015) are no longer on the live register;
 - Employment rates 3-6 months after graduation have increased from 37% in 2011 to 61% in 2014;
 - Online only courses have increased from 10% of places in 2011 to 15% in 2016 – giving access to courses from anywhere in the country;
 - The initiative has also supported access to lifelong learning and reskilling opportunities with 63% of participants aged between 30 and 49 years and 10% aged 50 to 65 ; and

- The proportion of females participating on Springboard+ ICT courses is 27% which is almost double that entering through the CAO system to mainstream ICT courses at 15%.
- *Progress project priorities in the Greater Dublin Area to address congestion in 2016; Re-open the Phoenix Park Tunnel - Action 131.* The Phoenix Park Tunnel opened for services on 21 November 2016.
- *Analyse the scope and scale of a Technical Knowledge Service to industry; Conduct a feasibility study to estimate the need and demand for a technical knowledge service to support industry, especially SMEs - Action 207.* NSAI has conducted a Feasibility Study that identifies significant business value in establishing a technical Knowledge Service to inform Irish businesses. The results of the Study indicate that there is a definite need for targeted, sector-specific information. This Knowledge Service would be of particular value to SMEs.

This means that 4 of the 14 of the previously delayed measures are now complete.

(Please see APJ 2016 Q3 Progress Report for text of undelivered Actions:

<https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Action-Plan-for-Jobs-2016-Third-Progress-Report.html>)

Quarter 4 Measures

Disruptive Reforms

Step-Up in Enterprise Skills Supply

Action 1: Develop new apprenticeships to meet the skills demands in a range of sectors and update existing apprenticeships.

Q4 Measure: Complete the review of all existing apprenticeships in conjunction with employers and secure approval for revised apprenticeship occupational and award standards and awards. (SOLAS)

Update: In 2015 Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in collaboration with SOLAS formally extended its suite of professional award-type descriptors to NFQ levels 5 and 6, and adopted standards for 5 high volume trades. QQI validated new curricula for these trades and they have been implemented from April 2016. Accelerated arrangements for reviewing the remaining trades have been agreed between QQI and SOLAS and 18 further programmes will be submitted for validation shortly.

Stimulating Regional Growth

Action 11: Implement the Community Enterprise Initiative Scheme which was launched in May 2015 and which aims to provide continued support to regional enterprise and to maintain and grow jobs in micro and small business throughout the country.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Phase 1 of the programme saw €3.1m invested in 31 projects nationally, a second tranche is planned for H1 2017.

The overarching goal of the Community Enterprise Initiative (2015 – 2017) is to stimulate and support enterprise and job creation at a local, community and regional level. This fund is part of the Government's €250m Regional Enterprise Development Initiative aimed at accelerating economic recovery in every part of the country.

The competitive call for applications was open to new and existing organisations, groups and alliances, who collaboratively seek to promote entrepreneurship, create jobs, foster innovation and enhance export opportunities for small business. A prerequisite for proposals was the need to demonstrate innovative solutions to fostering and creating employment. Priority was given to new approaches that build on, and strengthen, the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the country. Through the utilisation of existing infrastructure and the leveraging of nationally available enterprise supports, the specific objectives of the scheme include:

- Fostering an increased collaborative, networked and linked approach to regional and local enterprise development and job creation;
- Establishment of hubs, accelerators, networks and clusters or other partnerships based on regional strengths, opportunities and uniqueness. Within this is the establishment of partnership activities where innovative start-ups can be established in a supportive network before graduating to other support mechanisms or self-sufficiency;
- Proactively seeking out, encouraging and supporting applications from economically disadvantaged areas and areas facing potential economic shock to foster potential opportunities for job creation and supporting enterprise; and to
- Promotion of a progression pathway for companies as they start, develop and scale.

Action 17: Ensure that support for social enterprises, which was a new element in the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, is being delivered and that the specific targets set are achieved.

Q4 Measure: Meet specific targets set under Goal 3 aimed at promoting, developing and/or sustaining social enterprises. (*Function Transferred from DECLG*), DHPCLG, Pobal, LCDCs)

Update: SICAP will meet accepted targets aimed at promoting, developing and/or sustaining social enterprises.

Action 18: Develop the potential for job creation at regional and local levels through resource efficiency and sustainability initiatives including opportunities in reuse, recycling and recovery of waste as well as waste prevention and cost-saving initiatives for SMEs, farmers, communities and the public sector.

Q4 Measure: Implement national waste management policy actions in the areas of resource efficiency, green public procurement, the National Waste Prevention Programme, Producer Responsibility Initiative schemes for tyres and End of Life Vehicles, pay-by-weight for household waste collections, the rollout of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment re-use criteria; and new local re-use and recovery start-up enterprises. (*Function Transferred from DECLG*), DCCAE)

Update: New regulations allowing for the appointment of an approved body to act as a producer responsibility compliance scheme for the End-of-Life Vehicle Sector were introduced with effect from 21 November 2016. The Department of DCCAE recently concluded negotiations with industry around the operation of the compliance scheme and the scheme became fully operational on 1 January 2017. This is an important first step in the development of a coherent structure for the ELV Sector.

In relation to tyres, Repak ELT was tasked with putting the first step towards a full compliance scheme in place for tyres on 1 November 2015. Since then discussions have taken place with stakeholders on a range of issues including permitting requirements, the agricultural and haulage sectors and the end of waste criteria for tyres through the Tyres Working Group. Drafting of new regulations to underpin the new structures is continuing and it is anticipated that the new structures will be in place early in 2017.

Decisions around incentivising households to prevent and segregate waste through charging structures have been deferred until 2017.

The National Waste Prevention Programme for 2016 is delivering projects in accordance with update to Action 122, including supporting new re-use and recovery start-ups. Policy actions in relation to resource efficiency and green public procurement are being progressed in the context of the roll-out of the EU's Circular Economy Plan – Closing the Loop.

While repair and re-use of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment is already well developed in Ireland, particularly in the social economy sector, the key to re-use organisations developing further is access to quality product, a fact acknowledged in the Irish WEEE legislation. The European Union (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Regulations 2014 provides for such access in a co-

ordinated and efficient manner for approved re-use organisations, who under our domestic WEEE Regulations now have a legal right to access WEEE from producer's designated collection hubs. In 2015, the Department announced the approval of criteria developed by the Producer Register Ltd for preparing for re-use of WEEE organisations. This initiative marked a significant development in the re-use of electrical and electronic equipment sector. There are a number of key social, economic and environmental benefits to be gained from the development of a strong re-use marketplace in Ireland and re-use of WEEE is consistent with EU and Irish strategies, policies and directives towards a more sustainable future and circular economy. The appropriate regulatory environment exists to facilitate WEEE re-use and the Department continues to work with all stakeholders who wish to play a full and active role in realising the potential of this market.

All Government Transactions with Business Online by 2017- Reducing Red Tape

Action 20: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (All Departments)

Update: The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has identified 45 licences, authorisations, certifications and permits which are provided to business. 15 of these are available online. In relation to the remaining 30, detailed plans to put 14 services online by November 2017 have been developed. Development has completed on 2 further licences and these are expected to be online in Q1 2017.

The Department is continuing to liaise with the service providers in its business units, offices and agencies to address progress on 16 other services which due to legislative restrictions prevent provision of the service online (for example, a statutory requirement for a hard copy signature), or due to current requirements for hearings in person (for example, copyright and trade mark disputes).

Action 21: Continue the rollout of Licences.ie with a particular focus on the retail sector in the first instance.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, LGMA)

Update: The design and system build work for Licences.ie is complete and the service is now available for all Licensing Authorities to use as their online application process and also available to all businesses to apply for, renew and pay for their licences (those that are available on the service) through www.licences.ie.

There are currently 5,000 registered business users with 10 licence types available across 7 licensing authorities. Cost saving benefits are being experienced both by businesses in saving time in association with applying and paying for licences and for licensing authorities in terms of streamlining their licence application processes. The Service is continually being expanded to include additional licences and new licensing authorities.

National Clustering Initiative

Action 24: Publish the first statutory National Mitigation Plan which will set out the policy measures required to manage greenhouse gas emissions at an appropriate level to further the achievement of the National Transition Objective set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (*Function Transferred from DECLG*), DHPCLG, other relevant Departments)

Update: Initial, non-statutory public consultation process will be launched in early 2017 to inform preparation of a draft National Mitigation Plan.

Action 27: Support the development of local adaptation strategies to advance adaptation at the local scale, local authority level.

Q4 Measure: Complete a web based resource, "Climate Ireland". (EPA)

Update: The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and EPA have been engaging closely with the local government sector to ensure appropriate guidance is provided and capacity is strengthened in relation to the development of local adaptation strategies. Developments include the publication of Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines (May 2016), a follow-up training session and three regional workshops in July and September/October 2016. Work on completing the Climate Ireland resource is ongoing. The website can be accessed at www.climateireland.ie

Driving Intellectual Property in Enterprise

Action 33: Introduce the new Knowledge Development Box and special provisions for SMEs to support their IP generation and exploitation.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DoF, DJEI)

Update: The Knowledge Development Box (KDB) was introduced in Finance Act 2015. The OECD Forum on Harmful Tax Practices have agreed that the KDB is compliant with the "modified nexus" international standard.

Action 34: Establish an overarching inter-agency group to scope out and develop a roadmap leading to the development and building of IP capacity at enterprise level including awareness building around IP management in enterprise.

Q4 Measure: Develop a roadmap to build IP performance in the Irish enterprise base including establishment of benchmarks against which performance levels can be assessed post adoption of the roadmap and implementation of actions arising. (DJEI, EI, IDA, SFI and other relevant bodies)

Update: A working group to examine and take forward recommendations from a review of IP management and capacity building in enterprise has met. A roadmap or specific actions to be taken on foot of the recommendations in the consultant's report has been completed.

Action 36: Progress legislative reform in the copyright area to provide a more progressive IP environment fit for the digital age and responding to the work of the Copyright Review Committee.

Q4 Measure: Progress the Bill through as many stages as possible in the Houses of the Oireachtas before year end. (DJEI)

Update: The Heads of the Copyright and Related Rights (Amendment) (Miscellaneous Intellectual Property) Bill 2016 were approved by Government in July 2016 and work on drafting the Bill with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel has been ongoing since that time. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation considered the Heads of Bill in September and decided that pre-legislative scrutiny was not required. Further stages will be progressed in 2017.

Increasing Labour Market Participation

Action 40: Continue to invest in childcare to support labour market participation.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: One of the objectives of the existing targeted childcare schemes (Community and Childcare Subvention (CCS) and Training and Employment Childcare (TEC) programmes) is to support labour market participation. In 2016 work progressed on developing the Affordable Childcare Scheme, which will replace the existing targeted childcare schemes with a single, streamlined and more user-friendly scheme. The Affordable Childcare Scheme aims to reduce child poverty, enhance affordability, support labour market participation and provide a flexible platform for future investment in childcare. In relation to labour market participation, whereas existing targeted schemes link eligibility to social welfare benefits, the new scheme will link eligibility to income, thus supporting greater participation in the labour market. A policy paper on the scheme was published in October 2016, and a national public consultation was carried out in October-November 2016. Budget 2017 allocated an additional €19m for 2017, in addition to funds allocated for the schemes being replaced, with a view to introducing the Affordable Childcare Scheme later in 2017.

Action 43: Establish a pilot three-year Employer Helpline and Disability Support Service, to provide peer information and advice to employers and to share good practice on the employment of people with disabilities, with the aim of increasing disability competence and confidence among employers and promoting increased employment of people with disabilities.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJ&E)

Update: The Employer helpline and support initiative is in its first year of operation and accordingly, activities to date have included the setting up of a website and helpline, appointing a co-ordinator, and delivering a number of seminars and briefings for employer networks. There were 50 calls and email queries during the period from February to September 2016.

Action 44: Roll out the Youth Employability Initiative to enhance the employability of young people aged 15 to 24 years who are most at risk of unemployment and who are not in education, employment or training.

Q4 Measure: Evaluate the programme. (DCYA/CES)

Update: The Initiative, funded under the Dormant Accounts Scheme targets those young people aged 15 to 24 years who are most at risk of unemployment and who are not in education, employment or training for intensive support. The Initiative supports the provision of innovative programmes for them to enhance their employability skills and competencies. A total of €600,000 was made available in 2016. The application process was held in 2015 and the successful projects announced in June 2016. Over 1000 young people aged 15-24 from across the country participate in the 28 community based youth services that are to benefit under the Initiative. Evaluation is underway and will be completed in 2017.

Delivering Skills for a Growing Economy

Action 52: Systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of Springboard+ to further strengthen the contribution of the programme to supporting learners and skills development, job creation, reducing unemployment and meeting the skills needs of emerging industries.

Q4 Measure: Publish the most up to date evaluation findings. (HEA)

Update: “Developing Talent, Changing Lives”, an evaluation of Springboard+ 2011 – 2016 was completed by the HEA in Q4.

Some of the key findings of the report are:

- 80% of Springboard+ participants (2011 – 2015) are no longer on the live register
- Employment rates 3-6 months after graduation have increased from 37% in 2011 to 61% in 2014
- Online only courses have increased from 10% of places in 2011 to 15% in 2016 – giving access to courses from anywhere in the country
- The initiative has also supported access to lifelong learning and reskilling opportunities with 63% of participants aged between 30 and 49 years and 10% aged 50 to 65: and
- The proportion of females participating on Springboard+ ICT courses is 27% which is almost double that entering through the CAO system to mainstream ICT courses at 15%.

Action 56: Review the skills gaps identified by Enterprise Ireland’s clients as an input into the Regional Skills Fora and the policy making process.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: The network of 9 Regional Skills Fora provides a cohesive structure for employers and the further and higher education system to work together in building the skills needs of their regions. These regional fora aim to help employers better understand and access the full range of services available across the education and training system, and to enhance links between education and training providers in planning and delivering programmes, reducing duplication and informing national funding decisions.

Enterprise Ireland continues to identify skills gaps on both a sectoral and regional basis. The Enterprise Ireland Regional Skills Fora representative continues to engage in this issue at the relevant Regional Skills Fora. Work is also underway with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and DJEI to further the skills needs of SMEs in 2017.

Action 64: Drive increased collaboration between Government, industry and education under the Smart Futures programme.

Q4 Measure: This programme will raise awareness of STEM career opportunities for post-primary students, in line with the 2014 – 2016 strategy. Support the production of STEM programming during the peak schedule of a national broadcaster. (SFI)

Update: SFI has been working with the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and other partners to catalyse a transformation in scientific coverage and programming, particularly that which highlights Irish STEM stories, across all media platforms. SFI's joint agreement with RTE was renewed in 2016. This partnership will continue creating broadcast programmes, such as "Big Week on the Farm" raising the profile of STEM. Particular highlights of this partnership include:

- The "Big Week on the Farm" programme was the overall winner of the Agricultural Journalism awards for 2016; and
- The "Hacked" documentary, broadcast during Science Week, was seen by 300,000 viewers.

Q4 Measure: Grow the diversity of career profiles featured on the new Smart Futures website, including a range of qualification paths. (SFI)

Update: Numerous career stories were added to the Smart Futures website throughout 2016. A range of qualification paths have also been added to the Smart Futures website.

Action 64: Drive increased collaboration between Government, industry and education under the Smart Futures programme.

Q4 Measure: Grow Smart Futures activity in counties identified as receiving low intervention in 2015. (SFI)

Update: In September 2015, a new Smart Futures Client Relationship Management (CRM) system was developed to provide post-primary teachers with an online system to register for volunteer visits and to enable volunteers to access these visit requests and track their own volunteering activity over time. This system identifies where the 'cold spots' are in the country, allowing Smart Futures to be more targeted in school or volunteer recruitment.

Clare and Waterford have seen signs of improvement in recent years. Cavan, Leitrim, Longford, Mayo, Monaghan, Offaly and Roscommon continue to be 'cold spots' for the Smart Futures programme with very low levels of activity. The Smart Futures team will continue prioritising actions in these counties.

Action 64: Drive increased collaboration between Government, industry and education under the Smart Futures programme.

Q4 Measure: Grow the Smart Futures industry partners and volunteer base. (SFI)

Update: Volunteer training for Smart Futures programmes took place throughout the year. Volunteers come from STEM companies such as Abbott, Novartis, IBM, Google and SAP etc. across the pharma chemical, medical devices, energy and technology sector, as well as from research centres and academia.

Smart Futures offers Industry partners the opportunity to coordinate and strengthen STEM careers messaging under the Smart Futures umbrella, providing schools with high quality resources, access to role models and importantly, a process for evaluating outreach activity in this space.

Increasing ICT Skills

Action 72: Enhance industry input to programme content, provision of work placements and promotion of ICT programmes as part of the implementation of Skillnets ICT conversion Programmes.

Q4 Measure: Finalise delivery of ICT Conversion Programmes. (Skillnets)

Update: Skillnets' ICT Conversion Programmes have progressed very well and have delivered the agreed conversion programmes in 2016. Four dedicated Skillnet networks have been engaged in the design and delivery of ICT Conversion Programmes with enterprise. The four networks are ICT Ireland Skillnet, ISA Software Skillnet, ITAG Skillnet and Animation Skillnet.

By leveraging their network infrastructure, the networks engaged closely with employers in the process of identifying the programme content and relevance of the specific courses to ensure programmes are up-to-date and are addressing the skills gaps of the ICT sector. These intensive training programmes all include work placements within ICT companies, and have consistently resulted in employment progression rates of up to 85%. The companies who have provided work placements on the programmes include HP, Ericsson, IBM, Cisco, VM Ware and a range of animation companies including Treehouse Republic and Brown Bag Films.

11 ICT conversion programme have been delivered to date to over 185 unemployed individuals, providing 9,291 training days and also work placements with high levels of employment progression from all programmes. These programmes include a Diploma in DevOps, Certificate in Software Engineering and Fundamentals in Cyber Security.

A number of new conversion programmes were developed in 2016 and delivery of these programmes commenced in Q3/Q4. These include programmes in:

- Applied Cyber Security,
- Networking Technologies
- Back2IT

The new Back2IT programme includes technical training in Linux, Windows Server, ITIL Foundation, VMware, vSphere ICM, Comptia Network+ and Information Storage, as well as Project Management and Technical Writing skills. This programme which is being delivered in Cork was designed to attract a diversity of talents and placed a particular focus on supporting women re-entrants to IT.

Attracting world class talent to Ireland

Action 75: Undertake the Biannual Review of Highly Skilled and Ineligible Occupations Lists.

Q4 Measure: As per headline. (DJEI)

Update: The Q4 2016 review has been completed.

Action 76: Utilise the Research Professorship Programme to attract leading research talent to Ireland in key areas of opportunity.

Q4 Measure: Process applications for the Research Professorship Programme and make funding decisions. (SFI)

Update: All Research Professorship proposals submitted before 1 Jan 2016 have been processed, with funding decisions made.

Q4 Measure: Target award of three Research Professorships in 2016. (SFI)

Update: Six new Research Professors will commence their awards in 2016.

Action 77: Explore, in the case of non-European Economic Area students obtaining Irish masters and doctoral degrees, the possibility of extending the current 12 month postgraduate permission.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJE)

Update: The Department of Justice and Equality has opened discussions with the Department of Education and Skills on how best to target the graduate permission at high performing students, in line with the International Education Strategy 2016 - 2020, including the circumstances in which the permission could be extended beyond the present upper limit.

High performing students who attain a postgraduate award at Levels 9 or 10 in the Irish National Qualifications Framework (NFQ) will be permitted to avail of up to two years' residence in the State for the purpose of securing employment, typically in a related field. Graduates at level 8 will be permitted one year's residence.

Making Work Pay

Action 81: Reduce the income tax burden, as resources become available, to make Ireland more attractive for all workers, including for mobile foreign investment and skills and for our returning emigrants.

Q4 Measure: Develop options and associated costings for consideration by the Minister for Finance as part of his Budget deliberations. (DoF)

Update: Multiple income tax package options were prepared and discussed with the Minister for Finance prior to Budget, and a final package incorporating reductions to the three lowest rates of USC was agreed and announced in Budget 2017. This reduces the top marginal rate of tax on income up to €70,044 to 49%. Increases to tax credits for the self-employed and for single-income families with caring responsibilities were also introduced.

Q4 Measure: Implement decisions as part of Budget 2017. (DoF)

Update: Finance Bill 2016, implementing the tax measures announced in Budget 2017, was signed by the President on 25 December 2016.

Innovation

Action 82: Within the current cycle of Research Prioritisation, stimulate public research on services and business processes and manufacturing competitiveness.

Q4 Measure: Increase capacity in the higher education sector by initiating recruitment of 'star' researchers with proven track records of solutions-driven research in services and business processes and manufacturing competitiveness, in collaboration with global lead. (SFI, HEIs)

Update: Two of the six new Research Professors who will commence their awards in 2016 specialise in advanced manufacturing.

Q4 Measure: Identify, as appropriate, an enterprise-relevant services and business processes challenge in the new challenge-based funding system.. (SFI, IRC)

Update: In 2016, Science Foundation Ireland continued to consult with the research community, the enterprise sector and other stakeholders on the design of a challenge based approach to research funding and the identification of possible challenges that could be the subject of a call or competition. Several iterations of potential challenge-based funding schemes were discussed by the SFI Executive Committee throughout 2016. Pilot scale challenge-based schemes in addition to larger scale schemes were discussed. SFI Director of Programmes, Dr Darrin Morrissey, presented on challenge-based funding at a workshop arranged by the American Chamber of Commerce Ireland. SFI is well prepared to launch a challenge-based funding programme once appropriate budget has been secured.

Action 83: Initiate a market-led horizon scanning exercise to prepare for the next cycle of Research Prioritisation, due in 2018.

Q4 Measure: Initiate a market-led horizon scanning exercise to identify strategic areas of commercial opportunity in global markets for Irish-based enterprises as the basis for the next cycle of RP, due in 2018.

The exercise will take into consideration, inter alia,. (DJEI, research funders, enterprise development agencies, key stakeholders)

Update: This horizon scan of global markets and identification of opportunities for Ireland and Irish based enterprise aims to combine global market intelligence and trends with Irish sectoral intelligence to:

- 1) identify trends and opportunities in established markets where Irish based enterprises are already engaged; and to
- 2) Identify new and emerging/converging market opportunities with potential for Ireland and Irish based enterprises.

PA Consulting has been appointed to undertake the project on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The study was initiated in Q3 2016. An Advisory Group comprised nominees from the Innovation 2020 Implementation Group and chaired by Martin Curley, Professor of Innovation, NUI Maynooth has been established to oversee the exercise. A Master Stakeholder

Workshop was held on 17 November to review draft findings from the Global Markets Horizon Scan and the third meeting of the Advisory Group was held on 21 November to discuss the outcome of the workshop and next steps. Phase I of the global market horizon scan is due for completion in Q4 and Phase II of the project, to identify market opportunities for Ireland and Irish based enterprise is being initiated. The fourth meeting of the Advisory group will be held at the end of January 2017 to consider potential opportunities identified and to finalise and test assessment criteria.

To identify recent and likely future advances in science and technology a Technology Futures exercise was initiated in Q3 to identify technologies that are critical to Ireland's economic and social development out to 2035. Z_punkt The Foresight Company has been commissioned to undertake this project on behalf of DJEI. A Project Steering Group, with international and national membership, has been established to oversee the exercise and will meet 4 times over the duration of this project at critical junctures.

The first phase of this work is near completion with a long list of technologies (through a meta-analysis) having been identified together with a list of megatrends / global grand challenges and the corresponding applications, all of which will be validated and prioritised through a Delphi survey process in January / February 2017. This will be followed by round table consultation before development of the final report.

This project is due for completion by end April-2017.

Action 88: Develop standardised key performance indicators and associated targets for maximising the impact of the technology gateways, technology centres and research centres, including inter alia, enterprise co-funding and movement of researchers into enterprise.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, EI, IDA, SFI)

Update: A standardised set of KPIs is used by SFI to assess the performance of SFI Research Centres with regular reporting by each Centre against targets including industry cash, industry in-kind contribution and the mobility of researchers to industry. Aggregated information is published by SFI through its annual report and other mechanisms.

Similarly, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland use a standardised set of KPIs to assess the performance of the Technology Centres that they support. Enterprise Ireland assesses the performance of Technology Gateways also on the basis of a consistent set of KPIs. The different roles and missions of Research Centres, Technology Centres and Technology Gateways are reflected in the KPIs that are used and reported on by the agencies concerned.

Action 89: Ensure that all relevant research funding programmes incentivise collaboration between research performing institutions and centres in order to maximise impact.

Q4 Measure: Research funders will review their programmes to assess the extent to which they incentivise and reward collaboration between researchers, institutions and centres. (Innovation 2020 Implementation Group)

Update: This action is being progressed through the Innovation 2020 Implementation Group. The

position of each of the relevant research funders with regard to supporting collaboration has been established.

- The majority of SFI's programmes incentivise and reward collaboration. These programmes include Research Centres, Investigators Programme, Spokes, and Strategic Partnerships. In particular, many of SFI's Research Centres are multi-institutional and multi-researcher collaborations.
- IDA Ireland's current five year strategy identifies the promotion of collaboration & inter-disciplinary research.
- All Teagasc competitive funding requires collaboration between researchers, institutions and centres.
- In specific cases where appropriate, the EPA funds a number of research projects that require interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g with Agriculture, forestry, energy sectors). The EPA have established National research co-ordination groups, with key stakeholders (funders, governmental departments etc.), in the areas of Water, Climate and Sustainability that identify research opportunities in areas of common interest and avoid duplication of funding;
- The HEA supports collaboration through its core grant model. This helps researchers across institutions to collaborate with each other by providing platform support for research activity across the full spectrum of disciplines and Technology Readiness Levels. The HEA is also encouraging inter-institutional collaboration through the establishment of regional clusters of institutions across Ireland;
- The Health Research Board continues to sustain existing, and develop new, co-funding initiatives where appropriate. To give one example, in 2016 the HRB launched an innovative Applied Research Partnership programme to link academic and clinical researchers with decision makers, health managers, practitioners, NGOs, and the business sector;
- The Marine Institute has operated a number of co-fund exercises with other agencies. The Institute will continue to promote collaborative research programmes through the implementation of the National Marine Research and Innovation Strategy;
- The Specification document of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's most recent Call strongly encouraged applications with inter-institutional collaboration and contained an explicit requirement that applications in the budget range €600,000 to €3m must comprise a minimum of between 2 and 4 RPOs on a sliding scale with each accounting for at least 10% of the grant requested.

Action 90: Achieve €600 million in R&D investment annually to have a cumulative €3 billion in new R&D investments by 2019.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: R&D capital investment remains very strong. In 2016, IDA Ireland clients committed to R&D investment of €1.115bn. RD&I remains significantly important to Ireland's FDI landscape embedding existing employment and putting in place the framework for future employment creation. At the end of 2015 (latest data available), as per the ABSEI (Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact) survey, in-house R&D spend increased from €1.48bn in 2014 to €1.53bn in 2015 (+3.4%).

Action 91: Increase collaboration between firms and the public research system.

Q4 Measure: Expand the SFI Strategic Partnership and SFI Centres Spokes programme for adjoining new industrial and academic partners to the SFI Research Centres. (SFI)

Update: The Research Centres Spokes fixed call was reviewed and resulted in four awards being recommended for funding.

Q4 Measure: Increase the use of the Enterprise Innovation Partnership scheme to drive market led collaboration between firms and the public research system. (EI)

Update: In 2016, Enterprise Ireland approved 71 projects under the Innovation Partnership Programme.

Through its Innovation Partnership Programme, Enterprise Ireland helps companies to take their business to the next level by helping companies to access the latest skills and expertise from research institutes throughout Ireland.

The Innovation Partnership Programme can provide up to 80% of the cost of research work to develop new and improved products, processes or services, or generate new knowledge and know-how.

In an independent survey of companies that participated in the Innovation Partnership Programme:

- 96% of respondents would be willing to recommend the Programme to other businesses.
- 71% of participant companies surveyed said that their objectives were largely or fully achieved; and
- Each €1 of funding invested by Enterprise Ireland in Innovation Partnerships delivered €7.71 net turnover Impact at the company side.

Enterprise Ireland has made numerous presentations and exhibited at industry days at Technology Centres and Gateways to increase awareness and an increase in use of the Enterprise Innovation Partnership scheme. At these events Enterprise Ireland encourages enquiries that may convert into market led collaborations between firms and the public research system. Enterprise Ireland has been using a Customer Relationship Management system to track enquiries and to increase their conversion into Innovation Partnership applications.

Other actions to increase awareness of the Innovation Partnership scheme included the distribution brochures to potential applicants and recommenders. The brochure and website material is maintained and updated on an ongoing basis. An Innovation Partnership 'Express' promotional flyer was also designed and distributed.

Q4 Measure: Support over 830 industry-led research collaborations through Enterprise Ireland programmes. (EI)

Update: In 2016 Enterprise Ireland supported 1,036 Industry-led collaborative research projects. Enterprise Ireland's Industry led collaboration supports helps companies to find other companies with similar research agendas and help them collaborate and share resources and knowledge. The programmes Enterprise Ireland offers to support collaborative research with other companies include: Technology Centres; Enterprise Ireland's Research & Development (R&D) Fund and Knowledge Transfer Ireland.

Technology Centres: The investment in Technology Centres is a joint initiative between Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland allowing Irish companies and multinationals to work together on research projects in collaboration with research institutions. Technology Centres are collaborative entities established and led by industry. They are resourced by highly-qualified researchers associated with research institutions who are empowered to undertake market focussed strategic R&D for the benefit of industry.

Enterprise Ireland's Research & Development (R&D) Fund: Under the R&D Fund companies can get a collaboration bonus of up to 15% when there is collaboration between two companies on an R&D project.

Knowledge Transfer Ireland which enables business to leverage the commercial potential of Irish research and innovation. Using the KTI web portal, companies can more easily find technology, expertise, IP and facilities available in Ireland's Higher Education Institutions and State research organisations. They can also find information about how to engage with these institutions including access to resources such as practical guides and model agreements.

Action 92: Examine barriers to pension portability that can restrict researcher mobility.

Q4 Measure: Explore the possibility of the Irish Higher Education Institutions and other Research Performing Organisation participation in the EU RESAVER pension scheme. (DES, HEA, HEIs, RPOs)

Update: Action 3.14 of Innovation 2020, seeks to address barriers to pension portability that can restrict researcher mobility. The seven universities and the fourteen Institutes of Technology have expressed an interest in joining RESAVER and are all interested in exploring whether the RESAVER Initiative could work for Irish researchers. The IUA Pensions Managers Group have been asked to follow up and consider how it could be implemented.

Action 93: Ensure a strategic approach to the development of existing and new research infrastructure programmes.

Q4 Measure: Scope out and develop a successor to the PRTL to support investment in new infrastructure. (DJEI, DES, SFI, HEA with other departments and funders, HEIs, enterprise agencies and other stakeholders)

Update: DJEI established a working group with DES to progress the design of a new cycle of the PRTL. An outline proposal for the programme was presented by Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation at the Cabinet Committee on the Economy, Trade and Jobs in October 2016. This sets out the role that a future cycle of PRTL could play in delivering on Innovation 2020 targets for human capital and associated infrastructure investment for research. Work is now continuing on the detailed design and costing of the programme. Consultation with the Higher Education sector and other stakeholders on the proposed approach to a future cycle of PRTL will take place in due course.

Action 94: Support collaboration between the health system and enterprise leading to development and commercialisation of new healthcare technologies and to facilitate the health system to find efficiencies and improvements.

Q4 Measure: Report to the relevant Cabinet Committee on the progress of HIHI. (DJEI, DoH)

Update: On 8 December 2016, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation updated the Cabinet Committee for the Economy, Trade & Jobs on the progress to date of the Health Innovation Hub.

Key highlights for 2016 included:

- Health Innovation Hub Ireland was officially launched in UCC in September 2016.
- It involves a consortium from UCC, CIT, Trinity College Dublin and NUI Galway.
- Funding has been secured from within the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation's Vote and, through Enterprise Ireland, €5m is being provided over five years (€1m per annum). The HSE provides in-kind support including clinician time and hospital engagement etc, along with staff assigned to work in the hub; and
- As part of the official launch the first calls for proposals were issued.

A Review Panel was convened in December 2016 to identify successful applicants and these projects will be initiated in January/February 2017.

Action 95: Deliver on targets for the transfer of economically valuable research outputs to enterprise, from all publicly-funded research, through the knowledge transfer infrastructure supported by Knowledge Transfer Ireland.

Q4 Measure: All funders of public research will increase the commercialisation of the research that they support, using the available commercialisation and technology transfer programmes, to ensure the efficient transfer of economically valuable research outputs to e. (EI/KTI in collaboration with all research funders)

Update: Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) is the national office that helps business to benefit from access to Irish expertise and technology by making it simple to connect and engage with the research base in Ireland. Knowledge Transfer Ireland enables companies to innovate their business by signposting novel technology and research expertise in Ireland and by providing best practice guidance to simplify the process of accessing this rich source of opportunity.

KTI encourages and supports companies working with Ireland's State-funded research performing organisations such as universities, institutes of technology and other R&D centres of excellence. This engagement can improve business productivity, sales and performance by innovating products, services and processes. Companies and entrepreneurs benefit from the sharing of knowledge and expertise, and accessing technology and intellectual property which can increase business competitiveness.

In 2016 Knowledge Transfer Ireland supported the commercialisation of research through the Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative (TTSI) and through its central knowledge transfer functions (including the KTI Website, Model Agreements, Practical Guides and information on expertise within the public research system), to ensure the efficient transfer of economically

valuable research outputs to enterprise and to meet the following targets:

Commercially relevant technologies (licences, options, assignments): 102. The National Technology Transfer system enables the transfer of commercially valuable research outputs to industry. With funding from various sources including Enterprise Ireland, the Higher Education Authority, Science Foundation Ireland and others, researchers in Higher Education Institutes are inventing new technologies and developing solutions to challenges in areas like healthcare, transport, energy, engineering, food, software and telecommunications.

Many of these solutions and inventions have commercial potential and could become the basis for new companies, or could be used by existing companies to develop new products and services or processes and open up new markets. The technology transfer system plays a vital role in the early stage of this innovation pipeline.

The number of commercial relevant technologies transferred to industry figures is reported on a quarterly basis. The Q4 outturn will be available in Q1 2017.

Spin outs: over 30 (High Potential Start-Ups from Spin Outs: 13)

Enterprise Ireland's Commercialisation Specialists work with research teams in Research Performing Organisations (RPO) on research projects with the potential for commercial exploitation via a spin-out company. Together with these research teams and their Technology Transfer Office they work to nurture and develop spin-out companies to the point where it can be classed as an Enterprise Ireland High Potential Start-ups and considered for financial investment from Enterprise Ireland. The number of Spin-outs is reported on a quarterly basis. The Q4 outturn will be available in Q1 2017.

15 High Potential Start-ups were formed which originated as RPO spin-out companies.

Action 96: Drive the national Horizon 2020 European engagement agenda to secure €1.25 billion by 2020 in research funding for Irish companies and academics.

Q4 Measure: Win €150 million in research funding for Ireland under EU Horizon 2020 in 2016. (EI, Horizon 2020 National Support Network, Research Performers)

Update: Horizon 2020 (H2020) is the EU's financial instrument aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Seen as a means to drive economic growth and create jobs, Horizon 2020 has the political backing of Europe's leaders and the Members of the European Parliament, who recognise that research is an investment in our future and so put it at the heart of the EU's blueprint for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs.

By coupling research and innovation, Horizon 2020 is helping to achieve this with its emphasis on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering innovation.

Horizon 2020 is open to everyone, with a simple structure that reduces red tape and time so participants can focus on what is really important. This approach makes sure new projects get off the ground quickly – and achieve results faster.

The latest European Commission data shows Horizon 2020 funding to Ireland for 2016 at €156m. This brings Ireland's total funding in Horizon 2020 to €336m (2014-November 2016).

For comparison: Ireland's Total Drawdown in FP7 was €625m over 7 years (2007-2013). Ireland's €336m of funding equates to €2.4m per week - compared to €1m per week in the early stages of FP7 (the predecessor initiative to H2020). This is broadly ahead of our national target (€1.25bn, 2014-2020).

Higher Education Institutions remain the primary beneficiaries, accounting for 59% of all funding. Funding to Private Industry accounts for 31% with public bodies, research organisations and others making up the rest (9.9%). Demand for the programme from companies has been high (with 2,077 participations, 296 successes and funding of €104m approved).

Enterprise Ireland client companies account for 56% of all company funding with IDA Ireland clients securing 21% i.e. these agency client companies account for 77% of funding to date. Other companies (non-agency clients) primarily include, for example; project management consultancies. 70 % of funding to companies is to SMEs.

Q4 Measure: Catalyse the creation of and participation in consortia to bid for a large scale Horizon 2020 project. (Strategic Research Proposals Group reporting to High Level Group, Horizon 2020 National Support Network, SFI)

Update: The Strategic Research Proposals Group (SRPG) continues to meet quarterly to identify and promote opportunities for large bids. Among the programme areas that it has explored are Pre-Commercial Procurement of innovative solutions for public sector bodies; Smart Cities; and Smart Agriculture. It is also actively promoting the participation by Multinationals companies in Horizon 2020.

The SRPG organised a series of four thematic workshops, namely Health, ICT, Energy and Transport, to consider in depth specific opportunities in the corresponding H2020 work programmes. These

workshops involved a select group of key individuals from the relevant Government departments and State agencies and resulted in a very precise set of actions for each area.

Q4 Measure: Support Horizon 2020 engagement through the investigators programme, infrastructure call, workshops, ERA-net and business development approach to catalyse collaborative applications. (SFI)

Update: Science Foundation Ireland continued supporting Horizon 2020 wins in 2016, including SFI's Category A Research Infrastructure call, designed to increase success in Horizon 2020. All six projects funded by SFI under this call were successful in the corresponding Horizon 2020 scheme. The initial funding that will come to Ireland is about €2.5m - €4m. Membership of these consortia is also important in that it will increase opportunities for future funding.

SFI has continued its engagement with transnational European funding, joining three new Era-NETs in 2016. SFI is collaborating with international funding agencies through the ERA-Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life to fund research that will identify and validate biomarkers that are modulated by diet. Following a competitive peer review process, six Irish research groups were awarded funding; this success required SFI to increase its commitment to this call and resulted in 83% European Commission co-funding, an extremely high level.

Q4 Measure: Embed initiatives to support researcher careers and enhance applications to Horizon 2020. (IRC)

Update:

(1) The Council is currently developing the Frontier Research Programme which will fund exceptional, investigator driven research across all disciplines. The programme will cultivate enhanced ERC success for Irish researchers through the development of track record and international competitiveness. This impact is targeted to take effect from the final period of H2020.

(2) Implementation of the first call of the Council's CAROLINE MSCA-cofunded postdoctoral Fellowship scheme is underway. With a H2020 contribution of €4.6m, CAROLINE will create 50 research employment positions of between 2-3 years in both national and international domains, and will support the cultivation of future research leaders who will secure EU framework funding for the Irish research system.

(3) Council launched its New Horizons Interdisciplinary research Call in September 2016 and made 12 awards for interdisciplinary research projects linked with H2020 societal challenges totalling €2.6m in value. All awardees will be required to develop follow-on proposals for submission to Horizon 2020.

(4) The Council is continuing to provide support to the research community, in particular AHSS researchers, in the development of proposals targeting European Research Council grants and H2020 societal challenges. Given the prominence of migration in the H2020 Societal Challenge Six forthcoming work programme, the Council is convening a seminar in mid-January to enhance the readiness of researchers to respond when topics are ultimately published.

Action 98: Identify a pipeline of potential Small Business Innovation Research projects.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) is an initiative designed to drive innovation into the public sector by facilitating robust engagement between contracting authorities and innovative companies. It is competitive in nature with a two phased approach, channeled through an open challenge call to industry, prepared and published by public sector organisations. SBIR commences with initial feasibility and is followed by a final, detailed, product development stage.

In 2016, Enterprise Ireland successfully managed a pilot collaborative SBIR project with Dublin City Council seeking low cost, smart and innovative solutions to increase the number of people cycling in Dublin city.

Following approval by Enterprise Ireland's Board of €1m in funding to SBIR Ireland, a first official Call for Expressions of Interest (EoIs) projects to the Irish Public Sector was published on 27 September 2016 closing on 4 November 2016 – 29 EoIs were received from 19 Public Sector organisations. The evaluation process resulted in 10 projects being approved for funding support, both stand-alone and collaborative in nature, these projects are all due to commence in Q1, 2017.

Action 100: Drive market led innovation which addresses real patient needs through continued support of the Fellowship aspect of the Bio Innovate Ireland Programme for High Potential Start-Ups.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: In 2016, Enterprise Ireland continued to support the Fellowship aspect of the Bio Innovate Ireland Programme, which is delivering for High Potential Start-Ups. In 2016, three HPSUs which were a direct result of the EI investment in the programme were delivered.

BioInnovate Ireland is a forum which combines resources to catalyse and lead medical innovation by:

- Delivering the next generation of specially trained Fellows and skilled graduates to the med tech market place;
- Identifying new product development opportunities;
- Providing, developing and proposing commercial opportunities to move an identified clinical needs forward;
- Providing research opportunities and spin-out companies in collaboration with clinicians and partnering companies; and
- Building a med tech innovation ecosystem that can deliver internationally.

BioInnovate Ireland has achieved unparalleled access to Ireland's leading academic researchers, clinicians, and industry expert while the activity is underpinned by world class facilities available through the support network. BioInnovate offers two core programmes of activity: –The Fellowship Programme and the Industry Training Workshops.

The Fellowship programme, supported by Enterprise Ireland is a specialist medical device innovation programme which is affiliated with the Stanford University (USA) BioDesign programme. The 10-month, full-time, programme combines teams of high-calibre Fellows from either a medical, engineering, business or technical graduate background that aim to align unmet clinical needs with a

market opportunity.

Team members are chosen to contribute their skills, knowledge and expertise as part of a multi-disciplinary Fellowship team. During the process Fellows focus on one specific clinical area, receive mentorship from Industry, Clinicians, VC's, Domain Experts and Academics and are stipend supported by Enterprise Ireland.

Fellowship teams who are physically located at one of the partner Universities, perform their initial clinical immersion phase in the associated hospitals, and subsequently in hospitals across the country. To date, Fellows have interacted with hundreds of clinical staff in over 50 hospitals. The programme commences in early August each year, and had an associated post-graduate award of either a Post graduate Diploma or a Research Masters.

BioInnovate Ireland's training workshops have been developed to address the growing demand for innovation training in the Medtech sector and are delivered by a combination of BioInnovate Ireland Fellows, Academics, Clinicians and Industry Experts. These workshops afford participants the opportunity to work in multi-disciplinary teams to progress an unmet clinical need through the Identify, Invent and Implement Process.

Action 102: Secure €12 million in contracts from the European Space Agency.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Ireland has been a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) since its foundation in 1975. Irish industry is benefitting from Ireland's ESA membership through supporting in-company product development for the space market and commercial spin-out of space technologies into non-space markets. Subject to confirmation, the value of ESA contracts placed in Ireland in 2016 was €12.6m.

Enterprise Ireland has developed a new ESA Business Incubation Centre (BIC) in Ireland providing an important opportunity to develop new companies in this economical advantageous area. Additional benefits to Irish industry include: Access to knowledge resources within ESA; knowledge of technical standards; system specifications as well as highly specific market knowledge of the space sector, including linkages to space system integrators; Access to finance to start-up companies, and allowing firms exploit the profile and enhanced credibility of being associated with ESA and "Space".

Enterprise Ireland is actively engaged in attracting entrant companies to participate in the new ESA Business Incubation Centre.

*Final 2016 figures will not be available from ESA until Q2 2017

Action 103: Increase the early career stage human capital in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Complete the review process for the 2015 Starting Investigator Research Grant and make funding decisions. (SFI)

Update: The review process has been completed. 25 SIRG awards were offered by SFI.

Q4 Measure: Complete the review process for the 2015 Career Development Award Programme and make funding decisions. (SFI)

Update: The review process has been completed. 26 CDA awards were offered by SFI.

Action 104: Expand Science Foundation Ireland industry facing programmes to seed the establishment of long term collaborations of academic researchers with SMEs and MNCs in areas of economic importance.

Q4 Measure: Grow the number of existing public-private partnerships and Research Centre Spokes to a total of 20. (SFI)

Update: By the end of 2016, 7 Strategic Partnerships in addition to 13 Research Centres Spokes were approved for funding. This total includes some awards approved for funding by SFI's Grant Approval Committee. Pending successful contract negotiation, these awards were offered in Dec 2016/Jan 2017.

Q4 Measure: Target public-private partnerships with information and communications technology companies. (SFI)

Update: A very large public-private partnership award in the area of ICT will be made by end 2016 under the SFI Research Centres Spokes Programme. Pending successful contract negotiation, this award were offered in Dec 2016/Jan 2017.

Action 105: Grow and develop the 12 existing Science Foundation Ireland-supported research centres.

Q4 Measure: Support the 12 existing SFI Research Centres to increase their:
Signed legal collaborative research agreements with industry (to 260)
Of which approximately 140 are with SMEs Of which approximately 120 are with MNCs. (SFI)

Update: 371 signed legal collaborative research agreements with industry (Sept 2016).
161 are with SMEs; 210 are with MNCs.

Q4 Measure: Committed industry funding (to €63m). (SFI)

Update: 2016 industry commitments of €85m (€43m cash and €42m in-kind)
Non-exchequer funding currently stands at 41% of the overall Centre budget.

Q4 Measure: Success in Horizon 2020/European Commission funding awards (to 70-80 awards
valued at €30m-€35m). (SFI)

Update: To date, 125 H2020 awards have been won by the Research Centres – amount awarded to date is €78.8M.

Action 106: Fund new world-leading, large-scale research centres that will provide major economic impact for Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Invite these world class teams to submit full Research Centre proposals including minimum industry contributions of 30 per cent. (SFI)

Update: These applications have been submitted. Pre-proposal review has taken place. Eight applicants groups have been invited to submit full proposals. These will be reviewed through the end of 2016 and into 2017.

Action 109: Partner on research with Government entities and civic society to address national societal challenges.

Q4 Measure: Following from an assessment of the pilot 'Research for Policy and Society' initiative in partnership with a number of government departments and agencies, launch a full call. (IRC)

Update: The Research for Policy and Society 2016 Call was launched in September 2016, in partnership with a number of government departments and statutory bodies. Following a competitive, peer-reviewed process the Council recently decided on 21 awards (to be announced) of funding for research projects addressing policy and societal concerns, totalling €1.9m. In addition, to address civic society challenges, the Council launched a New Foundations 2017 Call on 19 September 2016. Included in the Call were strands addressing academia-civic society partnerships for both national and international societal challenges. There will be 28 awards (to be announced) made by the Council in respect of the civic society strands of the Call.

Action 110: Promote the new innovation standard among the third-level education sector and research community in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Deliver the agreed programme of appearances/presentations. (NSAI)

Update: NSAI delivered a programme of presentations and talks to third level institutes and the research community during the second half of 2016. In addition to the events in Sligo IT and Tralee IT reported in Q3, two further presentations were given to UCD, Dublin in October and researchers in Sligo IT in November.

Action 111: Take steps to establish a national biobanking system and support infrastructure.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HRB)

Update: The HRB is continuing to work with the ISO Technical Committee in the preparation of international standards for biobanking. This is an important development. The HRB will issue a call for funding to prepare for and support the incoming standard and get the health research community "ISO ready" when the standard is finalised in 2018.

In the meantime, the HRB ensures that all funding for biobanking is informed by international guidelines and it is working with other funding agencies to ensure that any biobanking component in their funded research adheres to appropriate guidelines.

The Department is considering a HRB proposal regarding Irish membership of the European biobanking infrastructure BBMRI-ERIC. Membership could be beneficial on a number of fronts including supporting linkages with international researchers, including access to sample collections and expertise membership as well as enabling Ireland to learn and benefit from a tried and tested model for coordinating biobanking infrastructure.

Action 112: Following investment to establish Clinical Research Facilities in Dublin, Cork and Galway and the establishment of Clinical Research Coordination Ireland, take steps to improve the accessibility and usage of the connected infrastructure for clinical studies and/or clinical trials.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HRB, CRCI)

Update: HRB-CRCI, the coordination centre for clinical trials, now provides an improved feasibility check for trials considered for Ireland and improved study start-up timelines. HRB-CRCI launched officially in Q4 as Central Point of Contact for Industry.

Over the last 12 months, improved accessibility of infrastructure due to HRB-CRCI was demonstrated by providing Clinical Industry Liaison support for 240 companies or projects from product concept to commercialisation, 137 expressions of interest from clinical investigators to participate in clinical trials distributed through the HRB-CRCI, and engagement with 25 clinical research networks. All these were zero previously.

Design for Innovation

Action 118: Conduct a scoping exercise on the nature of the design skills required across the economy to meet the future needs of enterprises in both design-intensive and non-intensive sectors. This will include a profiling of the current provision of design skills.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EGFSN, DJEI)

Update: A stakeholder workshop took place on 29 November 2016. The recommendations arising from the workshop and the research exercise were presented to the 7 December EGFSN meeting. Members reached agreement on the recommendations.

Action 119: The Embassy Network, including through the Global Irish Network, will continue to promote Irish design internationally.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT)

Update: The Embassy Network continued to promote Irish design throughout 2016. Events promoting the 'ID 2015' capsule collection were held in Sofia, Sydney, Plovdiv, Bratislava, Stockholm and Warsaw. The ID 2015 capsule collections will soon be permanently based in Embassy Tel Aviv and Consulate General Sao Paolo.

There was ongoing support and promotion of Irish design by the Embassy network, highlights of which include the showcasing of prints from the Design Craft Council of Ireland exhibition in Lithuanian Design Week, participation in the Austrian 'One Design Week', and the Nordic Now initiative.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade met with the Design Craft Council of Ireland in November to identify areas of further mutual interest and ongoing collaboration.

Competitiveness

Reducing the Cost of Doing Business

Action 122: Implement the National Waste Prevention Programme delivering resource efficiency initiatives for businesses, farms, communities and the public sector to enhance competitiveness and reinforce Ireland's green reputation.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (*Function Transferred from DECLG*), DCCAE)

Update: The 2016 programme is scheduled to deliver: 30 Resource Efficiency Assessments, 6 seminars and the development of an online efficiency diagnostic/tool aimed at SMEs; 30 on-farm resource efficiency assessments (incorporating multiplier peer-to-peer coaching); new engagement with the private nursing homes sector including 6 Resource Efficiency Assessments and a handbook for good practice on water usage in hospitals; Stop Food Waste Challenges taking place in 15-20 communities (incorporating multiplier peer-to-peer coaching); up to 12 'cleaner production' projects via Green Enterprise will receive funding of up to €60,000 each.

Action 126: Plan for the implementation of phase two of the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme, requiring all participants in the energy sector to work with their customers to deliver energy efficiency gains.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (*Function Transferred from DCENR*), DCCAE)

Update: A public consultation and stakeholder engagement process took place in Q3 and Q4 2016 during which the changes to the scheme were outlined to obligated parties. Revised Energy Efficiency Notices have been issued to all obligated parties which will cover the period 2017-2020.

Action 130: Ensure the implementation of Regulating for a Better Future across Departments, building upon recent progress and completing outstanding actions. Actions will focus on enhancing national competitiveness and securing Ireland's ongoing economic recovery.

Q4 Measure: Finalise Memoranda of Understanding between regulatory organisations to share their front and back office administrative functions. (DTTAS)

Update: There is currently no arrangement for any sharing of front and back office administration functions among aviation regulatory authorities (Commission for Aviation Regulation and Irish Aviation Authority).

Action 5.2.1 of the National Aviation Policy states: "The organisational arrangements for provision of safety and economic regulatory oversight will be restructured taking account of the review of the appropriate model for airport charges regulation and of developments and timelines under the Single European Sky (SES) legislation. In advance of any restructuring options being pursued there will be full consultation with interested parties."

Q4 Measure: Review legislation arising from the adoption of the Fourth Railway Package ahead of making any necessary legislative changes. (DTTAS)

Update: Review ongoing and will continue in 2017. Transposition of Fourth Railway Package to be completed by June 2019.

Q4 Measure: Review the operation of the commercial bus licensing regime ahead of making any necessary legislative changes. (NTA/DTTAS)

Update: Statutory review of Public Transport Regulation Act 2009 was submitted by the National Transport Authority in October 2016.

Q4 Measure: Continuing on from the implementation of the 2012 Taxi Regulation Review report, review legislation ahead of making any further necessary legislative changes. (NTA/DTTAS)

Update: Review ongoing and any changes will be implemented as required.

Q4 Measure: Complete the Corporate Offences and Regulatory Enforcement project's work. (LRC)

Update: The LRC is reviewing whether the supervisory and enforcement powers of the State's main financial and economic regulators are adequate or need to be supplemented and whether there are gaps in the criminal law that do not deal sufficiently with serious wrongdoing by corporate bodies. As part of its consultative process on this project, the LRC published a consultative Issues Paper on Regulatory Enforcement and Corporate Offences. In response to this consultative paper, the Commission has received a large number of submissions and comments from a wide range of relevant stakeholders, both in Ireland and from abroad.

The Commission is currently in the process of developing its final thinking on this project, having regard to the submissions received in response to the consultative paper and the engagement with stakeholders at its 2016 annual conference. It will continue to engage in relevant consultative processes with a view to publishing its report on this project this year, which will include final recommendations and draft legislation.

Q4 Measure: Report progress on the implementation of sectoral actions. ((*Function Transferred from DCENR*), DCCAE DTTAS/ ((*Function Transferred from DECLG*),DHPCLG /LRC/D/Taoiseach)

Update: A public consultation in review of airport charges regulation was completed in September 2016.

Investing in Economic Infrastructure

Action 131: Progress project priorities in the Greater Dublin Area to address congestion in 2016.

Q4 Measure: Continue to implement the rolling bus replacement programme through acquisition of PSO buses for Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann to maintain steady state. (NTA)

Update: 80 new PSO buses were delivered to Dublin Bus & 35 new buses/coaches to Bus Éireann.

Q4 Measure: Invest in fleet enlargement. (NTA)

Update: 30 new PSO buses were delivered for the Dublin Region for market growth.

Action 132: Establish and implement a framework for the provision by port companies of port services that are efficient, effective and adequate for the needs of our trading economy, positioning the sector so that it is capable of providing the type of port facilities the market requires.

Q4 Measure: Commence construction on the Alexandra basin redevelopment project which will inter alia deepen the navigable channel, reconfigure and/or rebuild quay walls and develop associated port infrastructure. (Dublin Port Company)

Update: Construction works commenced in 2016 on the Alexander Basin Redevelopment.

Q4 Measure: Continue construction on Phase 1 of Quayside Infrastructure Development Programme (overall programme costed at €50m over seven years) which will inter alia improve international connectivity through the construction of new quays walls and associated port. (Shannon Foynes Port Company)

Update: Phase 1 of the Quayside Infrastructure Development Programme was completed in 2016 at a cost of €13m.

Action 133: Continue to enhance Ireland's connectivity and grow our aviation sector, by supporting the development of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate new services and passenger growth at the three State airports, and to expand and develop international aviation services at Shannon. Connectivity to the regions will also be supported through Exchequer assistance for the Regional airports at Knock, Donegal, Kerry and Waterford.

Q4 Measure: Continue to invest in improvements at Dublin and Cork Airports aimed at meeting the needs of projected traffic growth. (daa)

Update: A number of developments were completed to enhance or increase existing infrastructure including the refurbishment of T1 arrivals area at Dublin Airport.

Q4 Measure: Continue regeneration by Shannon Group of the airport and Shannon Commercial Enterprise (formerly Shannon Development) properties, as an enabler to attract new aviation and ancillary service enterprises. (Shannon Group, DTTAS)

Update: Shannon Group progressed the first phase of the redevelopment of Shannon Free Zone, with the completion of;

- A 67,000 sq. ft. technology manufacturing facility at Shannon Free Zone East;
- the refurbishment of a 56,000 sq. ft. office and warehousing facility at Shannon Free Zone West; and
- the refurbishment of Universal House in Shannon Free Zone West.

Q4 Measure: Implement the new Regional Airports Programme 2015-2019 under the various support schemes and in accordance with State Aid Rules, as appropriate at Ireland West Airport Knock, Donegal, Waterford and Kerry airports. (DTTAS)

Update: The operation of the PSO contract with Stobart Air for the provision of air services from Kerry and Donegal airports to Dublin was reviewed in the autumn. Service provision was found to be satisfactory and the contract was extended for a further year (to January 2018). Also, under the Regional Airports Programme, €2.7m was disbursed to the four regional airports in Donegal, Ireland West Airport Knock, Kerry and Waterford in capital grants for infrastructure investments and equipment purchases in the areas of safety and security. In addition, a further €2.97m in grant funding was provided to the four airports in operational supports for security and safety activities.

Easier to do Business

Action 136: Further promote and expand the small business, construction and agribusiness sections of BeSMART.

Q4 Measure: Engagement with Insurance industry including CPD talks to the Insurance Institute of Ireland on BeSMART. (HSA)

Update: Several Social Media campaigns were undertaken to raise BeSMART awareness.

Q4 Measure: Engagement with Insurance industry including CPD talks to the Insurance Institute of Ireland on BeSMART. (HSA)

Update: Five Nationwide CPD Presentations were made to the Insurance Institute of Ireland.

Action 140: Through the Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum, progress the objectives of the National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility.

Q4 Measure: Continue to increase awareness of Corporate Social Responsibility and its value to business and to society. (DJEI, CSR Stakeholder Forum)

Update: Work continued to the end of 2016 to progress the objectives of the National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Awareness of CSR and its value to business and society was increased through the posting of best practice case studies, news, events, CSR awards, etc. on the CSR Hub and via social media.

In addition, the CSR Stakeholder Forum, in conjunction with DJEI, undertook the following actions:

- Developed a CSR on-line tool for SMEs which will help SMEs understand the value and benefits of imbedding CSR into their business operations. This on-line tool was launched by Minister for Employment and Small Business Pat Breen T.D. Minister for Employment and Small Business on 7 December 2016;
- Published a pilot CSR Newsletter on 22 December 2016 – which shared CSR news and showcased various best practice case studies; and
- Commenced phase 2 of the pilot Voluntary Mentoring Programme by securing additional large companies to participate in the Programme.

Finance for Growth

Ensure viable SMEs can access appropriate finance

Action 144: Detailed data from AIB, Bank of Ireland and ptsb will be collated and examined, on a monthly basis, ensuring a more informed understanding of the SME bank lending environment.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DoF, CRO)

Update: Figures to October 2016 received from AIB and Bank of Ireland have been analysed by both DoF and the CRO. A submission on the Analysis of Q3 SME Lending Data was sent to the Minister for Finance for information. Meetings were held with both AIB and Bank of Ireland to discuss the lending data and other issues pertaining to access to finance for SMEs. Engagement with ptsb is ongoing.

Action 145: Survey the demand for SME credit.

Q4 Measure: In addition to work carried out by the Central Statistics Office in this area, undertake two further SME Credit Demand surveys. (DoF)

Update: The latest SME Credit Demand Survey covering the period April to September 2016 was published on the Department of Finance website on 15 December 2016.

Action 148: Source additional funding to support the lending activities of the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland into the future.

Q4 Measure: Establish additional funding supports or expand existing funding facilities provided by multilateral institutions, the State and European Commission backed programmes. (DoF, SBCI)

Update: On 9 December, the SBCI signed a €200m long term financing facility with the Council of Europe Development Bank to complement the €250m Guaranteed Notes Programme signed and drawn in part with NTMA Funding and Debt Management. These new facilities now provide the SBCI with a total €1.25bn funding capacity for deployment through on-lenders to the SME market.

Action 149: Continue work on the development of an export finance strategy with the objective of delivering a product to market.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DoF, DJEI, EI, SBCI, ISIF)

Update: The Export Finance Working Group has developed a proposal for an Export Finance Initiative with the objective of supporting exporting SMEs. The Initiative will be offered on a pilot basis by the SBCI, subject to SBCI Board approval. The Initiative will run for an initial period of one year, after which time its effectiveness will be assessed.

If potential legal and regulatory issues can be addressed, it is anticipated the Initiative will be developed in H1 2017.

Action 151: Implement Enterprise Ireland’s Venture Capital and Development Capital Strategy.

Q4 Measure: Develop an improved system of reporting and evaluating the impact of seed and venture activity. (EI)

Update: A key part of the government’s Action Plans for Jobs has been increasing the level of funding available to growing and exporting Irish companies, supporting more of them to create the jobs we need.

In 2016, to support this Enterprise Ireland progressed the establishment of a number of funds which received commitments under the Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2013-2018). Under the first call for Expressions of Interest, in which €109.5m was committed to targeting Series A funding in the general technology and Lifesciences sectors, three funds were launched. Atlantic Bridge III, Fountain Healthcare Partners II and the Kernel Capital Growth Fund (ROI) II are now actively investing. An additional 2 funds successfully reached a close and are investing – these funds will be formally launched in the near term.

In addition, the first Angel has been approved under the €20m European Angel Fund and is actively sourcing deals. A further three Angels are at an advanced stage of the approval process

Under the second call for Expression of Interest, €65m was committed to funds targeting the early stage of company development. On 17 June, the €60m University Bridge Venture Capital Fund, the most recent fund announced under the scheme, was launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O’Connor, T.D.

Legal Negotiations are continuing with a number of other funds from this call and it is expected that three of these funds will be launched shortly.

Under the Development Capital Scheme, Enterprise Ireland continues to actively work with the three fund managers to promote and help our clients access these funds. The funds are active in the market and are seeing an increase deal flow pipeline across a range of sectors. The pace of investment is expected to continue into 2017.

Enterprise Ireland is also working to develop an improved system of reporting to build on the existing economic impact analysis of the Seed & Venture Capital Funds. A process to commission a review of the most recent Seed & Venture Capital Scheme has commenced recently.

Continue to research/learn in the area of Finance for Growth

Action 164: Host policy conferences on finance for growth, at least one of which is to be held outside Dublin.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DoF, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: The second SME State Bodies Group Policy Conference on Finance for Growth took place on 30 November in Galway. Representatives from WestBIC, Western Development Commission, Galway Chambers and six local SMEs met with the Group to discuss issues relating to finance for growth for indigenous SMEs.

Entrepreneurship

Action 166: Establish and monitor a range of nationally and internationally available indicators to assess national performance across the entrepreneurship ecosystem in order to inform entrepreneurship policy.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, DES, NCC)

Update: A range of indicators have been identified and recorded. These include Culture, Business Environment and Supports, Innovation and Access to Finance. By assessing Ireland's performance in each field through a number of internationally respected entities, we can see how Ireland is faring internationally.

Action 167: Carry out a mapping exercise to identify the range of supports available to entrepreneurs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: The mapping process results include direct State supports along with networks, working spaces, Campus Incubation Centres, Community Enterprise Centres and Chambers of Commerce. DJEI will engage with stakeholders on the results of the exercise in 2017.

Action 169: Support 130 new entrepreneurs via Enterprise Ireland's New Frontiers Development Programme.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: In 2016 Enterprise Ireland supported 160 entrepreneurs' participation on the New Frontiers Programme.

New Frontiers is Enterprise Ireland's national entrepreneur development programme for innovative, early-stage startups. It is a three-phased programme, based in 14 campus incubation centres across the country and is designed to support entrepreneurs capable of building a sustainable new business, trading internationally, creating employment and generating revenue in their own locality. Benefits of the New Frontiers Programme to entrepreneurs include de-risking the business model, a €15,000 tax-free grant, no equity taken from the business, provision of hot-desk and incubation facilities, and the introduction to Government and private investment opportunities.

Action 175: Implement the Local Enterprise Office Communications Strategy to ensure the services provided by the Local Enterprise Offices are communicated to all entrepreneurs and micro businesses.

Q4 Measure: Develop best practice case studies. (EI/LEOs)

Update: Enterprise Ireland in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) has developed a new LEO Communications Strategy. As part of this new strategy, they have developed a Communications toolkit and also media training have been undertaken by Local Enterprise staff. Implementation of the new communications strategy commenced in 2016 and has led to increased media coverage across the Offices.

The Communications Strategy continues to proactively build its message and brand utilising primarily editorial coverage across target media. Target audiences are communicated with clearly and professionally both at a national level and with customised communications at a local level. Key Local Enterprise Office activities and clients were showcased across all channels of communication - including Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur, National Enterprise Awards, National Women's Enterprise Day and the Student Enterprise Programme. An example of this is the value identified by local and national media coverage by an independent Media Insight Report - EUR 1.75 million - for Student Enterprise Awards 2015-2016. Local Enterprise Office clients were showcased via the case studies developed and media coverage obtained at National Ploughing Championships and Showcase, amongst others.

As a result of the LEO Communications Strategy there has been a significant increase in press coverage obtained nationally and locally for individual Offices. In support of this a local advertising campaign was undertaken by the LEOs during Q4 2016 with two themes: 'Starting a Business' and 'Growing a Business', to reach their target audiences via newspapers and local radio all around the Country.

Q4 Measure: Develop Local Enterprise Office Communications Toolkits. (EI/LEOs)

Update: Enterprise Ireland in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) has developed a new LEO Communications Strategy. As part of this new strategy, they have developed a Communications toolkit and also media training have been undertaken by Local Enterprise staff. Implementation of the new communications strategy commenced in 2016 and has led to increased media coverage across the Offices.

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Q4 Measure: Media Interview training for Local Enterprise Office staff. (EI/LEOs)

Update: Enterprise Ireland in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) has developed a new LEO Communications Strategy. As part of this new strategy, they have developed a Communications toolkit and also media training have been undertaken by Local Enterprise staff. Implementation of the new communications strategy commenced in 2016 and has led to increased media coverage across the Offices.

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Action 176: Strengthen the levels of customer service through the Local Enterprise Offices.

Q4 Measure: Repeat Local Enterprise Office Client Survey. (EI/LEOs)

Update: Since the establishment of the 31 newly branded Local Enterprise Office (LEO) offices, and commitment of additional staff in 2014, Enterprise Ireland has been focused on the development of an enhanced customer service (training, website, protocols with State bodies), seamless continuity of services (project supports/job creation, training and mentoring of start-ups and business expansion), and installation of oversight structures

Enterprise Ireland has placed a particular focus on Enterprise Capacity Building within the Local Enterprise Office network, involving the further development and promotion of the Local Enterprise Offices Network as the conduit providing information, support and advice to small businesses on, inter alia, access to finance issues. The means of achieving this objective is via appropriate training, mentoring and provision of information based on the availability of up-to-date information or training from the appropriate third-party sources.

The Local Enterprise Office's undertook a Local Enterprise Office client satisfaction survey in 2015, the results of which were used to inform/enhance the training programmes developed specifically to support Local Enterprise Office clients and the challenges they face. The second (repeat) Local Enterprise Office Client Survey which is underway is due for completion in January 2017, with analysis to be finalised in Q1. The results of the survey will help gauge the progress being made by the Local Enterprise Offices in strengthening the levels of customer service across the network and will help shape training and development programmes and the development of Client Relationship Management system and Client Engagement Model.

Q4 Measure: Research and source a new Customer Relationship Management System for use by Local Enterprise Offices. (EI/LEOs)

Update: Enterprise Ireland in consultation with the Local Enterprise Office network (LEOs), Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), County and City Management Association (CCMA) and DJEI have researched issues pertaining to the rollout of a new Customer Relationship Management system and formulated a working group which will drive the implementation of this key project in 2017. The outcome expected is for a new Customer Relationship Management /Client Engagement Management system that will be drive and support customer satisfaction and allow for targeted marketing initiatives, communications and client engagement. It will also allow for a significant enhancement of portfolio management for the Local Enterprise Office network.

Action 178: Begin rollout of funding for the delivery of successful projects under the Local Enterprise Office Competitive Fund.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs)

Update: On 1 June, Enterprise Ireland announced the allocation of €5m in funding for local and regional initiatives to support new businesses and jobs across the country under the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Competitive Fund and the Community Enterprise Initiative. This funding is the beginning of a new approach to supporting job creation initiatives at local and regional level in support of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs.

In line with the commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to create jobs in every region of the country, this €5m allocation will support 'bottom up' projects where the Local Enterprise Offices group together to create collaborative projects in their region and Community organisations partner with other regional organisations to deliver new job creation projects.

The Local Enterprise Office Competitive Fund aims to support Local Enterprise Offices to collaborate within their national network to fund initiatives focused on clearly defined opportunities, weaknesses or business challenges impacting micro-enterprise locally, regionally and nationally, in order to grow and sustain employment and scale micro-enterprise.

Under this fund, priority was given to new approaches that build on, and strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the country. A prerequisite for proposals was the need to demonstrate innovative solutions to fostering and creating employment.

A total of 50 applications were received in 2016 and following an assessment and evaluation process 16 projects reached the required standard. Enterprise Ireland has allocated a total of €1.5m to these projects. The balance of available funding will be allocated over the lifetime of the fund.

Local Enterprise Offices continue to develop and draw down funding in regards to agreed timescales and programme criteria. The following programmes are examples of this: Galway (Ireland West Food Group), Mayo (iFactory West), Wicklow (Creative Hub), Tipperary (Artisan Food, Digital Media and Ag Technology), Donegal (ACCLINVEST), Leitrim (Creative Connections and Graduate Internship), Fingal (online initiative for Dublin based food producers) and Sligo (sustainable food businesses).

Action 179: As resources allow, continue the process of narrowing the gap between the tax position of the self-employed vis-à-vis that of employees to encourage entrepreneurship and micro and small businesses.

Q4 Measure: Develop options and associated costings for consideration by the Minister for Finance as part of Budget deliberations. (DoF)

Update: The Earned Income Credit was increased by €400 in Budget 2017, bringing it to €950 with effect from January 2017. This tax credit, previously introduced in Budget 2016, is available to self-employed individuals who do not have access to the PAYE tax credit.

The Minister also announced his intention to introduce a new share-based incentive for SMEs next year in Budget 2018, following a process of engagement with the EU to ensure compliance with State Aid requirements. The purpose of the incentive will be to assist small companies in competing

with larger employers to attract and retain key staff.

Q4 Measure: Implement any decisions as part of Budget 2017. (DoF)

Update: The Earned Income Credit was increased by €400 in Budget 2017, bringing it to €950 with effect from January 2017. This tax credit, previously introduced in Budget 2016, is available to self-employed individuals who do not have access to the PAYE tax credit.

The Minister also announced his intention to introduce a new share-based incentive for SMEs next year in Budget 2018, following a process of engagement with the EU to ensure compliance with State Aid requirements. The purpose of the incentive will be to assist small companies in competing with larger employers to attract and retain key staff.

Action 180: Organise an Innovation Area at the National Ploughing Championships, targeting 50 companies, dedicated to new and innovative products, technologies and services aimed at the agri business sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: The National Ploughing Championships is one of Europe's largest outdoor agricultural trade exhibitions and the Innovation Arena at the event is a strong reflection of the great possibilities that lie in the agricultural sector.

The Innovation Arena allows innovators to showcase their ground-breaking developments, to thousands of visitors. Each year the Innovation Arena receives extensive media coverage as the world looks to Ireland to lead innovation for the agriculture sector; improving farming practices in Ireland and beyond.

Enterprise Ireland as part of the 2016 National Ploughing championships added a significant international dimension to the Innovation Arena with inward buyer visits from more than 15 countries including the US, Canada, Australia, China, Germany, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Poland, South Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia.

Innovation is one of the principles on which the Innovation Arena was founded and the competition for awards is at the heart of the event. Recognising this Enterprise Ireland, the National Ploughing Association (NPA) and The Irish Farmers Journal teamed up this year to recognise and reward outstanding innovation in the agricultural sector.

On 20 September Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O'Connor T.D. announced the winners of the 2016 Innovation Arena Awards. The awards recognised innovative agri-tech capability and new product development in the agriculture sector.

A record 195 applications to exhibit were received. 68 exhibitors were selected, all of whom were finalists in the Awards competition. Of these, 8 are spinout research projects, 12 are established companies and 48 are new start-up entrepreneurial-led exhibits. Entries were sought outside of Ireland for the first time this year and entrants from the UK and New Zealand are participated at this year's event.

The total prize fund this year was in excess of €70,000 including a top prize worth over €15,000 to the most innovative start-up

Action 182: Launch 10 Competitive Start Funds to support 100 entrepreneurs, including two targeted at attracting overseas start-ups to establish business in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland's Competitive Start Fund aims to accelerate the growth of start-up companies that have the capability to succeed in global markets. The fund is designed to enable those companies reach key commercial and technical milestones. A total of 12 Competitive Start Fund (CSF) calls took place in 2016. There were 3 calls open to all sectors, 2 specifically targeting female entrepreneurs, 2 targeting International entrepreneurs, 1 regionally focused (open to start ups based outside Dublin), 1 targeting Graduates and the final 3 were focused on the Fintech, Manufacturing and Agritech sectors. The twelfth call was a further one for women. While the call is now closed, the pitching and final decisions on successful applicants will be made in January. These resulted in approvals for 127 entrepreneurs/early stage companies for €50,000 each in return for a 10% equity stake in the business.

Action 183: Consider, with a view to progressing, actions emerging from the recent review of the Enterprise Ireland campus incubator programme.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Regional enterprise development is a core part of Enterprise Ireland's corporate strategy. To drive regional enterprise development Enterprise Ireland focuses supports and activities around known levers of regional development, such as, stimulating and sustaining entrepreneurship, supporting exporting SMEs, and leveraging the expertise and research presence in the regions' Higher Education Institutes.

Based on the positive external impact evaluation and the clear need to address space constraints in some of the smaller campus incubators a competitive Call for Proposals for the extension of Campus Incubation facilities at the Institutes of Technology was launched, approved by Enterprise Ireland. This fund offered maximum funding levels of €3m for eligible expenditure, with grant rates at 95% for the Border, Midlands Wes (BMW) region.

Arising from the competitive call process 3 incubators, Athlone IT Midlands Incubation Centre, GMIT I-Hub incubator at Mervue Galway and Waterford-IT ArcLabs incubators received funding approval from Enterprise Ireland, to almost double the incubation space at their incubators. These institutions have committed to providing the necessary additional management and operational resources which an expanded facility requires.

Action 184: Build on the success achieved to date with the Competitive Feasibility Funds by launching four targeted funds in 2016

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: The Action Plan for Jobs supports enterprise growth and job creation in every region of the country. The pace of progress in the regions, especially those with the highest unemployment levels, needs to be accelerated through targeted supports for enterprise and job creation. Vibrant and competitive regions are important, not just from an economic perspective, but also from a societal point of view. Growing the economic base of regions supports social cohesion and provides opportunities for young people in particular to continue to live and work in their local communities. Enterprise Ireland regularly offers feasibility funding for business start-ups in various sectors and geographic regions. The objective of the Competitive Feasibility Funds is to assist new start-up companies or entrepreneurs, to investigate the viability of a new growth-orientated business proposition which has the potential to become a High Growth Potential Start-up (HPSU*). The purpose of the Feasibility Grant is to enable the applicant and Enterprise Ireland to reach firm conclusions regarding the project's viability and set out investor-ready plans and financials associated with developing and commercialising the product or service on international markets. The Fund is open to manufacturing and internationally traded services businesses and designed to enable start-up companies reach key commercial and technical milestones. During 2016 Enterprise Ireland ran 4 targeted Competitive Feasibility Funds in the following regions: Midlands – Mideast; Cork region; Mid-West region along with one sectoral fund focused on the Agri-business sector. Together the 4 Competitive Feasibility Funds will have supported 19 companies across the country.

* HPSUs are start-up businesses with the potential to develop an innovative product or service for sale on international markets and the potential to create 10 jobs and €1m in sales within 3 years of starting up.

Driving Export Led Growth

Growing Irish Companies

Action 195: Implement the Enterprise Ireland Strategy to target the creation of over 13,000 new full-time permanent jobs and to support clients to achieve €22 billion in exports in 2016.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Over the last 3 years Enterprise Ireland has been implementing its 2014- 2016 strategy aimed at targeting job creation and supporting clients to achieve growth in export sales. The final outturns over the period of the strategy are not yet available. The results of the Annual Employment Survey (AES) and Annual Business Review (ABR) survey will provide the detail on Enterprise Ireland's progress against Employment and Export targets respectively.

These Surveys are on schedule. The Annual Employment Survey (AES) is nearing completion with its results due in Q1 2017 and the Annual Business Review is in progress, the latter's results to be published in Enterprise Ireland's Annual Report in Q2 2017.

Action 196: Establish a national approach to Lean involving micro businesses, SMEs and MNCs.

Q4 Measure: Implement the Lean Business three tiered offer, Start, Plus and Transform to drive the competitiveness of Enterprise Ireland client companies. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland continues to implement its three tiered Lean Business offer, Start, Plus and Transform to drive the competitiveness of Enterprise Ireland client companies, while ensuring that the Lean offer continues to develop and evolve to meet the changing needs of its participants. To date, 671 projects have been supported since launch.

Q4 Measure: Work closely with IDA and LEOs to provide their respective clients with a Lean offering. (EI, IDA, LEOs)

Update: Enterprise Ireland works closely with IDA Ireland and the Local Enterprise Office network (LEOs) to provide their respective clients with a Lean offering. To date IDA have completed 17 Lean Start projects successfully, a further 34 projects are under way and there is a pipeline of 10 additional projects. Similarly within the Local Enterprise Office network, 20 of the Local Enterprise Offices have a Lean offer in place, with a further 4 Local Enterprise Office offices expressing interest in a Lean programme for 2017. They are reporting very similar results to Enterprise Ireland's clients in terms of benefits derived for the offer.

Q4 Measure: Develop and maintain a directory of Lean Service Providers, at all levels of capability, to support company development. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland has developed and actively reviews and maintains a directory of Lean Service Providers, at all levels of capability, to support company development. As part of the continuous assessment and improvement process, Enterprise Ireland delivered two consultants' Fora in 2016, where the Lean programme was discussed and developed.

Q4 Measure: Support the Benchmarking Diagnostic offer, broader adoption nationally by sister development agencies, to develop fact based, international comparative sectoral competitiveness analysis. Expand the trained and accredited bench marker cohort to support thi. (EI)

Update: To support the Benchmarking Diagnostic offer, IDA Ireland has adopted the Enterprise Ireland Lean Offer for its clients. The broadening of the company base nationally will help to provide fact based, international comparative sectoral Competitiveness analysis.

To support this Enterprise Ireland, in consultation with IDA Ireland, has expanded the number of consultants trained and accredited as bench markers. In 2016 Enterprise Ireland delivered four training sessions, including one specifically focused on Innovation Benchmarking using the Innovation Health Check developed by Enterprise Ireland. Arising from this activity 48 consultants have been trained in the use of the benchmarking tools.

Action 197: Implement tailored mentoring programmes for the benefit of more than 300 Enterprise Ireland clients.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Ireland's recovery since 2011 has been founded on a deliberate policy of driving export growth across the economy and supporting successful Irish based enterprises in international markets. Enterprise Ireland's tailored mentoring and management development programmes use internal and external sources of expertise to ensure clients have access to high level strategic and sectoral expertise to grow their businesses internationally.

The Mentor Network programme is one of these sources, with over 400 business mentors, who give client companies, through their various stages of development, strategic advice and guidance on business development opportunities in Irish and overseas markets.

Through their engagement with these experienced business mentors, clients can accelerate their international growth and success through increased sales, expansion into new markets, successful development and execution of business strategy, and in some cases, introductions to key contacts, opening up business opportunities, channels to market and improved management capability.

In 2016, Enterprise Ireland implemented a number of tailored mentoring programmes benefiting 412 Enterprise Ireland clients.

Action 198: Support 800 participants on short course Management Development Programmes and 200 on long course Management Development Programmes.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland's customised long and short management development programmes, delivered in collaboration with leading international providers, aim to inspire business leaders, to equip them with the tools and techniques to operate more effectively and to build international scale. These programmes help build the capabilities companies need and deliver real and lasting impact, and results, for businesses.

In 2016, there were 1,551 participants on Enterprise Ireland short programmes and 569 participants on long programmes.

Action 199: Develop a process for a new strategy 2017-2019 for Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices that will lead to a new medium term strategy aligned with Enterprise 2025.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs)

Update: In 2016 Enterprise Ireland developed its new 4 year strategy covering the period 2017 – 2020. This strategy includes Enterprise Ireland's plans to support clients following the UK's decision to leave the EU. In tandem with the development of this strategy Enterprise Ireland has, in consultation with the Local Enterprise Office network, been developing the process for a new Regional Strategy (2017 -2019), in line with the Government's Enterprise 2025 strategy. The new Regional Strategy will be launched in Q1 2017.

Action 201: As part of Enterprise Ireland's drive to address the needs of family owned business, run two workshops under short Management Development Programmes specific to family owned businesses to share learning and best practice.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland offers a Suite of Short Programmes which aim to address the growth challenges of Enterprise Ireland client companies. The content of these short programmes has a very practical focus providing participating firms with tools and frameworks that can be easily implemented in-company.

Drawing on the collective experience of Enterprise Ireland's network of experienced SME practitioners, the Excel at Growth Series maintains a deliberate focus on the six fundamental building blocks that drive business growth: Strategy, Finance, Leadership & People, Sales & Marketing, Operations and Innovation, supporting companies through shared learning and best practice.

In 2016 Enterprise Ireland held two Excel at Growth workshops targeted specifically at Family Business Planning. These workshops were held in October and November 2016. In total there 25 participants on these workshops.

The "Business Planning for your Family Business" programme aims to equip Family Businesses with the knowledge, skills and financial know-how for successful business planning and growth and is designed specifically to allow participants to learn about and understand:

- Business Planning versus Family Business Planning - the differences and key issues on a family context including family business values;
- The value of financial planning and restructuring for a family business; and
- Governance in their own family business context.

As a result of attending this workshop participants have:

- A greater ability to develop a realistic business plan reflecting the realities of the family business context, and the needs of different family members;
- The ability to utilise and maximise effectiveness of a Shareholders Agreement;
- Greater insight into financial management in the context of a family business; and
- Decision making frameworks for Board member/shareholders and management; and
- Understand required governance structures for family business.

Action 202: Hold eight Potential Exporter Awareness Events and eight Workshops.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Export Awareness events and the more intensive Export Awareness workshops help companies understand the steps they need to take to develop their export potential. At these events, Enterprise Ireland outline a range of supports to help companies prepare to export and win new business overseas, successful Irish exporters talk about their exporting journey and participants have the opportunity to discuss their export plans with Enterprise Ireland executives.

During 2016, seven Export Awareness Events were held nationally covering all geographic locations. A further event, scheduled for November was cancelled due to the poor booking. Enterprise Ireland also held eight Exploring Exporting Workshops nationally. In 2016, there have been 77 participants at the Export Awareness Events and over 166 participated in Enterprise Ireland's one day Exploring Export Workshops. This series, which has been running for over 5 years, has over that period seen over 40 awareness events attract some 1,300 attendees, while over 700 participants have attended the 35 Exploring Exports Workshops.

Action 203: Host a national showcase of research and spin-out investor opportunities.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Now in its seventh year Enterprise Ireland's 2016 Big Ideas events is a platform for High Potential Start-Ups from the Irish research system to showcase and pitch their innovations to investors and to turn their Big Ideas into profitable ideas. This year's event was held on 28 November in the Helix, DCU.

The aim of the 2016 Big Ideas event was to highlight the successful collaborations that exist between Higher Education Institutes here in Ireland, investors and State support, with a particular emphasis being placed on potential new companies funded by the State that are rooted in research.

As part of the event a panel of Entrepreneurs gave insights into their own journeys from concept to contract, highlighting their achievements and in doing so aiming to generate a greater interest in the potential that lies within Irish research.

A "One to Watch Award" was presented to the outstanding pitch presented by University of Limerick spin-out Ostoform*.

The event offered the over 200 attendees and 250+ online participants**an ideal platform to see the quality of research that is currently taking place within institutes of higher education across the country. The accomplishments achieved by Ireland's national technology transfer system and the high standard of research that is currently being produced by Irish research centres was featured throughout.

* Ostoform has developed a medical device to manage skin complications suffered by ileostomy patients and was selected from eight investor-ready start-up companies who pitched their new innovations to investors at Enterprise Ireland's annual Big Ideas event.

**The participants at this year's event were predominantly made up of investors & researchers.

Action 205: Publish and roll out the National Standards Authority of Ireland Strategy 2016 to 2020 to address the technical quality infrastructure needs of industry and societal stakeholders and to support the regulatory function of Government Departments, bodies and agencies.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (NSAI)

Update: Ministerial approval was received in December 2016. The final version of the Strategy is currently with a translator for imminent publication in both Irish and English.

Action 206: Promote new business management standards (ISO) to maximise their uptake.

Q4 Measure: Roll out programme by Q4. (NSAI)

Update: A rolling programme of engagements promoting the most popular management systems standards has been delivered throughout 2016. The first six roadshows of the year focused on the updated ISO 9001:2015 (quality management) and ISO 14000:2015 (environmental management) standards were delivered in Dublin, Limerick, Galway, Sligo, Waterford and Cork by the end of March with an additional Dublin presentation on Excellence Through People on 25 February.

In Q2, four Roadshows on Migration from OHSAS to ISO 45001 (Occupational Health and Safety) were held in Dublin (x2), Cork and the Midlands. Two events to promote the new ISO 13485:2016 standard for medical device management systems were held in Galway and Dublin.

During Q3, a further two Roadshows were held in Galway and Dublin on upgrading to ISO 9001:2015 (quality management) and ISO 14000:2015 (environmental management) with case studies presented by Irish companies using the standards.

A further two Roadshows on the updated ISO 9001:2015 (quality management) and ISO 14000:2015 (environmental management) standards, including case studies from Irish businesses were held in Cork and Limerick during Q4. NSAI's group certification event was held in November where 30 businesses were recognised for their compliance with standards including the widely used ISO management standards.

Action 208: Support 25 new large scale food investments.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland continued its support for the food and drink sector and approved 34 new significant investments in Food companies in 2016. These investments included a number of significant capital projects (i.e. valued in excess of €500,000), Research & Development, Innovation projects and the approval and the proposed launch of the Meat Technology Centre in 2017.

Enterprise Ireland's Capital projects help companies undertake ambitious company expansions that will create employment, sustain competitiveness and grow sales in international markets.

Research and Development projects aim to develop novel products and services with a clear competitive advantage in their target market while Management Development Programmes for Managers and Client Companies support the development of strong leadership in client companies.

These investments will enable companies to increase employment through sustainable and substantially increased sales. Innovation Projects introduce companies to the research expertise in Irish Higher Education Institutes with the aim of generating innovative technologies leading to job creation.

Action 210: Apply the lessons and recommendations emerging from the evaluations of the enterprise development agency programmes across all programmes.

Q4 Measure: Complete implementation of the required changes. (DJEI, development agencies)

Update: Science Foundation Ireland Research Centres programme evolved taking into account the conclusions and recommendations from the suite of programme evaluations, specifically the CSET programme evaluation and the SRC programme evaluation.

Triggered by SFI's ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Research Centres programme, an expert panel, independent of SFI, has commenced reviewing the governance structures of the Research Centres. SFI will ultimately evolve the governance structure of the existing and new Research Centres following the expert panel's report.

In 2016, IDA completed the implementation of the above recommendations by:

- Introducing a number of improvements and revisions to the design of grant programmes;
- Enhanced the grant offering documentation; and
- Introduced a data visualisation tool for reporting purposes; and developed Programme Logic Models across our grant programmes.

Supporting Foreign Direct Investment

Action 211: Target 16,000 new gross jobs yielding 7,000 net new jobs in 2016.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: In 2016, IDA Ireland's client companies created just under 19,000 (18,627) jobs on the ground across a range of sectors, with every region of Ireland posting net gains in jobs. The net job increase was 11,842. Total employment at IDA client companies now stands at 199,877, the highest level on record. The performance was provided against a background of unprecedented geopolitical changes, an underperforming European economy and intense competition from other jurisdictions for foreign direct investment.

Action 212: Work to win another 175 new FDI projects in 2016.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: A record number of investments secured during 2016 rose to 244 from 213 in the previous year. These investments came from new name companies, locating in Ireland for the first time, existing companies expanding their operations in Ireland, and companies undertaking R&D activities in Ireland.

The number of new name investments went to 99 from 94 in the previous year. The strong net job creation performance of 11,842 additional jobs in Ireland is a result of a very strong pipeline of new investments and lower jobs losses within the employment portfolio.

Action 213: Continue to win investment from high growth and emerging markets together with new forms of FDI.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: 2016 was a very positive year for the Growth Markets Division as the nature and scale of investment from these geographies broadened and deepened. 16 investments were secured in 2016.

In 2015, IDA set up a new team to look at developing new sources of FDI for Ireland. This team identified six sectors of potential interest including Marine Economy, Investments linked to Infrastructure, Property FDI, Arts, Culture & Sport, Energy Services and Agritech. In 2016, the team has continued to develop value propositions for these sectors and have won their first projects.

Action 214: Attract 28 FDI projects from emerging overseas businesses to Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: IDA established a new Division (Emerging Business Division) in 2010, designed to focus on securing investments from early stage, fast growth companies. Since then, IDA has secured over 160 investments. In 2016, IDA won a further 31 investments.

Action 215: Target five new FDI food investments.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland is the government agency responsible for attracting food and drink related Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects to Ireland. Enterprise Ireland competes internationally to secure these projects for Ireland in an environment where attracting mobile food investment is extremely competitive and challenging. In 2016 Enterprise Ireland approved investment in 5 FDI projects.

Manufacturing

Action 217: Continue to invest in infrastructural and research projects supports (innovation partnerships, spokes etc) to encourage commercially relevant research, development and training in pilot scale (Technology Readiness Level 5-9) manufacturing and quality testing of next generation therapeutics (e.g. antibody drug conjugates).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA, SFI, EI)

Update: NIBRT has recently applied to SFI for funding under the new centres call in collaboration with industry and other academic institutes. The proposal is currently at stage two of the review process. IDA continues to work with their client base to encourage R&D and training investments, delivered through IDA grants and/or EI Innovation Partnerships.

Supporting Trade

Action 221: Continue to develop the coordinated approach to international messaging across Government, including through the regular updating of key messages and their communication by Ireland's Embassy network.

Q4 Measure: Update, on a quarterly basis, key messages for international audiences on Ireland's economic progress and our trade, tourism and investment strengths. (DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Key messages on Ireland's economic progress and trade, tourism and investment strengths are updated on a quarterly basis with inputs from across Government Departments and State Agencies. An update for Q4 was published in January.

Action 223: Advance the Africa Strategy which provides a comprehensive framework for the development and management of Ireland's official engagement with Africa, through a clearly targeted engagement on trade and economic relations with Africa, including: a renewed Africa Ireland Economic Forum; the strengthening of our embassies' trade promotion tools and capacities, in co-operation with the State agencies; and ongoing support to Irish business representative bodies and companies focused on doing business in Africa.

Q4 Measure: Consult with relevant stakeholders and deliver a revised Africa Ireland Economic Forum; including events to engage Irish business representative bodies and relevant companies. (DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies and the private sector)

Update: The revised Africa Ireland Economic Forum took place in Dublin from 16-17 June and brought together Irish business representative bodies, companies and policy makers to hear about the opportunities for enhanced trade and investment between Ireland and Africa. The Forum also hosted the launch of the Irish chapter of the Business Ireland Africa network, which aims to support both Irish businesses in Africa and African businesses in Ireland.

Procurement Opportunities

Action 231: Participate at "Meet the Buyer" events in conjunction with InterTradeIreland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DPER/OGP)

Update: The OGP partnered with InterTradeIreland to deliver a Munster Regional Meet the Buyer event in Cork on 19 October. At the event, SMEs had the opportunity to meet the OGP and other public sector buyers to better understand how public procurement works and the relevance of their goods or services. Some 350 businesses attended the event. The OGP also participated at a Meet the Buyer event in Belfast on 8 June in conjunction with InterTradeIreland, which was attended by over 500 businesses.

Stimulating the Domestic Economy

Agri-food

Action 239: Secure access to new third country markets for Irish meat and dairy products while maintaining access to existing markets.

Q4 Measure: Per headline action.. (DAFM)

Update: The Market Access team continued to engage closely with industry, Bord Bia, DFAT and the European Commission to identify and develop new third country markets including hosting a quarterly market access working group meeting . A beef certificate was agreed with New Zealand and a sheepmeat certificate was agreed with Iran during Q4, opening up access to those markets. A South Korean inspection visit was facilitated in October & November 2016 to maintain access there for pigmeat and dairy exports. On beef, a further questionnaire was submitted informally to the Korean MFDS as another part of the beef access process.

The Market Access team also had a major input both to the Ministerial Trade Missions to China, Vietnam, South Korea and Singapore in September 2016 and also to Algeria and Morocco in November 2016. Beef questionnaires were submitted to Vietnam and South Korea, and a Ministerial meeting was held with AQSIQ in China on beef access. Contacts are ongoing in relation to beef certification issues with Algeria.

Maintaining access to existing markets continues to be a key part of the work of the Market Access team and DAFM's veterinary services.

Action 240: Roll out a schedule of outward and inward trade visits at Ministerial level to promote agri-food exports in key markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM, EI, Bord Bia)

Update: Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., led a trade mission to Morocco in early November. While there he met with the Minister for Agriculture, ONSSA, ADA, the Head Wali (King's Representative) and President of the Souss Massa region. He also met with a number of Moroccan companies interested in trading with Ireland.

Officials continued this mission into Algeria meeting senior officials. While there Ireland hosted a dairy seminar, Food Ireland: Safe, Secure and Sustainable. The groups also met with a number of Algerian agri-food companies.

As regards inward visits, officials of DAFM met with delegations from Chile, Georgia and Macedonia in October. In addition, the Vietnamese media interviewed Minister for Food, Forestry, and Horticulture, Andrew Doyle T.D., and visited a farm in Wicklow. In November, the Norwegian Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Jon Georg Dale, visited Ireland and met with Minister Creed and officials.

Action 241: Support the expansion of the alcohol beverages and prepared consumer foods industry.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM, EI, Bord Bia)

Update:

- Under the 'Scale for Craft Beer Programme' an umbrella brand is planned for a group of craft beer companies planning to enter the US market.
- A guide to German foodservice is being developed to provide market understanding and identify market entry strategies for companies seeking to diversify into this market.
- Market study to Sweden to develop understanding of the gluten free opportunities for baked goods. (The Swedish market for gluten-free product is valued at €48 million).
- Further member approvals under the Food Competitiveness Fund for lean initiatives, Leadership4Growth and upskilling.
- Continued development, promotion and protection of Ireland's three spirit drinks Geographical Indications (Irish Whiskey, Irish Cream and Irish Poitín/ Irish Poteen)
- Bord Bia provided enhanced supports for companies exporting >20% of turnover to UK, which are seeking to diversify in UK and non UK markets.

Action 243: Support a further cohort of new food entrepreneurs under Food Works and promote market outlets for food start-up companies.

Q4 Measure: Conclusion of workshops and mentoring and submission of investor ready business plans. (Bord Bia/Teagasc/EI)

Update: Eight food entrepreneurs completed the Food Works programme and will submit their investor ready business plans early in the New Year for 'pitching' to a panel of potential investors. A series of workshops with nine enterprises was completed in 2016 and investor-ready plans will be finalised in January 2017.

Action 245: Continue the successful Food Academy initiative (which is run in conjunction with retail outlets) to nurture start-up food businesses through workshop style training and assistance with routes to market.

Q4 Measure: Provide a central listing for selected participants for their products at regional or national level. (Bord Bia, EI/LEOs)

Update: Food Academy Advance involves participants (20 finished in the summer and a new cohort will not begin until 2017) being selected by SuperValu/Musgraves for appropriate listings (regional or national) on a trial basis. Food Academy Start is run by individual LEOs on an on-going basis. Some of those participants may however progress to the Food Academy Advance programme in due course.

Action 248: Continue to improve analytical and innovation capacity in the sector through the recruitment and development under the Walsh Fellowship Programme.

Q4 Measure: Increase number of Walsh Fellows in line with increased staffing resources and work with university partners to ensure that training provided continues to focus on the analytical and innovation needs of the industry. (Teagasc)

Update: Teagasc awarded 50 new Walsh Fellowships under its 2017 call, increasing the overall number in line with increasing research staff numbers and broadening the international partnerships involved in Walsh Fellows supervision.

Action 249: Develop additional commercial project proposals, with the relevant Government agencies, to deliver knowledge transfer on Ireland's sustainable food production systems to international customers.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFSI)

Update: Projects won in 2016 include consultancy in export competitiveness (Kosovo), food safety training (Saudi Arabia) and food enterprise cluster development (Turkey). Opportunities in the SFSI pipeline include Saudi Arabia, Oman, Russia and a number of projects in Turkey.

Action 251: Lead research, in collaboration with other research institutions and industry, to derive applications from the significant State investment in foods for health.

Q4 Measure: Transfer laboratory processes for generation of food bio-actives to commercial scale. (Teagasc)

Update: During Q4, DAFM announced FIRM funding of the NIHAM Foods project, which is focused on the generation of new foods that will specifically enhance the growth of newly identified health-promoting gut microbes. This project will commence in Q1 2017.

The health-promoting properties of microorganisms present in fermented dairy foods were highlighted in an APC-funded study which was published in the journal MSys and a Teagasc-funded project continues to make progress in this area.

Research on the potential health benefits of cheese has continued and two human feeding trials relating to the impact of cheese on cardiovascular health and appetite modulation are being designed.

Action 253: Drive the implementation with client food and drink companies of: approved projects and new investments; the innovation and research development agenda; and the management capability and competitiveness agenda.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: The agri-food sector is Ireland's largest indigenous industry, directly and indirectly employing over 230,000 people. The sector is continuing to perform extremely well, increasing exports by 51% since 2009 to reach a record value of €10.8bn in 2015. The strongest categories in terms of export growth were beverages (+10%), beef (+6%), and seafood (+4%). The sustained growth in exports of Irish Whiskey, up by an estimated 18%, was the most significant driver in the beverages category. The growth in dairy exports, up 4%, occurred in the face of an exceptionally adverse trading environment and reflects the strong growth in the volume of specialist nutrition powders (infant formula), which increased by 25% overall and by 40% to China alone. Each year, Irish food and drink is exported to over 175 markets around the world. Ireland is the largest net exporter of beef in the EU and the Northern Hemisphere, exporting nearly 90% of what is produced each year. Ireland produces over 10% of the world's infant formula and Irish Whiskey is now the fastest growing spirit category in the world. Ireland also produces 50% of the world's cream liqueurs.

Continuing its support for the food and drink sector, Enterprise Ireland to the end of Q4, approved investments which included a number of significant capital projects (i.e. valued in excess of €500,000), Research & Development, Innovation projects and the approval and the proposed launch of the Meat Technology Centre before in early 2017.

Enterprise Ireland's Capital projects help companies undertake ambitious company expansions that will create employment, sustain competitiveness and grow sales in international markets; Research and Development projects aim to develop novel products and services with a clear competitive advantage in their target market while Management Development Programmes for Managers and Client Companies supports the development of strong leadership in client companies. These investments will enable companies to increase employment through sustainable and substantially increased sales. Innovation Projects introduce companies to the research expertise in Irish Higher Education Institutes with the aim of generating innovative technologies leading to job creation.

Following the announcement of the UK to leave the European Union, Enterprise Ireland's Food Business Unit has been proactively working with our food clients, who are significantly dependent on the UK export market, on responses to the potential impact on trade and investment flows.

Marine

Action 255: Implement the 24 actions identified in the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development.

Q4 Measure: Per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: The Aquaculture & Foreshore Management Division continued to work to reduce the backlog in Aquaculture Licence applications consistent with available resources and legislative requirements.

Action 256: Strengthen support for the enterprise dimension of the Irish Marine and Energy Resource Cluster, to add to the training, research, industry and naval capabilities currently in place.

Q4 Measure: Per headline action. (DAFM)

Update:

- Phase 1 evaluation of the proposal to develop the National Maritime Innovation Hub at IMERC was received from Enterprise Ireland. Invitations to progress to submit a Phase 2 submission are anticipated in Q1 2017.
- Ensure full occupancy in The Entrepreneur Ship, with 22 desks rented to start-ups and touch down companies: Complete - The Entrepreneur Ship is fully occupied.
- Develop and implement enterprise support capabilities for the Cluster: Iterative and ongoing -
 - IMERC start-ups participated in the Spike Island Start Up Boot Camp in November 2016 as part of the Start Up Nations Summit.
 - Mentor panel met with start-ups in October.
- Collaborate with the Emerging Sectors team of the IDA to identify and target touch down companies and potential anchor tenants for IMERC: Ongoing with some significant developments anticipated in 2017. IMERC jointly received an international award with the Marine Institute at the Blue Technology Summit in San Diego in November.

Tourism

Action 258: Implement 2016 relevant actions arising from the new Tourism Action Plan.

Q4 Measure: As per headline measure. (DTTAS, State Tourism Agencies, other relevant Departments)

Update: An analysis of the visitor accommodation capacity issues in Dublin City for the period to 2020 was completed. The Regional Co-operative Market Access Scheme was extended to 2018 and the necessary 2016 steps to support the Irish Rugby Football Union bid to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup have all been completed.

Action 259: Dublin, as the capital city, is the key driver of Ireland's tourism industry. Fáilte Ireland will work with industry and agency partners to grow the city's international appeal.

Q4 Measure: Implement relevant actions as per Destination Dublin strategy and Grow Dublin Tourism Alliance Progress and Action Plan. The focus will be on: brand activation; enhancing the visitor experience; cross-promotion; and growing the accommodation base. (Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland with others)

Update: A targeted advertisement campaign was carried out in Great Britain to increase awareness and consideration of Dublin as city holiday destination. Fáilte Ireland worked with Dublin based tourism businesses to help them tailor their offering to the needs of overseas tourists, and Fáilte Ireland also revised hotel regulations to allow for more innovative and consumer-focused accommodation offerings.

Q4 Measure: Activate a suite of festivals to drive tourism business in the off-peak season, e.g., St Patrick's Festival in March, Bram Stoker in October, and New Year's. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Fáilte Ireland funded several off-season festivals in the capital city, including Dublin Fringe (Sept), Dublin Theatre Festival (Sept/Oct), Bram Stoker (Oct), and New Year's Festival (Dec/Jan). Consumer research and trade feedback indicates that the festivals were successful in attracting additional visitors to the city, helping to support demand for visitor accommodation and other tourism services during the off-peak season, which in turn supports a higher level of year-round employment in the tourism industry.

Q4 Measure: Develop an engaging and distinct food story for Dublin to enhance the visitor experience. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: The Dublin tourism trade, with the support of Fáilte Ireland, has developed destination-specific food stories. These efforts help to drive differentiation and distinctiveness of Dublin as a visitor destination.

Action 260: Help Ireland's South, East and Midlands achieve international "stand-out" via the Ireland's Ancient East brand and build on the region's comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage.

Q4 Measure: Activate a programme of capital investment in the tourism stock of Ireland's Ancient East to improve public tourism infrastructure and support the development of heritage attractions, including partnering with the Office of Public Works to enhance the vis. (Fáilte Ireland, OPW)

Update: Six capital investment projects for Ireland's Ancient East were identified by Fáilte Ireland and OPW as part of activating a programme of capital investment.

Q4 Measure: Activate a suite of festivals that complement the destinations or experience brand proposition, e.g., Kilkenny Arts and Wexford Festival Opera. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Fáilte Ireland funded several off-season festivals across Ireland's Ancient East, the most high profile of which were Cork Jazz and Wexford Festivals Opera. The support assisted in maintaining demand for visitor accommodation and other tourism services during the off-peak season, which in turn supports a higher level of year-round employment in the tourism industry.

Action 261: Through the Wild Atlantic Way, deliver balanced and sustainable revenue and jobs growth with greater geographical and season spread and benefits to local communities in the West of Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Establish an insights and innovation supports programme for experience providers along the Wild Atlantic Way. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Fáilte Ireland has established the insights and innovation programme. The supports provided under this programme have helped small and micro tourism businesses to better understand and meet the holiday motivations of overseas tourists.

Q4 Measure: Work with private operators to encourage new quality accommodation to come on stream. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Fáilte Ireland's Welcome Standard (a new set of standards to allow for greater innovation, individuality and authenticity in Ireland's approved tourist accommodation businesses) was adopted by 127 accommodation providers along the Wild Atlantic Way. The providers offer a wide variety of innovative visitor accommodation, for example glamping, yurts, pods, vintage caravan, and old forts.

Action 262: Deliver a new suite of business supports in 2016 to enable our industry to maximise their potential in growing their revenue from overseas visitors. The key objective of these supports will be to continue to see growth in export earnings and employment from the tourism industry.

Q4 Measure: Target 70 new leads in key source markets to increase programming of Ireland by travel agents, tour operators and others who package and sell overseas holidays. (Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland)

Update: Over 70 new leads targeted in key source markets to increase programming of Ireland by travel agents, tour operators and others who package and sell overseas holidays.

Q4 Measure: Develop 28 partnerships for regional dispersal to drive additional sales to areas where there is under-utilised capacity. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Over 28 partnerships for regional dispersal to drive additional sales to areas where there is under-utilised capacity were developed.

Action 263: Events Ireland, which is part of Fáilte Ireland and is tasked with growing overseas arrivals through sports, business and other events tourism, will increase sports tourism overseas arrivals by rolling-out an Event Ambassador programme and, in partnership with key stakeholders, identifying, bidding and ultimately hosting suitable internationally mobile events.

Q4 Measure: Identify and build a pipeline of relevant and appropriate bid-worthy events for Ireland through collaboration with strategic partners. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: A pipeline of 58 events has been identified for the period up to 2024.

Q4 Measure: Support ten leads in making strong, competitive bids for new sports tourism events. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: 16 events were supported by Fáilte Ireland in 2016 and 40 leads were generated for new events in 2017 and subsequent years, of which 11 have reached bid pending status.

Q4 Measure: Secure a minimum of four new events for Ireland (generating an estimated €30m in revenue). (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: During 2016, 10 new events were secured for Ireland.

Action 268: Support a range of projects that apply good heritage practice to the management of places, collections or objects (including buildings) through the Heritage Management Grant Scheme 2016.

Q4 Measure: Complete draw down of grants to a range of private projects. (*Function Transferred from DAHG), DAHRRGA), Heritage Council)*

Update: All grants were drawn down on time and before year-end.

Action 269: Roll out a further built heritage jobs leverage scheme with €2 million funding which encourages the investment of private capital through the provision of matching public funds in a large number of small-scale, labour-intensive projects across Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Complete the draw down of grants to a range of projects. (*Function Transferred from DAHG), DAHRRGA), LAs)*

Update: All grants were drawn down on time and before year-end.

Construction and Housing

Action 284: Complete a review and report to Government on the steps necessary to deliver a system of e-Conveyancing in Ireland, including the resource implications, the timescales for delivery and the potential benefits to consumers and practitioners.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJE)

Update: The Department of Justice and Equality continues to work with the Law Society and other interested stakeholders on a review of the steps necessary to deliver a system of e-Conveyancing in Ireland and will report to Government as soon as possible.

New Sources of Growth

Digital Economy

Action 286: Bring forward proposals as to how best to capture the digital economy opportunities for enterprise.

Q4 Measure: Bring forward proposals as to how best to capture the digital economy opportunities for enterprise. (DJEI, relevant Departments)

Update: The rollout of Ireland's broadband intervention strategy will mark a critical juncture in Ireland's development, offering the potential for an inclusive information society and a digital economy where enterprises, individuals and the public sector can harness the wide range of benefits of the new wave of advanced digital technologies – significant productivity growth, improved global competitiveness, increased innovation and exports, more and higher quality jobs, better and more efficient public services, enhanced quality of life and prosperity for citizens.

To take full advantage of these benefits, Ireland needs to ensure that the enabling conditions are in place. However this is a complex policy environment involving a number of Government Departments and agencies across a wide range of issues and will require an integrated, whole of Government approach. Specific policy issues that arise include data protection, cybersecurity, interoperability and standards, digital literacy and skills, research, development and innovation, broadband access and regulatory coherence.

DJEI has mapped the policy enablers for the Digital Economy both at a national and EU level and has made proposals about how progress can be made towards ensuring Ireland's goal of becoming a Digital Hotspot in Europe. These proposals will be brought forward through the Action Plan for Jobs process.

Q4 Measure: Bring to the relevant Cabinet Committee. (DJEI)

Update: The proposals around the Digital Economy are included in Action Plan for Jobs 2017 and were brought to the Cabinet Committee on Economy, Trade and Jobs on the 6 of December 2016.

Action 287: Select the preferred bidder(s) to roll out the National Broadband Plan intervention.

Q4 Measure: Select the preferred bidder(s). ((Function Transferred from DCENR), DCCAIE)

Update: The procurement process to select a company or companies who will roll-out a new high speed broadband network within the State Intervention Area comprising over 750,000 is ongoing. Bidders in the process have indicated that they may need more time to conclude the procurement process. The timing of each stage of the procurement continues to be dependent on a range of factors including the complexities that may be encountered by the procurement team and bidders, during the procurement process.

Q4 Measure: Commence rollout. ((Function Transferred from DCENR), DCCAIE)

Update: The procurement process to select a company or companies who will roll-out a new high speed broadband network within the State Intervention Area comprising over 750,000 is ongoing. Bidders in the process have indicated that they may need more time to conclude the procurement process. The timing of each stage of the procurement continues to be dependent on a range of factors including the complexities that may be encountered by the procurement team and bidders, during the procurement process

Action 288: In line with the eHealth Strategy and the Knowledge and Information Plan, assess how to increase the capability of and access to health care Open Data.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DoH/HSE)

Update: The Open Health Data Governance Strategy and Open Health Data Policy were published in June 2016 on the eHealth Ireland website. These documents provide guidelines and policy statements to achieve the Open Health Data Vision: "Improve patient care, empower choice and support innovation through open access to HSE data, while protecting patients' personal data." Activities to raise the awareness and importance of Open Data were undertaken, including meetings with a number of data owners within different HSE Units.

The HSE Business Intelligence Unit held a webinar on Open Health Data on 17 October 2016, to discuss the benefits of Open Data publication and provide support on challenges.

In 2016, the HSE published 80 datasets on the National Open Data Portal (<https://data.gov.ie>). These include HIPE datasets from the Healthcare Pricing Office (HPO), HealthLink datasets and Health Atlas datasets.

A number of other datasets are currently being prepared for publication as machine-readable, open data on data.gov.ie, namely:

- NTPF National Waiting List Data
- HPO National Perinatal Reporting System (NPRS) data
- HSE Management Data Reports
- HSE Service Directory Data
- HealthLink eReferral Data

The Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS) is carrying out a data audit to identify datasets suitable for publication as Open Data.

The Department of Health is also carrying out an open data audit.

Action 289: To ensure that Ireland's approach to data protection in the digital economy is best in class globally, and provide regular reports to the relevant Cabinet Committee on progress being made towards that goal.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Taoiseach)

Update: Building on progress to date, Ireland undertook a range of measures over 2016 to ensure our approach to data protection in the Digital Economy is best in class globally and to establish Ireland as a thought leader in this area. Government and senior civil service management were updated on progress on these measures on an ongoing basis. The measures delivered over 2016 include:

- Continued investment to increase the resources of the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC) so that the Office can build on its strong track record and deliver on its expanding role. Over the past two years this programme of investment has seen the a cumulative four-fold increase in the ODPC's budget, from €1.89m in 2014 to over €7.5m in 2017; and a more than doubling of the numbers employed by the ODPC from 31 to circa 64, with a further recruitment drive to take place during 2017.
As well as numbers alone, this increase in funding has allowed the Commissioner to recruit the type of experts that her Office requires such as lawyers, technologists, investigators and a communications expert. In 2016 the ODPC also established a new Dublin Office that operates alongside its main office in Portarlington.
- Continued work through the Inter-Departmental Committee on Data Related Issues (IDC) to share best practice and promote awareness of data protection across the civil service. The IDC is the key vehicle for preparations for the new European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into effect from May 2018.
As well as the work to prepare for the GDPR within the civil service, the Data Protection Unit working with the colleagues in the Department of Justice attended and arranged a number of information events for the wider public service and local authority sector. This included organising a GDPR Information Seminar for the seminar attended by more than 300 public service representatives in November 2016.
- Working through the Government Data Forum to advance discussion of the opportunities and challenges for society and the economy arising from continued growth in the generation and use of personal data.

Over 2016 this work included publishing a report on the data protection and privacy implications of Smart City technologies and how these can be addressed. A stakeholder conference to discuss the issues and recommendation set out in the report was held in December 2016. The Data Forum is also undertaking work regarding preparations for the GDPR and how to ensure Ireland is fully prepared for its introduction in May 2018. This work will continue over 2017 alongside a number of activities to promote awareness and discussion of data protection and broader data related issues. In addition to the actions set out above, the Minister for Data Protection, Dara Murphy T.D. spoke on Data Protection and the work Ireland is undertaking in this area at a large number of national and European events over 2016.

Action 291: Roll out a further 1,000 Trading Online Vouchers through the Local Enterprise Office Network.

Q4 Measure: Continue the rollout of vouchers nationwide through the LEO network, subject to the findings of the evaluation of the operational aspects of the programme. (*Function Transferred from DCENR*), DCCA, EI/LEOs)

Update: Over 1,000 trading online vouchers were delivered through the Local Enterprise Office Network in 2016.

International Financial Services Strategy

Action 293: Implement the 2016 actions under IFS2020, including:

Q4 Measure: Report quarterly to Government on progress with implementing IFS2020, and subsequently publish quarterly progress report. (IFS 2020 Public Sector High Level Implementation Committee)

Update: The Public Sector High Level Implementation Committee has considered the Q4 Progress Report at its quarterly meeting. The Progress Report will now be brought to Government with the intention to publish thereafter.

Action 296: Support the implementation of IFS2020, by driving International Financial Services skills development through the delivery of actions contained within the Finuas Networks Programme Strategy.

Q4 Measure: Finalise delivery of International Financial Services Training Programmes through Finuas Networks Programme. (Skillnets, DES, D/Taoiseach)

Update: The measure has been completed. A range of programmes which further enhance IFS workforce skills were developed and/or delivered during 2016. Enterprise-led provision is directly linked to existing and emerging areas of opportunity for Ireland's IFS sector, including FinTech, Alternative Investments and Aviation Leasing and Finance.

Bio-economy

Action 304: Initiate an examination of the scope, feasibility and conditions necessary for the development of a national bio-economy strategy; and produce an interim report on the matter by year end.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Taoiseach with other relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: An Interdepartmental Group chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach has been established to assess the potential and conditions necessary for the strategic development of Ireland's bio-economy. This group met for the first time on 22 November 2016 and is scheduled to meet again on 25 January 2017.

A scoping exercise is underway to capture a sense of the current activities and potential opportunities in this area and relevant Departments have been asked to contribute to this process. The Group's efforts will contribute to the development and publication of a National Bio-Economy Policy Statement in Q2 2017.

Ongoing Measures

Disruptive Reforms

Step-Up in Enterprise Skills Supply

Action 1: Develop new apprenticeships to meet the skills demands in a range of sectors and update existing apprenticeships.

Ongoing Measure: Develop the 25 category 1 proposals, recommended by the Apprenticeship Council, into new apprenticeships in response to proposals from key sectors of the economy. (Apprenticeship Council, SOLAS, HEA, DES, employers and education bodies)

Update: The Apprenticeship Council has worked with consortia to develop these proposals into sustainable apprenticeships that can be delivered on a nationwide basis. Two new statutory apprenticeships commenced in 2016. The Insurance Practitioner Apprenticeship was launched in September and the Industrial Electrical Engineering Apprenticeship in November. 13 further apprenticeships are expected to be implemented, subject to further development and validation, in 2017.

Ongoing Measure: Engage with Category 2 and 3 proposers to consider the advancement of their proposals. (Apprenticeship Council, SOLAS, HEA, DES, employers and education bodies)

Update: Information events hosted by SOLAS were held for Category 2 and 3 proposers in November. Proposers have been asked to submit their detailed development plans, including timescales for completing each of the remaining development steps, to the Apprenticeship Council by mid-January. The Apprenticeship Council will work closely with consortia to develop these proposals into sustainable apprenticeships that can be delivered on a nationwide basis.

Action 2: Establish a network of Regional Skills Fora to foster greater engagement between the education and training system, employers and other local stakeholders in building the skills needs of their regions.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES, HEIs, ETBs, Skillnets, employers, EI, IDA, SOLAS, HEA, LEOs)

Update: The Regional Skills Fora and a Forum Manager are now in place in 9 regions across the country. The Managers have established a strong network of working relationships between the stakeholders in the region, with particular focus on liaison between enterprise and education and training stakeholders in advancing the objectives of the Skills Forum. Each Regional Skills Manager is a member of the implementation group on each of their Regional APJs.

Action 3: Launch the single ICT website portal through industry and agencies working together to attract international technical talent.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI, DJEI, IDA, DFAT)

Update: Tech/Life Ireland, a new national initiative to brand Ireland as a top destination to pursue a career in technology was launched on 27 June by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, T.D. Tech/Life Ireland is funded by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. It will be delivered in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and the tech industry to help attract up to 3,000 top tech professionals to Ireland each year.

Tech/Life Ireland is a focused international marketing initiative with a dedicated website, www.techlifeireland.com, to attract talented and experienced tech experts to Ireland and to promote top tech career opportunities here.

The initiative uses digital and social media to showcase the unrivalled lifestyle, tech environment and job opportunities available in Ireland. Initial target markets include countries in Central and Southern Europe. These have been identified based on detailed analysis of talent movement, local search activity and consultation with recruitment professionals from industry.

Stimulating Regional Growth

Action 4: Progress the implementation and monitoring of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs, including the identification of examples of best practice of cross-agency collaboration and promotion of peer learning.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, relevant public bodies)

Update: Each of the 8 Regional Action Plans is being overseen by a Regional Implementation Committee, with membership drawn from industry, local authorities, Enterprise Agencies, the education sector and other key stakeholders and agencies.

Meetings of all Regional APJ Implementation Committees took place during 2016. Key areas of focus for these meetings included the review of draft Progress Reports for the Regional Action Plans, discussion of competitive funding for the regions and identification of best practice initiatives within each region.

The first Progress Reports on the implementation of the Plans, covering the period to end-June 2016, have been finalised and were published in December 2016.

Action 8: Deliver on the target of achieving a minimum 30 per cent to 40 per cent increase in the number of investments for each region outside Dublin over the lifetime of the IDA strategy Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: IDA Ireland has seen jobs growth across all of its regional locations in 2016. This result

reflects an intensive focus by IDA Ireland via its five year strategy, Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019 in relation to regional dispersal of FDI investments. 59% of all employment remains outside of Dublin. In 2016, 52% of all jobs (gross) created by IDA clients were based outside of Dublin. While there continues to be a global trend towards FDI favouring large urban centres, IDA statistics continue to show the strength and resilience of FDI in regional locations. In addition to direct employment it is estimated that for every ten jobs created by an IDA client company, there are seven knock-on jobs created in the wider economy. Some regional wins in 2016 include: First Data, Tipperary (300 jobs); Shire, Meath (400 jobs); Kellton Tech Solutions Ltd, Louth (100 jobs); Wayfair, Galway (160 jobs), Surmodics, Galway (100 jobs), Fazzi, Limerick (300 jobs), Cylance, Cork (150 jobs), and OPKO Healthcare, Waterford (200 jobs).

Action 9: Following on from the identification of regional locations requiring property solutions:

- Construct three advance technology buildings in Sligo, Castlebar and Tralee for marketing to clients; and
- Commence the process of providing three new advance buildings in Limerick, Dundalk and Galway.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update:

2016

- Castlebar - Contractor commenced in Q1 2016. The 9 month construction programme has been extended by 2 months due to issues with ground conditions. Building will be complete by end of Q1 2017.
- Sligo –Contractor commenced in Q3 2016. The start date was deferred due to a right of way/way leave issues. Building will completed by Q2 2017.
- Tralee – Contractor commenced in Q3 2016. The start date was deferred due to a right of way/way leave. Building will be complete by Q2 2017.

2017

- Limerick AOB – On Schedule (In design, planning nearly ready to lodge).
- Dundalk AOB – On Schedule (In design, planning nearly ready to lodge).
- Galway AOB – On Schedule (Private Developer) legals to issue.
- Galway ATB – In Design.

Action 12: Support the creation of 500 new jobs and continue to support existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post- research/pre-commercialisation units in the life sciences, food and business support services and creative enterprises sectors, and ongoing support for community development initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), ÚnaG)

Update: This target has been achieved in full.

Action 13: Develop advanced property solutions for innovative companies in the Gaeltacht seeking to move from the incubator phase to market.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), ÚnaG)

Update: Text to follow from Department.

Action 16: Continue to implement the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, which as the primary social inclusion programme of Government, has a strong focus on community activation, social inclusion and community development, while also prioritising those hardest to reach.

Ongoing Measure: Address any issues that emerge from the six month and annual review process to ensure the Programme is targeting those most in need. ((*Function Transferred from DECLG*),DHPCLG, DCCAE, Pobal, LCDCs)

Update: Issues emerging from the six month and annual review process for SICAP have been addressed to ensure the Programme is targeting those most in need. The Programme met its targets for 2016.

Ongoing Measure: Consult with key Departments i.e. DES etc. to agree referral protocols. ((*Function Transferred from DECLG*),DHPCLG, Pobal, relevant Departments)

Update: DHPCLG has consulted with relevant bodies during 2016 to manage and refine referral protocols.

All Government Transactions with Business Online by 2017- Reducing Red Tape

Action 20: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Ongoing Measure: Provide regular updates through the appropriate Cabinet Committee structures on progress by all Departments to achieving compliance with the requirement of making all licensing and authorisation procedures available online by November 2017. (DJEI)

Update: The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has identified 45 licences, authorisations, certifications and permits which are provided to business. 15 of these are available online. In relation to the remaining 30, detailed plans to put 14 services online by November 2017 have been developed. Development has been completed on 2 further licences and these are expected to be online in Q1 2017.

The Department is continuing to liaise with the service providers in its business units, offices and agencies to address progress on 16 other services which due to legislative restrictions prevent provision of the service online (for example, a statutory requirement for a hard copy signature), or due to current requirements for hearings in person (for example, copyright and trade mark disputes).

Action 25: Develop the first statutory National Climate Change Adaptation Framework to provide a strategic policy focus to ensure adaptation measures are taken across different levels of Government to reduce Ireland's vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change and avail of any positive opportunities that may arise.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DECLG*), DCCAIE)

Update: Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2016 a draft National Adaptation Framework (NAF) must be submitted to Government not later than 10 December 2017. Work on drafting the Framework is progressing satisfactorily.

Action 26: Develop Sectoral Adaptation Plans, which will specify the sector specific adaptation policy measures required to enable adaptation to the effects of climate change and the achievement of the National Transition Objective set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DECLG*), DCCAIE, other relevant Departments)

Update: Draft, non-statutory Agriculture and Forest as well as Transport sectoral adaptation plans were published for consultation by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on 24 November and 30 December 2016 respectively.

Action 28: The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland will work with enterprise, the development agencies and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to realise the potential for enterprise and jobs growth identified in its report Ireland's Sustainable Energy Supply Chain Opportunity, by addressing barriers to supply chain growth in the sector, fostering growth by developing local capacity to capture export opportunities and assisting a favourable environment for FDI.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, EI, IDA, SFI, DJEI)

Update: The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland has been working with Enterprise Ireland and the IDA in several areas to develop local capacity and build on the work completed as part of the Supply Chain Study. In particular, work was carried out to expand the supply chain of local companies that can supply goods and services for the ocean energy sector. The Ocean Energy Supply Chain database was reviewed and launched in November through the Ocean Energy portal to make access easier to (and for) the companies. SEAI currently have a database of over 500 companies.

SEAI also supported 2650 jobs in 2015 in the sustainable energy sector through local home and community energy retrofits across the country and maintains a register of 16,000 energy efficiency and renewable products from 250 suppliers. SEAI also worked with 300 SMEs to improve their profitability and helping them to reduce their energy costs and with over 150 of the largest energy using companies in helping them to manage their energy use and remain competitive. SEAI has

developed and is actively promoting the next phase of energy management standards including, the energy efficiency design management system standard – IS399 and EXEED Certified Program. These provide a strong energy efficient design strategy at organisation and project investment levels to optimise energy performance and to minimise asset lifecycle costs.

SEAI is continuing to work with EI and IDA to further develop supply chain opportunities over 2016.

SEAI is a member of the Working Group on Retailers Reducing Energy Costs which is made up of retail representatives, energy specialists from the public and private sector, and officials from DJEI. To help drive a greater take up of energy efficiency by small retailers, SEAI, in partnership with the EPA's Green Business, committed to deliver a new resource efficiency training programme for retailers. This is currently being piloted by 15 members of the Convenience Stores and Newsagents Association (CSNA) and the Small Firms Association (SFA). It consists of two training workshops and a site visit to the participants' premises by experienced energy/resource efficiency auditors.

Action 29: Following on from work completed in 2015 the Inter-Departmental Committee will agree a programme of activity to promote Ireland's value proposition as an Energy Innovation Hub to entrepreneurs, investors, businesses and research organisations both at home and abroad.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (IDC, DCCAE, DJEI, relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: This measure is being led by DJEI. The focus of the work of this group in 2015 was the development of promotional material for use by its members in the context of promoting Ireland as an Energy Innovation Hub. A six page brochure was prepared and the IDC members agreed to promote this material through its marketing channels. This promotional work is an on-going activity for the relevant stakeholders. A website hosted by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland has also been established: www.energyinnovationhub.ie. In addition, as part of the St. Patrick's Day activities in 2016, the brochure was circulated to all the embassies to promote Ireland's capability in this area.

SEAI has continued to develop the Ocean Energy Portal element of the Energy Innovation Hub and launched an updated Supply Chain Database on this portal which was promoted internationally at Ocean Energy Europe Conference in Brussels. The Ocean Energy Steering Group developed a communications plan for 2016 and set a target of 20,000 hits in 2017. This was reached by August

Action 30: Building on the Report of the Inter-Departmental Group on Smart Ageing, map out and implement a programme of actions and proposed timelines.

Ongoing Measure: Report periodically on progress on implementation to the relevant Cabinet Committee.. (D/Taoiseach, DJEI, DoH, other relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: The Senior Official Group on Smart Ageing is driving implementation of the Programme of Actions for Smart Ageing. Departments and agencies have reported back to the Senior Official Group on implementation of actions on a quarterly basis. A final progress report on implementation of the Programme of Actions is being compiled and is due to be brought to the Cabinet Committee on Economy, Trade and Jobs in Q1 2017.

Driving Intellectual Property in Enterprise

Action 35: Work towards completion of the implementation of the new European Patent system and the Unified Patent Court to provide an alternative patenting option for industry.

Ongoing Measure: Continued active participation in negotiations to complete the “patents package” comprising the Unitary patent and the Unified Patent Court with a view to having the system operational during 2016. (DJEI/Patents office)

Update: The two Committees established to oversee the implementation of the patents package met regularly throughout 2016. The UK referendum in June 2016 has significant implications for the coming into effect of the Court and will result in a delay to its introduction.

Increasing Labour Market Participation

Action 37: Continue the development and reform of the State's public employment services to help ensure that the number of people on the Live Register is reduced as the economy recovers and the labour market responds flexibly and efficiently to employment growth.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DSP)

Update: DSP is continuing to implement the measures contained in Pathways to Work 2016-2020 launched in January 2016.

Action 38: Promote and support development of the "Skills to Work" brand to increase awareness of re-skilling options for jobseekers.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES, DSP, D/Taoiseach, SOLAS, HEA, Skillnets)

Update: The Skills to Work brand was supported during 2016 and represented at a number of career fairs, the largest of which was Career Zoo held in February.

Action 39: Lead and coordinate the actions of the Steering Group to ensure implementation of the Protocol between the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the aim of which is to maximise recruitment from the Live Register by enterprise development agency client companies.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline measure. (DJEI, supported by DSP and the enterprise development agencies)

Update: DJEI continues to drive this process through the Steering Group. The Steering Group meets quarterly and has held its Q3 (8 Sept) & Q4 (10 Nov) meetings.

At these meetings, significant progress was made with the CSO on establishing an appropriate methodology to measure movement from Live Register to enterprise agency supported jobs – a commitment in Pathways to Work. The development of a methodology has proved problematic. A methodology has now been agreed and it is expected that the 2014 & 2015 figures detailing the numbers who have moved from the Live Register to enterprise agency client supported jobs will be finalised shortly.

Action 41: Fund locally delivered courses for women which will comprise a series of training opportunities on self-development and work related skills to assist a return to the labour market and promoting entrepreneurship.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJE)

Update: As previously indicated, under the European Social Fund Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020, a call for Applications was launched by the EU Funds unit in the Department of Justice and Equality on 22 September 2016. Projects will be selected which will be co-funded by both the Exchequer and the EU's PEIL Programme (€11 million in total). The EU Funds Unit of the Department of Justice and Equality is currently in the process of considering applications received.

Action 42: Implement the Government's Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJE)

Update: The Comprehensive Employment Strategy Annual Report is currently being drafted by the Implementation Group Chair and will be circulated shortly.

Delivering Skills for a Growing Economy

Action 47: Finalise and publish the new National Skills Strategy. The new strategy will set out the framework for the period to 2025 for how Ireland can continue to develop relevant skills and ensure that our supply of skills is activated and effectively used.

Ongoing Measure: Commence the implementation of actions and recommendations. (DES, DJEI, DSP, SOLAS, HEA, education and training Providers, employers)

Update: The National Skills Strategy was published in January 2016. Implementation of the actions and recommendations of the new National Skills Strategy has commenced.

Action 48: Implement the Strategy for Higher Education Enterprise Engagement, including enhanced communications, comprehensive employer access to skills and research development opportunities in Higher Education and Training, and embed entrepreneurship as a core feature of Higher Education and Training.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES, HEA, HEIs)

Update: This has been incorporated into the implementation of the National Skills Strategy and is also being progressed through the development of the Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement.

Action 49: Continue to progress the reconfiguration of the higher education system envisaged by the National Strategy for Higher Education, through the further development of regional clusters of higher education institutions and implementation of the revised higher education landscape.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (HEA, DES)

Update: This measure is ongoing into 2017.4

Action 62: Review the status of recommendations made in reports of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, including 2015 reports on the freight transport, distribution and logistics sector and the hospitality sector, with a view to progressing implementation of the recommendations and, in particular, those that require prioritisation.

Ongoing Measure: Contact parties responsible for implementing recommendations and seek update on progress. (DJEI)

Update: The Secretariat to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) conducted desk-based research on the status of recommendations made by the Group in sectoral reports since 2008, including more recent reports on the Freight Transport, Distribution and Logistics sector and the Hospitality sector (it was not necessary to contact individual parties for updates).

The objectives of the review were to:

1. Identify progress which has been made generally in implementing recommendations; and
2. Identify and prioritise key outstanding recommendations which it is considered are still important to progress.

Thirteen sectoral reports published by the EGFSN were reviewed in this exercise. There were a total of 109 high-level recommendations in these reports. The EGFSN will consider any steps to be taken to progress any identified outstanding key recommendations.

Action 63: Deliver a strengthened Communications Strategy for the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, which will result in more effective dissemination of information on the skills needs of the economy through improved engagement with education and training providers and other key stakeholders.

Ongoing Measure: Implement actions arising from the review of the Communications Strategy. (EGFSN, DJEI)

Update: The Secretariat of the EGFSN undertook a number of additional actions during 2016 to strengthen the dissemination of the Group's analyses and recommendations. These included workshop and conference presentations, featured articles and updates on relevant social media and engagements with the new Regional Skills Fora to ensure dissemination of relevant information resources.

The National Skills Strategy 2025, which was published in January 2016, envisages the establishment of a new National Skills Council and the retention and refreshing of the mandate of the EGFSN. A new Communications Strategy for the EGFSN will be developed accordingly.

Action 65: Implement the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-19, including funding and actions targeting increased access and participation in higher education by mature and part-time students.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES, HEA, HEIs, other stakeholders)

Update: Implementation of the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (NAP) is ongoing:

- NAP Steering Group met in May and September.
- The Working group to support more disadvantaged students to access initial teacher education has been established and met twice. Call for proposals issued and following assessment by independent panel, projects have been selected to support students from the target groups to enrol in and complete initial teacher education.
- Review of the Student Assistance Fund was published in September.
- Review of the Fund for Students with Disabilities was initiated.
- Working group to address the issue of non-completion was established and met October.

Increasing ICT Skills

Action 69: Provide support to institutions in delivering in excess of 20 Summer Computing Camps to encourage second-level students, including those targeted by the access programmes of institutions, to consider ICT careers, through the Information Technology Investment Fund, and the higher education institutions will continue to support Coder Dojo in provision of space, administrative supports and mentoring strategies.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (HEA)

Update: From reports received to date from the HEIs, funding was provided to support 29 camps in 2016. Over 1,245 students participated across the participant HEIs. Each HEI was awarded €5,000 to support camps programmes. Camps typically target transition year students and run for a week. A particular focus is placed on the inclusion of girls, with some girls' only camps. In 2016 over 40% of participants were female. Six of the publically funded HEIs in the Dublin region ran summer computing camps in 2016. HEI computing departments are centrally involved in supporting coder dojos, providing facilities to host dojos, third level computing students to run clubs and lecturers to provide mentoring strategies. HEIs link their computing camps and computing outreach activities to coderdojo activities and use these to foster greater links with secondary schools within their region.

Action 70: Provide support to higher education institutions to continue to implement retention supports for ICT students through the Information Technology Investment Fund.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (HEA)

Update: The Information Technology Investment Fund (ITIF) continues to supports HEI ICT programme retention, and provides annual block funding to HEIs, (€80,000 for Universities and €54,000 for IOTs). HEIs allocate this funding across their specific retention activities. Activities are focused on integration of incoming students, supports and facilities for all students, and targeted activities for students experiencing difficulties. Recently received reports, covering activity in 2016, detail over 100 specific retention supports delivered to ICT students. These include learning support centres; additional tutorials over the summer and weekends; peer mentoring; staff retention seminars; group building initiatives; maths learning supports; and improved infrastructure.

Innovation

Action 85: Increase awareness of supports and ensure maximum use of publicly-funded research, by the promotion and showcasing of available research, development and innovation supports to enterprise through the Knowledge Transfer Ireland website and other opportunities at a regional and national level.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (KTI/EI with all funders, IDA, SFI and other relevant stakeholders)

Update: The Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) website hosts information aimed at increasing awareness of supports and encouraging the use of publicly-funded research. Knowledge Transfer Ireland's website is updated on a regular basis and provides links where appropriate to information on Innovation on external sites.

Website traffic continued to perform well in Q4 with the highest ever number of monthly visitors to the site (5,900) recorded in October 2016. Traffic to the site in the first two months of Q4 represented 80% of the overall traffic in Q3.

Social media engagement continued to increase in Q4 with KTI's Twitter audience up by 6% and LinkedIn audience up by 40% by the end of November 2016. Press coverage secured in Q4 included articles in the Sunday Business Post, a mention in the Irish Times and other online channels which were aimed at building awareness and driving traffic to the site.

In Q4, KTI published a 'Review of the outcomes reported in the KTI AKTS 2015' and a one-pager describing the 13 KTI Practical Guides and 28 KTI Model Agreements that are available for download. A new KTI promotional video was produced and shared on the KTI YouTube channel as well as a promotional video highlighting the KTI conference that took place in November 2016. All these resources were shared via social media channels upon becoming available on the website.

Action 87: Further drive industry-academic collaboration and exploitation of Intellectual Property from the public research system through active promotion of the resources and know-how available to facilitate this, through Knowledge Transfer Ireland.

Ongoing Measure: Further support enterprise to engage with the publicly funded research base and to access IP including model agreements, practical guidelines and improved information on expertise within the public research system.. (KTI/EI)

Update: Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) has a range of resources available on its website to support enterprise to engage with the publicly funded research base and to encourage companies to access IP and expertise including Model Agreements, Practical Guides and improved information on expertise within the public research system. The "IP Protocol 2016" has been widely disseminated and made available on Knowledge Transfer Ireland's website; in addition a "Practical Guide to IP & Confidentiality" was also made available on the website.

In November, KTI hosted its third Annual Conference. Focused on the theme of Collaborative Research the event, opened by Minister for Training, Skills and Innovation T.D., received a record

number of registrations with almost 200 in attendance. A panel of experts and keynote speakers shared their views on what contributed to successful collaborations and on international trends in the field. Feedback on the event has been wholly positive from all stakeholder groups. In December, KTI hosted a roundtable meeting for leading IP solicitors and patent attorneys to discuss the National IP Protocol and identify the most effective means of leveraging their networks to disseminate the Protocol to a wider audience, namely their commercial clients with IP legal requirements.

Action 89: Ensure that all relevant research funding programmes incentivise collaboration between research performing institutions and centres in order to maximise impact.

Ongoing Measure: Clusters of research and technology centres with complementary research agendas will be identified and incentivised to collaborate for greater overall impact. (SFI, EI)

Update: SFI is making strong progress on this action.

- The Spokes programme reviewed 11 applications in 2016. Several of these applications included collaborations between Research Centres. Awards will be made by end 2016, and will include an award with Inter-Centre collaboration.
- Two US-Ireland Centre to Centre projects were awarded in 2016. These involve a tripartite collaboration between researchers in the NSF funded Engineering Research Centres in the USA and Northern Ireland based Research Centres.
- Three SFI Research Centres, supported by SFI and the IUA, collaborated to achieve €6.1 million in Horizon 2020 funding for a postdoctoral training programme.

Enterprise Ireland's Innovation Partnership Programme which includes participation by SFI client companies encourages Irish-based companies to work with Irish research institutes for their mutual benefit. Companies benefit through access to expertise, resources, processes, services, the generation of knowledge, and the Institutes through the development of skills, IP and publications. 15 innovation partnerships have been approved to date.

Action 93: Ensure a strategic approach to the development of existing and new research infrastructure programmes.

Ongoing Measure: Review and optimise the rollout of access policies to maximise enterprise use of, and partnerships in, research infrastructure. (HEA, HEIs, Research Funders)

Update: The Large Items of Research Equipment (LIRE) Database and National Principles for Access to Research Infrastructure were established by the HEA. The HEA is now planning to undertake a review of these.

Action 99: Develop and operate the Regional Innovation Process to foster peer-to-peer interactions and SME-HEI linkages (people, resources, training and research).

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: The Regional SME Innovation Forum is a focused initiative aimed at fostering regional collaboration between industry and the higher education sector, on the innovation agenda. The forum brings local SMEs together at a regional higher education institute (HEI) location to discuss the innovation challenge and to drive industry/ academic linkages.

Enterprise Ireland has worked with the regionally based HEIs to foster peer-to-peer interactions and to increase the linkages (people, resources, training and research) between Enterprise Ireland's client companies and the HEIs. To support this initiative there have been 4 Regional SME Innovation Forum events to date.

The pilot commenced in the WEST region where two Fora were hosted (NUIG, GMIT). The third event, the inaugural South Regional Innovation Fora, was hosted in Cork IT in 2015. These events inform attendees of local SME's experiences of innovation, and how institutes in the locality could assist with the wider research agenda for SMEs.

Enterprise Ireland, Knowledge Transfer Ireland, Teagasc and local HEIs attended these events affording attendees the opportunity to discuss with them their broad innovation agendas and engage on the opportunity to collaborate.

The benefits of the Regional Innovation Process, for both participating companies and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), is evident, supporting the proposal to scale this process to a national level. As a result Enterprise Ireland in Q1 2017, will commence work on moving from the pilot phase (conducted in Galway & Cork) to a national roll out of the SME Innovation Forum in each region.

Design for Innovation

Action 116: Continue to promote Ireland as a source of internationally competitive design and creative, innovation-led companies.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland; DJEI and the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland are working together to promote Ireland as a source of internationally competitive design and creative, innovation-led companies.

Showcase, Ireland's boutique tradeshow which is focused on exploring the best of Ireland's design and creativity, continues to grow in international reputation as a source of innovative & design led consumer gifts and products.

The 2016 event involved over 450 exhibitors including leading Irish designers and manufacturers and the very best emerging home grown creative talent.

Action 117: Promote product design and design thinking as part of management capability in client companies via existing supports.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland is promoting product design and design thinking as part of management capability in client companies via existing supports. Innovation Vouchers* are currently being used by companies to connect to and use the Enterprise Ireland funded Design Gateway at IT Carlow as well as a number of other Gateways throughout the country to develop products & services with improved user experience.

*The Innovation Voucher initiative was developed to build links between Ireland's public knowledge providers (i.e. Higher Education Institutes, public research bodies) and small businesses. Innovation Vouchers worth €5,000 are available to assist a company or companies to explore a business opportunity or problem with a registered knowledge provider.

Competitiveness

Institutionalising the Drive for Competitiveness

Action 120: The National Competitiveness Council's priority issues for sustainable competitiveness over the short and medium term will be brought to Government. Individual Government Departments will respond and bring forward proposals as appropriate to enhance competitiveness. This work will be overseen by the relevant Cabinet Committees.

Ongoing Measure: Respond and bring forward appropriate proposals to address priority issues identified by the NCC to enhance competitiveness. (D/Taoiseach, all Departments)

Update: The Cabinet Committee on Economy, Trade and Jobs has considered a number of key competitiveness issues since its establishment, including key reports from the National Competitiveness Council (NCC). The NCC's 'Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2016' report was brought to Government recently. In it the Council outlines priorities for consideration, particularly in the context of the Action Plan for Jobs 2017, to help improve Ireland's competitiveness.

Reducing the Cost of Doing Business

Action 124: Ensure that the commitments and targets set out in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan are adhered to.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((Function Transferred from DCENR), DCCAE and relevant Departments)

Update: DCCAE continues to work with Departments to monitor progress – this process will also inform the development of the next National Energy Efficiency Action Plan to be published by April 2017.

Action 125: Publish and implement the Public Sector Energy Action Plan.

Ongoing Measure: Implement the action plan. ((Function Transferred from DCENR), DCCAE and relevant Departments)

Update: The Strategy for Public Sector Energy Efficiency identifies where most potential exists for further energy efficiency gains across the public sector. It will provide the framework, guidance, support and further impetus to help all public sector bodies take the Next steps needed to meet the 2020 targets. The Strategy was approved by Government on 20 December 2016.

Action 127: Review the National Energy Services Framework to ensure adequate expertise and best practice models are available to organisations wishing to pursue energy efficiency projects.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((Function Transferred from DCENR, SEAI)

Update: SEAI has revised and reinvigorated its project assistance grants to support energy saving

projects, and was launched in July 2016. SEAI and DCCAIE are reviewing the current support model with a view to developing a more interactive support model in 2017.

Action 128: Provide €55 million in Exchequer supports to further stimulate energy saving activity in the residential and community sectors.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DCENR*), DCCAIE, SEAI)

Update: In 2016 nearly €62m in Exchequer funds were allocated to the Better Energy Programme. Since the re-launch of the Better Homes scheme in early 2015, applications for grants have increased by 50%. The Better Energy Communities scheme continues to attract significant interest, with more than €20m in grants allocated in 2016. The Warmer Homes scheme continues to play a pivotal role in combating and energy poverty and a new “Warmth & Wellbeing” pilot which was launched in Q2 2016 has seen deep energy efficiency upgrades provided to people suffering from acute respiratory conditions. It is estimated that some 2310 jobs were supported by the Better Energy Programme in 2016.

Action 130: Ensure the implementation of Regulating for a Better Future across Departments, building upon recent progress and completing outstanding actions. Actions will focus on enhancing national competitiveness and securing Ireland's ongoing economic recovery.

Ongoing Measure: Engage with the EU-wide full regulatory framework review of communications policy. ((*Function Transferred from DCENR*), DCCAIE)

Update: The initiation of the process of reviewing the legal and institutional framework for the regulation for electricity and natural gas markets was formally announced by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment at a seminar on 1 December 2016.

Investing in Economic Infrastructure

Action 131: Progress project priorities in the Greater Dublin Area to address congestion in 2016.

Ongoing Measure: Continue the rollout of the Luas Cross City infrastructure track laying works. (NTA)

Update: Luas Cross City is on target to come into operation at end-2017.

Easier to do Business

Action 136: Further promote and expand the small business, construction and agribusiness sections of BeSMART.

Ongoing Measure: Present/ demonstrate BeSMART at 30+ relevant Nationwide events (Feb – Nov). (HSA)

Update: The planned number of BeSMART presentations/demonstrations has been exceeded. To Date, 55 have been completed.

Finance for Growth

Ensure viable SMEs can access appropriate finance

Action 147: In line with the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland Business Plan, deliver the balance of the original €800 million of funding in the SBCI to the SME market by end of 2016, subject to demand

Ongoing Measure: Continue to put in place loan facilities with new and existing on-lender providers of finance to Irish SMEs in order to provide better SME financing options and greater competition. (SBCI)

Update: To date, the SBCI has on-lending agreements in place with 8 on-lenders to the value of €906 million. Available figures as of end September, €465 million was drawn down by the SBCI's on-lenders and €458 million has been lent on to SMEs. Drawdown is subject to credit demand and the SBCI continues to seek new on-lending partners in order to increase the availability of low cost, flexible funding to SMEs.

Action 150: As part of the ongoing implementation and deployment of capital in line with the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund Investment Strategy, the fund will continue to examine ways to support non-bank alternative providers of finance to SMEs in the Irish market both directly as part of its SME strategy, and also indirectly via other strategies including food and agri, real estate and venture capital.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (ISIF)

Update: The ISIF continues to deploy capital to support new and existing non-bank alternative and other providers of finance as part of its strategy. Over €250m has been committed in 2016 to-date, including €30m to two SME Funds (Causeway Capital Partners & BMS Finance), €30m to Finance Ireland, approx. €112m in six VC deals; a €25m commitment to Ardstone, the equity residential development fund, and a €45m commitment to the MilkFlex farmer loan fund.

Action 151: Implement Enterprise Ireland's Venture Capital and Development Capital Strategy.

Ongoing Measure: Implement Enterprise Irelands Venture Capital and Development Capital Strategy. (EI)

Update: A key part of the Government's Action Plan for Jobs has been increasing the level of funding available to growing and exporting Irish companies, supporting increasing numbers to create jobs.

In 2016, to support this Enterprise Ireland progressed the establishment of a number of funds which

received commitments under the Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2013-2018). Under the first call for Expressions of Interest, in which €109.5m was committed to funds targeting Series A funding in the general technology and Lifesciences sectors, three funds were launched. Atlantic Bridge III, Fountain Healthcare Partners II and the Kernel Capital Growth Fund (ROI) II are now actively investing. An additional 2 funds successfully reached a close and are investing – these funds will be formally launched in the near term.

In addition, the first Angel has been approved under the €20m European Angel Fund and is actively sourcing deals. A further three angels are at an advanced stage of the approval process.

Under the second call for Expression of Interest, €65m was committed to funds targeting the early stage of company development. On 17th June, the €60m University Bridge Venture Capital Fund, the most recent fund announced under the scheme, was launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, T.D.

Legal Negotiations are continuing with a number of other funds from this call and it is expected that three of these funds will be launched shortly.

Under the Development Capital Scheme, Enterprise Ireland continues to actively work with the three fund managers to promote and help our clients access these funds. The funds are active in the market and are seeing an increase deal flow pipeline across a range of sectors. The pace of investment is expected to continue into 2017.

Enterprise Ireland is also working to develop an improved system of reporting to build on the existing economic impact analysis of the Seed & Venture Capital Funds. A process to commission a review of the most recent Seed & Venture Capital Scheme has commenced recently.

Roll out, monitor and evaluate State supports for SMEs

Action 155: The Prompt Payments Forum will examine further initiatives to drive a change in the payment culture in Ireland – for example promoting the relationship between responsible payment practices and the corporate social responsibility agenda.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Work is continuing with the Payments Forum on the development of new prompt payment initiatives.

Action 156: Having regard to emerging international best practice, and in the context of the EU Commission Action Plan on Building a Capital Markets Union, examine the impact of crowdfunding in an international context with a particular focus on State supports and regulatory regimes.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: The Department of Finance has received a formal response from the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission on crowdfunding and will liaise further with the Central Bank of Ireland as it finalises the public consultation document. Ministerial approval to hold a Public Consultation on the regulation of crowdfunding will be sought in early 2017

Enhance awareness of State business supports

Action 158: Continue to implement the integrated communications strategy to increase awareness.

Ongoing Measure: Improve SME knowledge of the range of State supports for their businesses by engaging through their representative bodies and by participating at key events nationwide. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: The Supporting SMEs campaign committee, working collectively and utilising resources of Jobs Ambassadors located around the country, attended ten events in Q4 2016, with almost fifty events attended over the course of the year. Events attended include those run by the Local Enterprise Office network, by representative bodies, and regional events organised by SBCI in conjunction with accounting bodies and Chambers of Commerce.

Ongoing Measure: The Advisory Group on Small Business will work to promote the Supporting SMEs on-line tool, which contains information on over 80 State supports for SMEs. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Members of the Advisory Group on Small Business (AGSB) have, and continue to, publicise the SME tool on their websites and throughout their organisations. The AGBS last met in December.

Ongoing Measure: Continue to upgrade the Supporting SMEs Online Tool. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Following the addition of county-specific supports earlier this year, phase one of an administration screen update has been completed to allow real-time updates to the supports listed on the Online Tool. Phase two, which is currently underway, will allow for further real-time updates, such as the contact information for Local Authorities and LEOs, the addition of a secondary contact and the addition of Eircodes.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver new marketing and communications materials to ensure ongoing engagement with the Supporting SMEs Campaign. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: New marketing materials are being prepared to coincide with the addition of county specific supports on the Online Tool. An online advertising campaign to increase SME engagement with the Online Tool has been placed on hold until early 2017 and will coincide with a regional marketing campaign to promote the county specific supports.

Ongoing Measure: Have a presence at key events across the Country to engage with SMEs and increase their knowledge of the range of supports available. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Almost 50 events were attended over the course of the year.

Engage with International Funding Institutions

Action 159: Ensure closer cooperation with other National Promotional Banks in developing initiatives to promote the financing of growth in Ireland.

Ongoing Measure: Participate in various National Promotional Banks or Institutions' network forums and develop and maintain strong bilateral relationships with key NPB/I relationships. (SBCI, DoF)

Update: The European Long Term Investors Association (ELTIA) invited the SBCI to join the Management Board of ELTIA as one of two small National Promotional Bank representatives from December 2016. The SBCI is engaging with the ELTIA secretariat and the other small member representatives to the Board in establishing communication procedures between small Board members and the wider group (ELTIA small member countries). A representative from the SBCI attended the Network of European Financial Institutions for Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (NEFI) conference in Prague in December on Structural Funds.

Action 160: Continue work on the potential for use of the European Fund for Strategic Investments through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland.

Ongoing Measure: Work closely with the European Investment Bank and the European Commission to develop Irish capability, projects and access to EFSI. (DJEI, DoF, SBCI)

Update: COSME / EFSI agreement (approval of a €100m fund for risk sharing products) was signed on the 7 December. This counter-guarantee facility will be used to support the Agricultural Cash Flow Support Loan Fund launched by the SBCI in conjunction with DAFM in January 2017. The SBCI continues to engage with relevant Irish Stakeholders/Departments on specific sectoral issues to find EFSI (European Fund for Strategic Investment) based solutions.

Action 161: Continue our engagement with the European Investment Bank, European Investment Fund and Council of Europe Development Bank in developing and implementing mechanisms designed to maximise the provision of enhanced financing to SMEs.

Ongoing Measure: Maintain strong relationships with the European Investment Bank, European Investment Fund and Council of Europe Development Bank to maximise knowledge and access to capability and experience in implementation of SME access to finance enhancements. (DoF, DJEI, SBCI, ISIF, EI)

Update: The SBCI application for an InnovFin counter guarantee is still in progress with EIF. SBCI continues to engage with potential partner banks with regard to creating a pilot program for a guaranteed loan product. The timeline to market is under review but is expected to be Q2 2017. On 9 December, the SBCI finalised legal agreements with the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) and signed a €200m long term loan facility. The ISIF is in regular engagement with the EIB and EIF on a number of matters pertaining to the SME

and other sectors. The ISIF has joined the new “EIF-NPI Equity Platform” which is largely focused on co-investment opportunities in growth companies (it is not clear at this stage whether there is an opportunity to use this platform, but it may yield useful opportunities).

Action 162: Maximise our engagement with the relevant elements of the Multiannual Financial Framework.

Ongoing Measure: Maximise our engagement with the relevant elements of the Multiannual Financial Framework- e.g. Horizon 2020, COSME- so as to ensure there are no untapped or underutilised sources of framework or other funding available to the SME sector. (DJEI, DoF, SBCI, EI)

Update: SBCI continues to keep in close contact and up to date on all developments in this sphere. The SBCI is in regular contact with EIB/EIF on potential adoption and adaptation of product offerings for use by the SBCI under its mandate, or in the wider Irish economic context - seeking to address the best approach to put the necessary conduit framework in place to optimise funding and risk capital available under the EFSI Juncker plan.

Continue to research/learn in the area of Finance for Growth

Action 163: Engage with the OECD to leverage their expertise around monitoring and evaluating policy initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DoF, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: DoF have worked with the OECD on the 2017 edition of the OECD Scoreboard on SME and Entrepreneurship financing. The Ireland Chapter has been finalised. The Scoreboard is due to be published in Q1 2017.

DoF are currently working with the OECD to complete a survey on effective approaches to implementing the G20/OECD High Level Principles on SME Financing. This is the first phase of this piece of work which will continue in 2017.

Entrepreneurship

Action 165: Implement all the actions and report on progress under the National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship so as to deliver on its objectives.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Implementation of actions under the policy statement continues following its publication at the end of 2014. This is a five year plan and so far 54 actions have been completed. Of the remaining actions, 28 are of an ongoing nature and the other 14 were due to be completed during 2016. The first progress report covering 2015 was finalised in early 2016. The implementing bodies have been asked for updates for those actions that were due 'to be completed in 2016' and the second progress report covering 2016 will be prepared and finalised early in 2017.

Action 170: Provide business development and financial supports to 185 high potential and early stage start-ups.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland in 2016 provided development and financial support to 229 high potential and early start-ups. Enterprise Ireland's engagement with both post-CSF funded and post-HPSU funded start-ups involves working with them to develop their business, build their team and build their capabilities to scale their businesses internationally. This work involves one to one engagement as well as master classes, networking and peer to peer learning.

*A High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) is defined as a start-up venture that is: Introducing a new or innovative product or service to international markets; Involved in manufacturing or internationally traded services; Capable of creating 10 jobs in Ireland and realising €1m in sales within three years of starting up; Led by an experienced management team; Headquartered and controlled in Ireland; and less than five years old from the date of company's registration

Action 173: Ensure vacancies that occur at Head of Local Enterprise Office are filled in a timely fashion in accordance with the agreed recruitment protocol.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (*Function Transferred from DECLG*),DHPCLG /LAs/EI/PAS)

Update: This is ongoing as vacancies arise- none at present

Action 174: Initiate a detailed assessment of Local Enterprise Office performance potential and available resources in association with the Local Authorities.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs)

Update: In 2014 the 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) were established, following the dissolution of 35 County Enterprise Boards, to deliver an improved system of local enterprise supports to start-ups and small businesses across the country.

The 31 LEOs are no longer independent agencies but rather Offices within Local Authorities with policy direction and funding provided by Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

In early 2016 Enterprise Ireland set out Terms of Reference for the detailed assessment of a number of Local Enterprise Offices performance potential and available resources. During Q2 an independent consultant was engaged to complete a detailed assessment of performance potential and available resources within an agreed sample of four Local Enterprise Offices. This assessment was completed in Q3 and core findings have already been implemented e.g. a new funding model has been agreed with the Local Authorities and sanctioned by DPER that enables filling of previously vacant LEO posts and will lead to an increase in the numbers of staff working in the LEOs nationwide.

Action 181: Promote Ireland internationally as a start-up location and attract 15 new overseas start-ups to establish their business here.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: During 2016 (March and August) Enterprise Ireland launched two separate Competitive Start Funds specifically targeting overseas entrepreneurs. The objective of these two funds is to attract potential entrepreneurs to set up their new business in Ireland. Ireland competes internationally to attract these new businesses to Ireland.

The International Competitive Start Fund (CSF) specifically targeted manufacturing & internationally traded services start-ups that were, at the time of application, based overseas but willing to relocate to Ireland. A total of 16 projects were short-listed from the first call and these promoters were invited to travel to Ireland to experience the start-up ecosystem and to pitch to the evaluation panel. The pitch took place on 1 June. Enterprise Ireland approved funding for 10 successful applicants. The CSF was marketed in conjunction with Connect Ireland and Enterprise Ireland's overseas office network.

A second overseas specific Competitive Start Fund was launched on 24 August and a total of 12 projects were short-listed from this call. These promoters pitched to an evaluation panel in Cork, in November, as part of the Start Up Gathering. Funding has been approved to 8 successful applicants.

Action 186: Continue to implement the Accelerator Development Strategy to increase the number of accelerators operating in the Irish market.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: In January 2016 the then Minister for Jobs, Enterprise Innovation, Richard Bruton T.D. launched a €3m Scheme to pilot an initiative to support a number of regional accelerators (outside of County Dublin) and issued an open competitive call for expressions of interest, with a deadline for submissions of 31 March 2016. Following this Enterprise Ireland reviewed the submissions. The Scheme is funded under the €40m Fund established by the Government to support regional economic development. All funding under the Scheme will be allocated on the basis of open competition.

In Q3 2016, the Board of Enterprise Ireland made commitments to a number of regional accelerators. Enterprise Ireland is currently working with these accelerators to finalise the overall structure of these pilots. It is expected that the first of these accelerators will launch before the end of 2016 with the first cohort expected to commence in 2017.

The Action Plan for Jobs 2015 called on Enterprise Ireland to increase the level of start-up support in Ireland, with one of the associated actions being a scheme to support commercially managed accelerators. Accelerators can and do play a role in enhancing the start-up eco-system nationally and in supporting the early stage development of start-up companies leading to increased growth overtime.

Action 193: Implement the enterprise engagement strategy for higher education to include entrepreneurial education as an important part of the national framework for enterprise engagement.

Ongoing Measure: Implement the recommendations from the HEInnovate report. (DES, HEA, HEIs)

Update: HEInnovate report has been finalised and arrangements are being made for publication. The findings and recommendations from the report are being considered in the development of the new System Performance Framework for Higher Education and the new Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement.

Action 194: Undertake 16 workshops and one to one mentoring support under the Enterprise START programmes aimed at encouraging entrepreneurs with the potential to develop innovative export orientated projects.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise START programmes targets those with an idea for an innovative and ambitious start-up business; with the potential for exporting and growth in International Markets; and helps these potential entrepreneurs explore their new business ideas.

In 2016 Enterprise Ireland undertook a suite of Enterprise Start workshops and one to one mentoring support programmes. Enterprise Ireland rolled out 16 workshops, attended by 215 participants.

For participants these 2 evening or 1 day workshops are practical, interactive and thought provoking. Participants are provided with comprehensive information to understand the business development process including the key success factors and potential pitfalls as well as an outline of financial supports available from Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Office. While for Enterprise Ireland they help to identify, target, and validate a viable pipeline of new HPSU*.

* HPSUs are start-up businesses with the potential to develop an innovative product or service for sale on international markets and the potential to create 10 jobs and €1m in sales within 3 years of starting up.

Driving Export Led Growth

Supporting Trade

Action 220: Recognising the importance of cross-border economic links on the island of Ireland and the supporting work of InterTradeIreland in this area, maintain focus on economic growth and job delivery through the North South Ministerial Council and continue outreach activities, including at a Ministerial level, to the Northern Ireland business community.

Ongoing Measure: Armagh North South Ministerial Council Secretariat will continue to work with Departments to explore priorities at their NSMC sectoral meetings, especially as they affect economic development, job creation and the best use of public funds. (DFAT, DJEI, ITI with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Sixteen NSMC Ministerial meetings including two Plenary sessions held through 2016, in cooperation with relevant departments, have facilitated and highlighted continuing cooperation across a range of sectors, including those pertaining to economic development, job creation and the best use of public funds. The NSMC meetings have provided fora for Ministerial discussions on matters of interest to the all-island economy and the supporting work of InterTradeIreland and the other North South Implementation Bodies.

Ongoing Measure: Economic outreach activity and Ministerial engagement with the Northern Ireland business community will also continue to be a priority activity. (DFAT, relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Significant economic outreach activity has been maintained and enhanced through 2016 by the Armagh Secretariat and Department, addressing North South Brexit implications and building and growing North South economic and sectoral linkages. In addition, visits to Derry, Newry and Belfast by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade have involved significant engagement with the Northern Ireland business community- companies and representative bodies- addressing concerns around Brexit and the all-island economy.

Action 221: Continue to develop the coordinated approach to international messaging across Government, including through the regular updating of key messages and their communication by Ireland's Embassy network.

Ongoing Measure: Develop and communicate messages aimed at attracting talent to Ireland. (DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade liaises regularly with D/JEI and relevant State Agencies to ensure up-to-date material on initiatives aimed at attracting talent to Ireland is incorporated into the key messages that issue to the mission network on a quarterly basis. Information about the Tech/Life Ireland initiative – aimed at attracting ICT professionals to come to Ireland to live and work – is included in the most recent messaging.

Action 222: Develop and implement a programme of trade missions and other trade, tourism, investment and education events focused on key target markets, including exploratory and high potential markets as defined under the Review of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy. A substantial number of these trade missions and related events will be led at Ministerial level.

Ongoing Measure: Implementation of trade mission programme and trade, tourism, investment and education events supported by the Embassy network. (DFAT, EI, other relevant Departments and State agencies)

Update: A programme of trade missions and related promotional activities in key target markets was successfully implemented. This programme included 16 high-level Ministerial led trade missions to 15 different countries.

Action 223: Advance the Africa Strategy which provides a comprehensive framework for the development and management of Ireland's official engagement with Africa, through a clearly targeted engagement on trade and economic relations with Africa, including: a renewed Africa Ireland Economic Forum; the strengthening of our embassies' trade promotion tools and capacities, in co-operation with the State agencies; and ongoing support to Irish business representative bodies and companies focused on doing business in Africa.

Ongoing Measure: Consult with our embassies and state agencies and develop and deliver supports for trade promotion activities. (DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Supports to (our) embassies and to Irish business representative bodies and companies to assist and promote Irish companies doing business in Africa continues. Full drawdown of Africa Strategy Implementation Fund allocation to Business Ireland Africa expected by year end.

Action 225: In line with previous Global Irish Economic Fora, Government Departments and state agencies will have a key role to ensure implementation of relevant recommendations and outcomes from the 2015 Global Irish Economic Forum.

Ongoing Measure: Implement Global Irish Economic Forum recommendations in line with 2016 delivery plan as agreed by Government. (DFAT, DJEI with relevant Departments and agencies and the private sector)

Update: Outcomes from the Forum have been taken forward by relevant Government Departments and State Agencies with many integrated into Government Strategies, including Foodwise 2025, the International Financial Services Strategy and the International Education Strategy. A comprehensive progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the Global Irish Economic Forum will be prepared in Q1 2017.

Enhancing Collaboration between Irish and Foreign Owned Enterprises

Action 226: Progress implementation of the agreed Global Sourcing Strategy across Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to increase global sourcing sales by Enterprise Ireland client companies by €100 million over three years.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI, IDA)

Update: The Global Sourcing agenda continues to form an important part of Enterprise Ireland's work programme. EI has dedicated a specific unit to progressing this agenda item. Over 180 introductions were made to MNC's in Ireland in 2016. The Trade and Investment Mission to Ireland was held in 3 locations: Athlone, Sligo, and Limerick in 2016. As part of opportunities & challenges arising from Brexit, making the Global Sourcing agenda richer and deeper will be a priority

Action 227: Continue to identify opportunities to support investment and job creation in the Green Economy.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI, IDA)

Update: Strengthening the connections between Irish-owned firms and the foreign-owned base of companies in Ireland plays an important role in growing our enterprise base.

Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland continue to provide opportunities for Irish-owned firms to connect into global supply networks, which help to strengthen their capabilities, reputation and visibility on international markets.

Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland are continuing to drive collaboration on key priorities including maximising of procurement opportunities for Irish business through the Global Sourcing initiative, enhancing collaboration between Irish and foreign owned enterprises.

One of the areas of potential opportunity lies within the green economy, where Enterprise Ireland continues to seek out opportunities to support investment and job creation.

Enterprise Ireland has to this end been involved in the development of an Ultra-Low Energy Cluster aimed at promoting the use of low energy technologies & products in construction.

Procurement Opportunities

Action 232: Engage with SME representative bodies, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland and Inter-tradelreland through the SME working group to identify further measures to assist public sector procurement.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DPER/OGP)

Update: The SME Working Group met on 2 occasions during 2016. The work of the Group continues to contribute to areas such as the training and up- skilling of SMEs via Meet the Buyer events; and refinements to the eTenders system to encourage SMEs access public procurement. The Group also carried out a review of the operation of the pilot Tender Advisory Service.

Action 236: Increase registration by SMEs on e-tenders.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DPER/OGP)

Update: OGP has been actively promoting the use of the eTenders platform at 'Meet the Buyer' events and 'Taking Care of Business' presentations throughout 2016. OGP supports the 'Go-2-Tender' programme run by InterTradeIreland which is aimed at the SME sector to provide knowledge and practical skills to tender successfully for public sector contracts including the use of the eTenders platform.

Action 237: Publish pipelines of procurement activities on <http://www.procurement.ie> to inform SMEs of opportunities that will arise during the year.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DPER/OGP)

Update: The OGP pipeline of procurement activities (Schedule of Frameworks and Contracts) is published on www.procurement.ie. The Schedule is updated on a quarterly basis so that a rolling nine month forward view is always visible. This advanced notice of forthcoming tendering processes can assist SMEs in planning and preparing to compete in public procurement contracts.

Stimulating the Domestic Economy

Tourism

Action 264: Promote Irish art and artists worldwide. Develop the impact of Culture Ireland investment in the Irish arts sector globally, identify new markets for Irish work, and build awareness of the range and quality of work produced by Irish artists and companies in strategic international territories, working with Tourism Ireland and other State bodies.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), Culture Ireland)

Update: Culture Ireland continues to increase global awareness of the diversity and strength of work of Irish artists. Throughout 2016 Culture Ireland had a special focus on territories with a significant Irish diaspora delivered through the 2016 Commemoration programme I Am Ireland. During 2016 Culture Ireland supported 450 events in 60 countries and reached over 4.5 million live audience members and 15.5 million online. Working with State bodies, in particular Tourism Ireland, the Irish Film Board and the IDA, Culture Ireland achieved a heightened focus, especially around the St Patrick's Day period in key territories such as the US. In 2016 Culture Ireland created an estimated 260 full-time jobs and generated media value of over €7.5 million.

Action 265: Support up to 300 individuals and over 500 organisations across a wide range of arts venues, festivals, arts organisations and touring initiatives around Ireland in 2016.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), Arts Council)

Update: The Arts Council met this target.

Action 266: Continue to develop cultural digitisation initiatives in order to enhance Ireland's roots tourism offering.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), GRO, National Library and National Archives)

Update: Website providing public access to the historic records of Births, Marriages and Deaths of the General Register Office (GRO) launched in Q3. A Genealogy Policy Working Group has been formed and is working to draft a new National Genealogy Policy during 2017.

Action 267: Develop further heritage tourism initiatives, including a programme of trailway development in National Parks and Nature Reserves, in partnership with key stakeholders. Collaborate with the relevant Departments and Agencies to ensure that National Parks, Nature Reserves, National Monuments and historic buildings contribute as signature experiences along the Wild Atlantic Way, in particular through the development of a national park trails network, so as to add to the attractiveness of these areas for tourists.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. ((*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), Fáilte Ireland and National Trails Office)

Update: A strategic investment programme, focused upon signature experiences at National Parks and Nature Reserves along the Wild Atlantic Way, has been agreed between the D/AHRRGA and Fáilte. The programme will be formally launched by An Taoiseach in January 2017.

Action 270: Support the major refurbishment programme for the National Gallery of Ireland and the development of a permanent exhibition space and interpretative centre at the GPO, the development of visitor facilities at Teach an Phiarsaigh, Ros Muc, the restoration of the Moore Street national monument as a 1916 Commemorative Centre and other investments as part of the Ireland 2016 Programme.

Ongoing Measure: Continuation of work on Projects. ((*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), OPW, ÚnaG and NGI)

Update:

NGI – Completed - The construction work has been completed and the building has been handed over to the gallery in December 2016. The historic wings will re-open to the public in Spring/Summer of 2017.

Interpretative centre at the GPO: Completed The permanent exhibition space and interpretative centre at the GPO opened to the public in Q2 2016

Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh, Conamara – Completed - Visitor facilities at Teach an Phiarsaigh, Ros Muc, opened to the public in Q4.

Moore Street Commemorative Centre project – Delayed - Pending the outcome of an appeal to the Court of Appeal and further consultations with stakeholders, conservation works, as approved by the High Court, are currently in progress to preserve and protect the buildings for the time being and to prevent further deterioration to the fabric of the National Monument buildings.

National Library: Completed - The National Library and OPW have been working on a design scheme which will be submitted to the Department shortly. Construction is expected to begin in 2017.

National Archives: Completed - The OPW have engaged a design team who are currently working on drafting a tender request which is expected to issue at the start of 2017, with construction beginning in the summer of 2017.

Cork Event Centre: Delayed - Negotiations and the procurement phase took longer than expected, Cork City Council (CCC) are managing this project with grant assistance of €12m from D/AHRRGA. A Service Level agreement is in place in respect of the grant and CCC are in contract negotiation with their preferred bidder.

Regional arts and cultural centres: Completed - A new Arts and Culture Capital Scheme was launched in July 2016 with applications are currently being evaluated and the Minister will announce grant awards early 2017.

Construction and Housing

Action 275: Implement the relevant measures set out in the Social Housing Strategy 2020 to support the delivery of social housing.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (*Function Transferred from DECLG*), DHPCLG and relevant Departments)

Update: Measures under the Social Housing Strategy 2020, are now encompassed and enhanced under Rebuilding Ireland: Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, which contains a clear commitment to reporting regular progress, particularly through quarterly progress reports. The first Quarterly Progress Report (in respect of Q3 commitments and actions), which was published on 1 November and can be accessed at <http://rebuildingireland.ie/First-Progress-Report.pdf>, sets out the progress on the implementation of the relevant actions. Further progress reports will follow on a quarterly basis, with the next due to be published in January 2017. Each Quarterly Report under Rebuilding Ireland will focus on the actions due to be progressed or completed in the preceding quarter.

Action 276: Fund the delivery of 20,000 residential units on a commercial basis by end 2020.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (NAMA)

Update: NAMA is committed to facilitating, on development land owned by its debtors, increased residential delivery in the greater Dublin area and in other locations where residential development may be commercially viable.

Progress as of 2016:

- Completed since start-2014 - 4,700
- Under construction - 1,037
- Funding approved but not yet under construction - 1,111
- With planning permission but not yet under construction - 7,300
- Planning application lodged / to be lodged in 2017 - 11,000

Action 278: Support the delivery of housing-related enabling infrastructure in large scale priority development areas, and roll out the Activate fund.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (ISIF)

Update: ISIF has invested in a number of significant financing platforms and projects (e.g. Activate Capital; Ardstone Residential Partnership; and Wilbur Ross Cardinal Commercial Real Estate Mezzanine Debt Fund), and is actively examining other investment opportunities, with a view to boosting supply and speed of delivery mixed-tenure residential developments. In particular, ISIF is engaging with public and private sector stakeholders to examine the feasibility of establishing, in conjunction with the private sector, a Housing Investment Fund which would fund the delivery of substantial new mixed-tenure residential developments in a way that is both off-balance sheet and

commercially viable.

ISIF is engaging with a range of Higher Education Institutions (“HEIs”) and has explored in some detail how ISIF can support their capital programmes, with a particular emphasis on plans for on-campus student accommodation. An example of ISIF’s progress is the provision of a €54m long term debt facility to DCU to support its student accommodation and overall campus development programme.

ISIF is exploring the creation of a Housing Infrastructure Development Fund to unlocking potential housing supply in key areas of established need, such as the Greater Dublin Area and the other Gateway cities. ISIF is currently in advanced engagement with local authorities and private sector developers in respect of specific substantial infrastructure financing requirements. These initial projects would see ISIF invest €100m unlock sites that could, in the medium term, support construction of over 15,000 new residential units.

Action 282: Maintain the Home Renovation Incentive Scheme to support homeowners and legitimate businesses.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DoF)

Update: The Home Renovation Incentive was extended as part of Budget 2017 for a further two years, until end 2018.

Action 283: Implement and monitor the Living City Initiative.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DoF)

Update: The Living City Initiative commenced 5 May 2015. As part of Budget 2017, the Department of Finance conducted a review of the Living City Initiative. A number of changes were brought forward following this review, including extending the residential element of the scheme to landlords, removal of the requirement under the residential element for a pre-1915 building to have been originally constructed for use as a dwelling, removal of the floor area restriction for owner-occupiers, and reduction in the minimum amount of capital expenditure required for eligibility.

Action 285: Facilitate emerging and developing construction sector businesses to adopt best practice and build in quality and safety aspects of their products and services to comply with building regulations and gain market share.

Ongoing Measure: Conduct an information campaign aimed at emerging and developing construction sector businesses on the benefits of standardisation and certification of construction products and services including CE marking. (NSAI)

Update: In April 2016 NSAI launched S.R. 54 Code of Practice - Methodology for the energy efficient retrofit of existing dwellings and the SEAI Energy Show in the RDS. The free technical guide provides best practice information to all contractors involved in the renovation of homes, including architects, engineers, and insulation installers. The launch was supported by a PR campaign across print,

broadcast and social media.

In May NSAI spoke at the RIAI (Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland) Seminar on Product Certification for architects and architectural technologists. The event was attended by 50 construction professionals. Also in May, NSAI organised a seminar on Business Information Modelling (BIM) for the construction sector which was attended by 80 construction industry professionals.

In November 2016 NSAI held a Fire Seminar with attendance of 60+, to outline recent and proposed amendments to related Irish and European construction standards and related Irish Technical Guidance for businesses involved in fire security in Ireland

New Sources of Growth

Audio-Visual

Action 300: Work with the Irish Film Board and other agencies to explore the capacity to expand the industry. Increase full-time employment equivalents in the film and audio-visual sector up to 1,000 jobs by supporting the Irish Film Board to fund at least 15-20 Irish feature films and develop creative co-production feature film opportunities for 5-10 creative co-productions. Overall, up to 32 projects will be supported, including feature documentaries, animation, TV Drama and short films.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (*Function Transferred from DAHG*), DAHRRGA), IFB)

Update: The Film Board met this target by the end of 2016.

Glossary of Terms

AIB	Allied Irish Bank
APJ	Action Plan for Jobs
BAI	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
BPFI	Banking and Payments Federation Ireland
CBI	Central Bank of Ireland
COSME	EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs
CRCI	Clinical Research Coordination Ireland
CRO	Credit Review Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAA	Dublin Airport Authority
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DAHG	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DAHRRGA	Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
DCCoI	Design and Craft Council of Ireland
DCCAÉ	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
D/Defence	Department of Defence
DECLG	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DG GROW	Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DHPCLG	Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government
DJEI	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

DSP	Department of Social Protection
D/Taoiseach	Department of Taoiseach
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
ECB	European Central Bank
EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
EI	Enterprise Ireland
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
EFSI	European Fund for Strategic Investments
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ETB	Education and Training Board
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FET	Further Education and Training
GEDI	Global Entrepreneurship Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GPO	General Post Office
GRO	General Register Office
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HIHI	Health Innovation Hub Ireland
HPSU	High Potential Start-ups
HRB	Health Research Board
HSA	Health and Safety Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers' Confederation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
IDC	Inter-Departmental Committee

IFB	Irish Film Board
IFS	International Financial Services
IICM	Irish Institute of Credit Management
IMDA	Irish Medical Devices Association
INAB	Irish National Accreditation Board
IoT	Institute of Technology
IP	Intellectual Property
IRC	Irish Research Council
ISIF	Ireland Strategic Investment Fund
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ITI	InterTradeIreland
JOC	Joint Oireachtas Committee
KTI	Knowledge Transfer Ireland
LA	Local Authorities
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LEADER	Liaisons entre actions de developpement de l'économie rurale
LEO/s	Local Enterprise Office/s
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency
LPC	Low Pay Commission
LRC	Law Reform Commission
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NAMA	National Asset Management Agency
NCC	National Competitiveness Council
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NGI	National Gallery of Ireland
NPB	National Promotional Bank
NSAI	National Standards Authority of Ireland
NTA	National Transport Authority
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	Office of Government Procurement
OPW	Office of Public Works

PAS	Public Appointments Service
PCI	Pharmaceutical Ireland
PIAB	Personal Injuries Assessment Board
PSO	Public Service Obligation
ptsb	Permanent TSB
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RDI	Research, development and innovation
REACH	Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
RP	Research Prioritisation
RPO	Research Performing Organisations
SBCI	Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SFSI	Sustainable Food Systems Ireland
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
SVCS	Seed and Venture Capital Scheme
UCD	University College Dublin
ÚnaG	Údarás na Gaeltachta
VAT	Value Added Tax
WDC	Western Development Commission
WEF	World Economic Forum

