

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS

2016



Third Progress Report

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Commentary

This is the third 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. It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the third quarter of 2016.

The Government published the fifth in its multi-annual Action Plan for Jobs series in January this year. This Plan, which contains 304 actions 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, 2013, 2014 and 2015 cumulatively, and reported on by the Monitoring Committee in its previous quarterly reports (see www.djei.ie).

The latest official statistics on employment and unemployment in Ireland (CSO QNHS Quarter 2 2016) show that total employment increased by 56,200 in the year to Q2 2016, bringing total employment to 2,014,900. There was an increase in full time employment of 44,900 and an increase in part-time employment of 11,400. Since 2012 when the first Action Plan for Jobs was launched 176,000 more people are at work.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September 2016 was 7.9%, down from a high of 15.1% in February 2012.

Actions due in Quarter 3

In the third quarter of 2016, Departments and agencies were to deliver 88 measures under the Action Plan. 14 of the measures due in Quarter 3 of 2016 have not been delivered, giving a completion rate of 84%.

Measures not delivered as planned in Q3

As stated above, 14 of the Q3 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *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 are being finalised and will be submitted to Cabinet in shortly, and will be published thereafter.
- *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.* The HEA is currently collating and analysing data for each year of Springboard, 2011-2016, and will publish an evaluation report in Q4 2016.
- *Undertake the Remuneration Review to provide clearly defined criteria for use in an evidence based setting of salary thresholds for employment permit; As per headline action - Action 74.* A Request for Tender seeking labour market specialists to undertake the evidence based research was published in May 2016. However, no proposals were received. The Department has now decided to conduct the review in-house and is currently redesigning their approach. The review will commence in Q4 2016 and is expected to conclude in Q1 2017.
- *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; Amend the charging legislation of the commercial waste market to provide for the introduction of pay by weight for commercial waste, following on from actions implemented in previous APJs (in relation to the application of pay by weight to household waste - Action 130.* In light of the fact that decisions around the introduction of pay-by-weight for household waste collection have been deferred until 2017, the scheduled introduction of pay by weight per kilogramme charging for commercial waste collection has consequently also been deferred.

- *Progress project priorities in the Greater Dublin Area to address congestion in 2016; Re-open the Phoenix Park Tunnel - Action 131.* Works to upgrade the Phoenix Park Tunnel to facilitate train services running from the Kildare line into Connolly, Tara, Pearse and Grand Canal Dock Stations are progressing. These works include track works, embankment strengthening, tunnel works and signaling works. It is expected that commuter rail services will begin using the Tunnel before the end of Q4 2016.
- *Develop and introduce a smartphone GeoSMART Inspection application to assist the interaction between inspectors and employers and allow for real time data sharing; Test the app in the field and roll out to inspectors - Action 135.* The smartphone application has been developed and verified as secure. Completion of the pilot phase has been delayed to end of December 2016, pending replacement of staff resources lost to HSA's ICT due to staff resignation and retirement.
- *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; Report with recommendations to inform future regulatory regime presented to Minister - Action 137.* As a consequence of delays in establishing the cross-departmental group and new legal issues arising, it is expected to convene the group in November and revise the schedule for delivery on its review and recommendations.
- *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; Review domestic and EU developments and conduct stakeholder consultation - Action 138.* As a consequence of delays in setting up the Steering Group, it is expected to convene the steering group in November 2016 and revise schedule for preparing and overseeing an assessment exercise based on a consultancy tender.
- *Prepare a National Planning Framework to set a long-term national framework to ensure proper planning and sustainable development and the optimal economic and social development of the country as a whole; Publish the Draft National Planning*

Framework and Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Reports - Action 141. It is intended that an emerging draft National Planning Framework (NPF) will be prepared by Q1 2017 for submission to the Oireachtas for approval.

- *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. The report is in the final stages of drafting. The recommendations in the draft report are being considered and implementation of accepted recommendations will be progressed once the report is finalised.
- *Embed graduates in international markets for 30 Enterprise Ireland client companies to help them to internationalise and grow their business in new or existing markets through the Graduates 4 International Growth Programme (G4IG); As per headline action* - Action 204. Enterprise Ireland is progressing this action to achieve the target of 30. To date in 2016, 25 Graduates have been embedded under the G4IG programme (Iteration 3) which launched in January 2016. G4IG (iteration 4), the design of which is being adapted to address the impact of Brexit, will commence client recruitment in Q4 2016. The fourth G4IG programme, being run in partnership with the IMI, will see the Graduate pool embedded in international markets in Q1 2017.
- *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. The study will be completed in Q4 2016.
- *Enact the Planning and Development (No. 2) Bill 2015 to implement the planning provisions of the Mahon Tribunal, including the establishment of an independent Planning Regulator and e-planning related measures identified in Construction 2020; Progression of Planning and Development (Amendment No.2) Bill 2015 through Houses of the Oireachtas* - Action 277. This Bill is now called the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016. Second Stage debate commenced in the Oireachtas on Wed 28th September 2016 and will continue on through Q4.

- *Publish and implement the joint Irish Film Board/Broadcasting Authority of Ireland national strategy on skills shortages and talent development; Commence implementation of strategy - Action 302.* The study will be published shortly and the implementation of the strategy will commence following its publication.

Update on actions delayed in Quarter 1

As reported at the end of Quarter 1, there were 14 actions delayed. The following 5 measures from this report have now been delivered:

- *Publish and implement the Public Sector Energy Action Plan; Publish the action plan - Action 125.* A draft Action Plan has been prepared. The opportunity is being taken to update the Plan with the more recent data on Public Sector energy use available in October. It will be submitted to the Government for approval and subsequent publication this quarter.
- *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; Finalise the outline certification scheme, and seek Government approval for the scheme as well as approval for priority drafting of the heads of a Bill to underpin it - Action 32.* Government approved priority drafting of a Bill to underpin the KDB certification scheme in July and the drafting process is well progressed.
- *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; Submit copyright legislative reform proposals for Government approval together with the draft heads of a Bill - Action 36.* Government approved the Draft Heads of a Copyright Amendment Bill in July 2016. The Office of the Parliamentary Counsel has now been asked to progress formal drafting of the Bill.

- *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; publish the report of the 2015 Global Irish Economic Forum – Action 225.* Following approval by Government, the report of the 2015 Global Irish Economic Forum was published on 29th of July, 2016.
- *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; publish the report of the 2015 Global Irish Economic Forum – Action 225.* 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.

Update on actions delayed in Quarter 2

As reported at the end of Quarter 2, there were 15 actions delayed. The following 3 measures from this report have now been delivered:

- *Evaluate the delivery and outcomes of the 2015 Design 4 Growth pilot scheme led by LEO Dublin City which was aimed at assisting participating companies to use good design in a strategic way to enhance their product or service; As per headline action - Action 114.* An independent evaluation of the delivery and outcomes of the Design 4 Growth pilot scheme was undertaken in Q3 and the findings will be presented as Case Studies to inform the future development of the scheme.
- *Place Construction Industry Register Ireland on a statutory footing; Bring Memorandum for Government seeking approval for draft Heads of Bill and referral to Environment Select Committee - Action 279.* It is proposed to bring forward a Memorandum for Government before the end of October 2016 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

- *Carry out a detailed evaluation of the operational aspects and enterprise impacts of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme; Complete the evaluation of the operational aspects of the programme and identify recommendations - Action 290.* The evaluation of the operational aspects of the scheme are currently being finalised and will be completed in the coming weeks. DCCAIE has engaged with a number of stakeholders including the practitioners of the scheme & Heads of Enterprise in the 31 Local Enterprise Offices, & attendees of information sessions. The evaluation will identify recommendations.

Quarter 3 Measures

Disruptive Reforms

Stimulating Regional Growth

Action 10: Expand the campus incubation programme to increase campus incubation capacity and address unmet regional start-up company needs.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland has expanded its Campus Incubation facilities to support more regional start-up companies. The three initial expansions include the Galway, Athlone and Waterford campus incubators have unequivocally enhanced the profile and reputation of their regions as a location of choice for international start-ups, collaborative R&D ventures, service providers, entrepreneurs, investors and returning emigrants. They have demonstrated that the companies emerging from these incubators are sustainable, scalable, export focused companies, who go on to establish themselves in the region.

Currently, the three locations have a combined output of 10-12 start-ups per year, including approximately 5 High Potential Start-ups (HPSUs) per year. With the extended facilities these figures would increase to 25-30 start-ups and 10-12 HPSUs per year.

Action 15: Commence the implementation of LEADER Local Development Strategies to support rural enterprise development in all 28 sub-regional areas.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG)

Update: LEADER Local Development Strategies have been selected in 26 of the 28 sub-regional areas, with strategies for the remaining two areas expected to be finalised in October. Implementation of LEADER has commenced in 23 of these areas following the completion of Funding Agreements with the approved Local Action Groups for each area.

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.

Q3 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. 14 of these are available online. In relation to the remaining 31, detailed plans to put 15 services online by November 2017 have been developed. 1 of these 15 services went live in September 2016 (Employment Permits) and 2 are in the final stage of development and expected to be online in Q4 2016.

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).

Driving Intellectual Property in Enterprise

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.

Q3 Measure: If approved by Government and subject to available resources in the office of Parliamentary Counsel, progress formal drafting of the Bill. (DJEI)

Update: The OPC appointed a Drafter in August 2016 and formal drafting of the Bill has commenced.

Delivering Skills for a Growing Economy

Action 50: Continue implementation of the Strategic Dialogue process for 2016 under the Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014-2016, including monitoring of performance metrics for the skills needs of the economy.

Q3 Measure: Review of performance compacts agreed for 2014-16. (HEA)

Update: The Review of performance compacts with the Institutions was completed by the HEA in Q3 2016. The second Systems Performance Report is currently being drafted by the HEA and will be submitted to the Minister in the coming weeks and published thereafter. As outlined in the Action Plan for Education it is now the intention to set out a multi-year vision for the future of Higher Education which will see the development of a new Systems Performance Framework for Higher Education for the period to 2021. The new Systems Performance Framework will state the national priorities and objectives for the higher education system over the next number of years.

Action 51: Develop a Workforce Development Strategy for employees, in alignment with the new National Skills Strategy, and in consultation with enterprise and education and training providers regionally and nationally.

Q3 Measure: Produce a new strategy for workforce development for employees, in consultation with enterprise and education and training providers regionally and nationally. (SOLAS, DES)

Update: A draft Further Education and Training policy framework for Employee Development has been prepared as per Q3 deadline and it is planned that it will be agreed by end Q4 2016.

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.

Q3 Measure: Continue to gather the full range of quantitative and qualitative data on Springboard+ inputs, outputs and outcomes. (HEA)

Update: The HEA is currently collating and analysing data for each year of Springboard, 2011-2016

Action 53: Roll out the 2016 call for proposals for Springboard Courses, with a particular focus on priority areas identified by industry through the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs including ICT, the medtech and biotech sectors; skills for enterprise to trade internationally; international financial services; entrepreneurship and business start-ups.

Q3 Measure: Roll out Springboard+ places. (HEIs, HEA)

Update: Rollout of Springboard+ 2016 has commenced.

Under Springboard+ 2016, 180 courses have been approved for funding providing for 5,825 places. Courses will be delivered in public and private education institutions across the country, during the 2016/2017 academic year, in areas such as ICT, Manufacturing which includes the medtech and biotech sectors, Construction, Entrepreneurship, Cross-Enterprise Skills, the Hospitality Sector and International Financial Services.

Springboard+ courses are at Level 6 (Certificate) to Level 9 (Masters) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Action 57: Embed the Graduates Business Growth (G4G) Initiative in 80 Enterprise Ireland client SMEs.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: To date, there are over 80 companies engaged in the programme. Enterprise Ireland is conducting an evaluation with clients to assess the effectiveness of the initiative and continually improve based on client feedback.

The Graduate Business Growth Initiative supports Enterprise Ireland SME client companies to hire up to two graduates per annum. This is a broad based graduate placement across all disciplines and sectors, aiming to embed higher levels of graduate capability in our SME client companies.

The graduates complete a project defined by the company linked to their overall growth plan while the companies identify in-company mentors to work with the graduates; providing an infrastructure that supports them, both in their development and in the completion of the project, for the duration of the graduates' employment.

Enterprise Ireland has designed and developed a dedicated website for its graduate offers and initiatives called www.gradhub.ie. Enterprise Ireland client companies can advertise opportunities on the website to attract and recruit graduates.

Action 59: Increase the number of research Masters awards under the Irish Research Council Employment Based Programme to address national skills requirements, particularly in the SME sector.

Q3 Measure: Complete review process and make funding awards. (IRC)

Update: The Employment Based Programme scheme is a tailored mechanism for job creation and research opportunities for early-career researchers in Ireland. It offers co-educational collaborations between Irish-based businesses and organisations and Irish higher education institutions and more than 50 employment partners have participated in the scheme so far. In addition, more than 120 jobs have been created for researchers who are currently embedded in a range of organisational types, across all academic disciplines and enterprise sectors. The programme thus speaks to the wider employment market for researchers, and is not restricted to enterprises in industrial priority areas.

The 2016 Employment Based Postgraduate Programme was launched in December 2015 and closed in February 2016. In total, 52 eligible applications were submitted by the closing date. 32 applications were recommended for funding by the international assessment panel, of which 7 were research Masters of either a 12 month or 24 month duration. 25 applications recommended for funding were for PhD research. The figures represent an increase in research Masters from 2015.

The research Masters being funded are in the following areas:

- Physics
- Biological Sciences A
- Engineering
- Chemistry
- Markets

The following will act as employment mentors on the research masters:

- ProPhotonix Ire. Ltd.
- NVP Energy Limited
- Castolin Eutectic Ireland Ltd.
- Men's Development Network Ltd.
- Novartis Ringaskiddy Limited
- Leinster GAA

The Employment Based Postgraduate Programme complements the IRC Enterprise Partnership Scheme, which also offers Masters by Research options. Although EPS PhD and Masters scholars are students rather than employees, the programme strongly supports the transition of scholars into the labour market post-completion, either in their enterprise partner or other relevant employers.

Action 60: Through the National Skills Bulletin report, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs will identify key existing and emerging skills needs of the economy to inform education and training providers and other stakeholders and assist in the alignment of skills provision with the needs of enterprise.

Q3 Measure: Publish annual Skills Bulletin. (EGFSN)

Update: A draft final report of the National Skills Bulletin 2015 was presented to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs at its meeting on 21 September.

The National Skills Bulletin provides an overview of the Irish labour market at occupational level, by examining a variety of indicators on demand and supply. The Bulletin informs policy formulation in the areas of employment, education/training, immigration (particularly the sourcing of skills which are in short supply in the Irish and EU labour market from the EEA), as well as informing career guidance advisors, students and other individuals making career and educational choices.

The report was adopted by the EGFSN at its meeting on 21 September and published on 30 September.

Increasing ICT Skills

Action 66: Through strengthened collaboration between Government, the education system and industry and as part of the goal of making Ireland the most attractive location in the world for ICT skills and ability, implement the key actions from the ICT Skills Action Plan 2014 – 2018.

Q3 Measure: Roll out the new ICT places. (HEIs, HEA)

Update: Roll out of new ICT places under Springboard+ 2016 has commenced.

Springboard+ 2016, will provide for over 1,200 part-time Springboard ICT places and over

800 full-time ICT skills conversion places.

In addition, a further 699 ICT skills conversion places will be available to eligible participants on a new pilot, part-time, two-year option.

Courses will be delivered in public and private educational institutions across the country.

The ICT skills conversion courses are at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Action 67: 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.

Q3 Measure: Roll out of incentivised places. (HEIs/HEA)

Update: Roll out of additional incentivised places has commenced and is ongoing.

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.

Q3 Measure: Finalise delivery of ICT Conversion Programmes. (Skillnets)

Update: Four dedicated Skillnet networks are 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.

The networks have 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 providing work placements on the programmes include HP, Ericsson, IBM, Cisco, Citrix, VM Ware and a range of animation companies including Treehouse Republic and Brown Bag Films.

8 ICT conversion programme have been delivered to date to over 150 unemployed individuals, providing both training and work placements with high levels of employment progression from all programmes. Over 7,146 training days have been delivered to date.

These programmes include a Diploma in DevOps, Certificate in Software Engineering,

Fundamentals in Cyber Security.

A number of new conversion programmes are commencing in Q3 including 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 was designed to attract a diversity of talents for the programme and placed a particular focus on supporting women re-entrants to IT. This programme commenced at start Q3 and is being delivered in Cork.

Attracting world class talent to Ireland

Action 73: Deliver the online application system for employment permits.

Q3 Measure: Deliver the live system. (DJEI)

Update: The Employment Permits Online System (EPOS) went live on 5 September 2016

Making Work Pay

Action 78: Undertake analysis and make a recommendation on the appropriate level of the national minimum wage.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (LPC)

Update: Report presented to the Minister and published on the 19 July 2016.

Action 80: Examine the issues surrounding the preponderance of women on the national minimum wage and report its views in relation to the underlying causes.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (LPC)

Update: The Report is now scheduled to be submitted by end of October (Q4, not Q3) as agreed with Department. Work to date is in line with the scheduled timeframe.

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.

Q3 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 developed and discussed with the Minister, 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.

Innovation

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.

Q3 Measure: Issue the first call for proposals. (HIHI)

Update: The national HIH was officially launched by the Minister for Health & Secretary General of DJEI in UCC on 26 September 2016. This project will further enhance the collaboration between the health system and enterprise. As part of the official launch the first calls for proposals were issued. An open call was announced for innovation into healthcare from companies, or from individuals or teams with good concepts or ideas with no particular theme. All applications impacting health will be considered. In addition, a Focused Call on Improving Care for Older Persons in the Healthcare System was announced, with particular emphasis on the following priority areas:

- Development of an “Internet of Things” wearable device alerting nursing staff/family of movements/falls which might assist in the early detection and prevention of incidents
- Supporting an integrated care pathway for promoting, enhancing and enabling integrated and patient centred care for older persons.

The closing date for applications under this process is 18 November 2016.

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.

Q3 Measure: Cooperate with European entities also providing individual student/early stage career researcher programmes which partner with employers to leverage opportunities in Horizon 2020. (IRC)

Update: The Council was successful in winning a MSCA COFUND award (CAROLINE) with a H2020 contribution of €4.6m. This will create 50 employment positions of between 2-3 years as part of a tripartite research collaboration with non-profit employers in the social, civic and cultural sectors, in both national and international domains. A key emphasis within the programme will be the transition of the 50 research fellows into employment within both the academic and non-academic sectors beyond the completion of the Fellowship.

Each Fellowship will involve secondment outside academia, with the option of further placements to other non-academic entities, including enterprise.

The Council has contributed to a Science Europe survey report on Postdoctoral schemes across Europe. The survey report will be published in early Q4 and will aid the Council in identifying countries with promising early-stage researcher programmes that partner with employers. The potential for forming consortia with selected country agencies to target Horizon 2020 (in particular MSCA) funding for the further development of such programmes will be explored.

The Council jointly operates and funds the Irish MSCA Office, based in the IUA. Both the Council and IUA are keen to renew the partnership for a further period of three years, from 2017. The Council is currently discussing targets and priorities for the coming years for the unit, including in relation to enhancing draw-down of funding for schemes that include collaboration with employers and enterprise.

More broadly, the Irish Research Council is developing links and relationships with agencies in Europe through its membership of networks such as Science Europe and participation in selected EraNets.

Action 97: Expand the Technology Gateway network to ensure better regional geographic and technological coverage.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Since its inception in 2013 the Gateway Network has achieved significantly higher levels of interaction between industry and the Institutes of Technology (IoTs) than had been envisioned at the programme outset.

To date, the Technology Gateways have completed a total of 956 industrial projects, at a value of €10.24 million, of which €4.85 million in cash (47%) was contributed from industry.

Based on such positive results, Enterprise Ireland is expanding the Technology Gateway network to provide more regional and technological coverage in order to support local industries' innovation needs. These include:

- a new Medical & Engineering Technology Gateway based in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
- a Precision Engineering & Manufacturing Gateway in Sligo IT and

- an Applied Design Gateway in IT Carlow

These will provide local and nationwide resources for industry delivering solutions on near to market problems for industrial partners.

Action 101: Run an Innovation for Growth programme (I4G) to 30 Enterprise Ireland client companies in 2016.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Enterprise Ireland has run 2 programmes in 2016, with a total of 30 participant companies.

Enterprise Ireland has partnered with the Irish Management Institute to deliver Innovation 4 Growth, a unique programme specifically designed to meet the needs of ambitious and entrepreneurial Irish companies seeking to use innovation as a way to unlock opportunities in the marketplace. Targeting leaders in Enterprise Ireland's client companies' management teams the programme fast-tracks their company through an end-to-end innovation learning and practice journey. It then supports them to deliver on one or more innovation initiatives. Centred on three distinct Journey Phases the programme also incorporates significant peer-to-peer and business coaching support to help you implement innovation practices, processes and culture with participant companies.

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

Q3 Measure: Review initial applications to create a shortlist of world class teams. (SFI)

Update: All 16 initial applications have been reviewed. 8 of these applicant groups have been invited to submit a full application.

Action 107: Grow the total number of Industry Fellows to 80 thereby increasing the pool of researchers strongly positioned to take up employment in industry in Ireland.

Q3 Measure: Complete the review process for the 2015 Industry Fellowship Programme and funding decisions made. (SFI, EI, IDA)

Update: The review process for the 2015 Industry Fellowship Programme is complete. In the first call, there were 11 successful applicants. In the second call, there were 21 successful applicants.

Q3 Measure: Launch the 2016 Industry Fellowship Programme. (SFI, EI, IDA)

Update: The 2016 Industry Fellowship Programme has been launched. The 2016 SFI Industry Fellowship Programme has two deadlines. First Deadline: 6 July 2016. Second Deadline: 2nd December 2016.

Q3 Measure: Grow the total number of Industry Fellowships to 80. (SFI, EI, IDA)

Update: There has been a total of 81 awards made to the Industry Fellowship program.

Q3 Measure: Evaluate the outcome of the first 50 Industry Fellowships in order to evolve the Programme. (SFI, EI, IDA)

Update: Case studies from the first 50 Industry Fellowships have been compiled. SFI have analysed destinations of the Industry Fellows, subsequent to the programme. Both of these evaluations have informed the 2016 Industry Fellowship Programme.

Q3 Measure: Promote the Industry Fellowship Programmes to the SME and MNC community. (SFI, EI, IDA)

Update: A number of resources have been put in place to help Industry Partners find potential Academic Partners. SFI has created a private SFI Industry Fellowship Programme group on LinkedIn, where potential Industry and Academic Partners have registered their details. Currently there are 800 active members on the LinkedIn page.

The Science Foundation Ireland researcher database lists all Science Foundation Ireland award holders. Companies can identify the appropriate academic researcher from the database and contact them to discuss whether or not there are eligible researchers in their group.

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

Q3 Measure: Deliver the agreed programme of appearances/presentations. (NSAI)

Update: In September 2016, NSAI delivered presentations to two third level Institutes involved in the Enterprise Ireland partnership Technology Gateway programmes, PEM (Precision Engineering and Manufacturing) in Sligo IT, and IMaR (Intelligent Mechatronics and RFID) and Applied Biotechnology in Tralee IT. NSAI addressed students and research team members on the innovation standard, the role and benefits of participation in standardisation work and the contribution of standards to research and innovation.

Competitiveness

Reducing the Cost of Doing Business

Action 121: Assess the factors impacting upon housing supply in Ireland from a competitiveness perspective.

Q3 Measure: As per headline measure. (NCC)

Update: Following consultations with key Government Departments, it was agreed that the NCC would focus on the affordability of housing (to purchase and rent) which is a key component of competitiveness and impacts upon the attractiveness of Ireland as a location for investment and indirectly impacts on enterprise costs. The primary objective of this study was to assess the affordability of residential property in Ireland both nationally and in an international context. The final report was published in July 2016, and subsequently used as an input into the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.

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.

Q3 Measure: Initiate a review of the legal and institutional framework for the regulation of electricity and natural gas markets, including the Commission for Energy Regulation's mandate, as set out in the Energy White Paper. (DCENR)

Update: The Department, having considered various options on how best to implement the White paper commitment, is finalising its conclusions with a view to proceeding to taking the next step leading to initiation of the review in Q4 2016.

Q3 Measure: Initiate a formal review of the implementation of the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation at the sectoral levels. (D/Taoiseach)

Update: An internal review of the implementation of the Policy Statement at sectoral level on the basis of information provided by sectoral Departments under the Action Plan for Jobs 2016 and follow up bilateral engagement is underway. The draft terms of reference and timeframe for a wider review will be informed by the outcome of this exercise and discussed at the December meeting of the Senior Officials Group on Infrastructure, Climate Action and the Environment.

Easier to do Business

Action 134: Develop a Client Relationship Management system in the Irish National Accreditation Board which will make it easier for business to apply for accreditation.

Q3 Measure: Implement Client Relationship Management system. (HSA)

Update: The CRM system is still under test and due to be in a go-live status in October.

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

Q3 Measure: Social Media campaigns targeting sectors or specific Business Types through BeSMART to increase usage. (HSA)

Update: Use of social media campaigns to promote BeSMART has started and is now used regularly throughout the year.

Q3 Measure: Engagement with Insurance industry including CPD talks to the Insurance Institute of Ireland on BeSMART. (HSA)

Update: A series of BeSMART promotion talks to the insurance industry have already started and will continue through October and November.

Planning for Medium Term Growth

Action 143: Facilitate local authorities in the deployment of low-carbon and climate change adaptation strategies as a means of availing of the employment opportunities presented by the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy.

Q3 Measure: Convene workshops for local authorities on their greenhouse gas mitigation and climate change adaptation responsibilities. (DECLG)

Update: A conference on climate change mitigation and adaptation for local authorities was held on 19 July 2016 in Tullamore, Co. Offaly. As a follow up to that conference and as part of ongoing capacity building measures in the sector, the first of three regional two-day workshops on the development of local authority adaptation strategies was held in Ringaskiddy, Co Cork on 14 and 15 September 2016. Two further regional workshops will be held in October 2016 in Dublin and Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon.

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.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (DoF, CRO)

Update: Figures to July 2016 received from AIB and to August 2016 from Bank of Ireland has been analysed by both DoF and the CRO. A submission on the analysis of Q2 data has been sent to the Minister for information.

Action 146: Collate and monitor data on lending to SMEs from both bank and non-bank sources and report on this issue to the relevant Cabinet Committee.

Q3 Measure: Report to relevant Cabinet Committee on SME lending. (DoF, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: The SME Funding Dashboard was prepared for the Senior Officials Group on 27 September and Cabinet Committee on Economy, Trade and Jobs on 4 October. It reported on the SME Credit and Lending landscape. The SME Funding Dashboard provides information on bank and non-bank finance indicating:

- Gross new lending to SMEs was higher in Q2 2016 compared to Q2 2015;
- Credit demand remains subdued; and
- Non-bank finance continues to develop and provides some competition in the market place.

Roll out, monitor and evaluate State supports for SMEs

Action 157: Ensure that financial management capability training is available in all Local Enterprise areas.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs, other providers)

Update: A review was carried out which confirms that all LEOs undertake a variety of financial management capability training on an ongoing basis covering such topics as cash-flow management, financial analysis, tax analysis and management accounting.

Entrepreneurship

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

Q3 Measure: Develop a bi-monthly voice of the customer feedback system. (EI/LEOs)

Update: As part of the ongoing commitment to customer service development, a shared voice tool has been developed which will be used to measure customer service on an ongoing basis.

The further roll-out of this project requires the development of a uniform Customer Relationship Management system which is an ongoing project.

Action 177: Carry out a review of the feasibility element of the Local Enterprise Office Financial Instruments.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs)

Update: Feedback has been received from all the LEOs in relation to feasibility approvals for the past three years. Analysis was undertaken to ascertain the current status of those feasibility projects.

Following this review a series of recommendations emerged and these will be rolled out.

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

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs)

Update: 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 €1.5 million to these projects.

The letters of offer for successful projects were issued to the LEOs leading the approved projects. All letters of offer have been accepted and returned to Enterprise Ireland's Centre of Excellence for Micro and Small Businesses. On receipt of project implementation plans and drawdown requests, the funds will be remitted by EI to LEOs.

The roll out of funding to the successful applicants is now underway.

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.

Q3 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, 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 185: Carry out a review of the Women in Business Network.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs)

Update: A review was carried out between the LEOs and EI's Centre of Excellence in relation to Women in Business Networks and National Enterprise Women's Day. The National Enterprise Day has been moved from a national event to a series of regional events to encourage a more pervasive approach to stimulate and support female entrepreneurship at local and regional level. The review has been completed and the arising recommendations and actions are being implemented.

Action 190: Support the International Women in Business Conference held as part of the Rose of Tralee Festival.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: The Enterprise Ireland International Business Women's Conference was organised by Enterprise Ireland in collaboration with the Rose of Tralee International Festival, Irish Tatler, AIB and the Department of the Diaspora. It took place on Monday 22 August in the Brandon Hotel in Tralee and celebrated successful women in business. Now in its second year, in conjunction with the Rose of Tralee International Festival, delegates heard from leaders working across the business and entrepreneurial spectrum focusing on this year's

theme “The Changing Face of Success”.

- The conference addressed the under-representation of women in business and the importance of female role models in encouraging more women to consider and enter into entrepreneurship. The event also featured a line-up of 29 expert speakers including the Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald T.D.; Julie Sinnamon, CEO, Enterprise Ireland; Eleanor McEvoy, entrepreneur and Dragon’s Den participant; a number of Irish female entrepreneurs, and previous Rose of Tralee winners.
- The event began with a focus on how advances in social and digital media are driving business for entrepreneurs forward. The conference also focused on social entrepreneurship, with keynote speaker and social activist, Madi Sharma, representing The European Economic & Social Committee, speaking on the challenges faced by many women and her own journey from ‘victim to change-maker’.

Driving Export Led Growth

Growing Irish Companies

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

Q3 Measure: Progress the changes required with the agencies. (DJEI, development agencies)

Update: EI has made great progress in applying the recommendations and improving certain programmes as required, e.g.) Enterprise Ireland now has a requirement that significant new funding programmes complete an ex-ante evaluation. This evaluation is submitted to a sub-committee of the Executive for review and sign off.

- SFI has made strong progress on the adaptation of programmes and implementation of the changes required, as detailed in SFI's Q1 report. Additional progress has been made on the SFI Research Centres programme. 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.
- IDA Ireland report steady progress that they have made in developing a Programme Logic Model for their grants, which has been circulated for internal approval.

Manufacturing

Action 218: Explore the potential for research support in the area of drug device combinations by establishing a representative group which will agree priorities for action and present proposals to Government.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA, EI, SFI, IMDA, PCI)

Update: IDA held a cross sectoral networking event on this topic in 2015 and a similar event was held by IBEC and IDA in 2016. While there is strong evidence of industry interest in this area, as yet no specific proposals to Government have been formulated.

Action 219: Explore the potential for IDA to work with the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to support the establishment of a biotech Contract Manufacturing Organisation manufacturing facility in Ireland.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA, ISIF)

Update: IDA and ISIF have met with a number of contract manufacturing organisations and discussions are ongoing. No decision is expected in 2016.

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.

Q3 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 Q3 is currently being prepared for issue in October.

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.

Q3 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 16th-17th 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. Approximately 450 people attended the main event on 17th June, with over 70% of those surveyed indicating that they would be engaging in follow-up business contact with other attendees and 100% indicating that they would attend the Forum again in the future.

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.

Q3 Measure: Per headline action.. (DAFM)

Update: The DAFM meat market access team covers all meat products - beef, sheep, pork and poultry. It continues to work very closely with Bord Bia, industry, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Irish Embassies abroad and the European Commission in trying to identify and secure new markets, as well as to ensure that existing markets remain open and to reinforce them where possible.

A key focus during Q3 was planning for the Asian Ministerial Trade Mission in relation to beef access for China, Vietnam & South Korea and enhancing dairy exports to the region. This included completion of a beef questionnaire for Vietnam and South Korea. The Trade Mission was planned in conjunction with Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland, SFSI and Irish Embassies in the region.

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

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM, EI, Bord Bia)

Update: DAFM led a trade mission to Asia, with the assistance of Bord Bia, Sustainable Food Systems Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. Minister Creed led a trade mission to China and Singapore from 6–10 September. Minister of State Doyle led a trade mission to Vietnam and South Korea from 5–9 September. There was also a series of inward trade visits from China, US, Shanghai and Saudi Arabia.

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

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM, EI, Bord Bia)

Update: This multi-annual action is on schedule to be completed in line with Food Wise 2025. Programme of verification visits by Revenue to protect the GI status of Irish Whiskey and Irish Poitín and by DAFM to protect the Irish Cream GI is on target.

DAFM continues to fund lean manufacturing, leadership programmes and innovation vouchers managed by Enterprise Ireland for prepared consumer food companies; and has engaged with ISIF on financing requirements of the alcohol beverages and prepared consumer foods sectors.

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

Q3 Measure: Continued workshops and start of 1:1 business mentoring Food Works 4.

(Bord Bia/Teagasc/EI)

Update: Nine early stage food enterprises are currently participating in the fourth Food Works programme, which commenced in June and will run until December. The programme will comprise a series of workshops, with contributions from leading industry figures. Eight business mentoring sessions, involving 1:1 time with a personal mentor to develop, challenge and identify steps to grow the participants' businesses, will be run.

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.

Q3 Measure: Organise/host 12 x trading manager one-to-one pitch meetings. (Bord Bia, EI/LEOs)

Update: 18 individual pitches made in Q3 to Musgraves buying panels. Each panel included 3 local store managers and 2 Head Office representatives. Pitches were made by companies on completion of the Food Academy Start Programme run locally across the Cork LEO regions and Cavan/Monaghan LEO regions.

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.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (SFSI)

Update: Projects won in 2016 to date include consultancy in export competitiveness (Kosovo), food safety training (Saudi Arabia) and food enterprise cluster development (Turkey).

Action 250: Further develop proposals for a Food Innovation Hub at Teagasc Moorepark campus to promote greater collaboration between industry and public research and deliver a step change in innovation activity in the food industry.

Q3 Measure: Complete the feasibility study detailing the concept, proposed mode of operation and interest from the dairy processing, nutritional beverage and wider food and beverage sectors. (Teagasc)

Update: A feasibility study/business case for the development of customer application suites (Food Innovation Hub) on the Moorepark campus has been completed. Dairy processing and nutritional beverage (including infant formula) companies have been contacted and their interest recorded in the feasibility study.

Q3 Measure: Finalise the hub design. (Teagasc)

Update: An initial design has been completed as a three dimensional building structure. The layout and internal design have been discussed with those companies interested in the Hub concept. Alterations to the design are planned based on these discussions - these alterations will be incorporated into the design only after full approval for the build is received.

Q3 Measure: Complete the intellectual property, contractual documentation and rental options. (Teagasc)

Update: Rental options have been included in the feasibility study. Intellectual property and contractual negotiations (including documentation) will be completed with those interested companies subject to approval being granted to proceed with the build.

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

Q3 Measure: Align competencies in food processing and biosciences to provide a platform for development of foods for health. (Teagasc)

Update: As part of an on-going process within Teagasc, opportunities for greater collaboration between researchers focusing on food processing technologies and those using bioscience approaches to identify novel bioactive food components are being pursued. This has resulted in the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams and the preparation of a number of collaborative project proposals.

Q3 Measure: Deliver technology for incorporation of bio-actives into food. (Teagasc)

Update: During the period to Q3, research on the identification and application of bio-actives in foods continued. Sources mined for bio-actives include terrestrial foods such as milk, meat and various plants, and marine sources including fish, and micro- and macro-algae. In addition, the impact of gut microbiota on health and wellness was investigated as well as the potential of foods to modulate gut microbiota.

A key activity for Teagasc as part of the FHI consortium is the scale up of production to pilot scale of a number of lead functional compounds (LFC) selected by the FHI industry partners as being leading candidates for commercial exploitation. A key feature of this research is that the technologies used for scale up are transferrable to commercial scale production.

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.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: This is an ongoing action (as set out in the published table of actions, but reported on quarterly).

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 €10.8 billion 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 we produce each year; We produce over 10% of the world's infant formula and Irish Whiskey is now the fastest growing spirit category in the world. We also produce 50% of the world's cream liqueurs.

Continuing its support for the food and drink sector Enterprise Ireland in to the end of Quarter 3, approved capital investments which included a number of significant capital projects (i.e. valued in excess of €500,0000), Research & Development, Innovation projects and the approval and launch of the Meat Technology Centre (see action 252). The current investment pipeline remains strong.

Enterprise Ireland's Capital projects help companies undertake ambitious company expansions that will create employment 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.

Marine

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

Q3 Measure: Per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Some 18 of the 24 actions identified in the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development are to be progressed with the support of funding and resources provided through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme 2014 – 2020, which was launched in January 2016.

Some 13 actions are already commenced and underway in 2016, with two others pending. Some seven actions are scheduled to commence in 2017 and one action in 2018. One further action will commence immediately where required.

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.

Q3 Measure: Per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Phase 1 proposal to develop a National Maritime Innovation Hub Building were submitted to Enterprise Ireland in June. Currently awaiting feedback from Enterprise Ireland's evaluation.

Full occupancy was achieved in The Entrepreneur Ship, with 22 desks rented to start-ups and touch down companies.

IMERC Mechathon was successfully delivered in July with support from Enterprise Ireland, Tyco and participants from IMERC partners in UCC, CIT and Navy.

The European Space Agency's €2.5m National Space Solutions Centre Ireland including focus on business incubation for space and maritime convergence was successfully launched.

Collaboration with the Emerging Sectors team of the IDA to identify and target touch down companies and potential anchor tenants for IMERC is ongoing.

Action 257: Progress the implementation of Harnessing our Ocean Wealth- an Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland.

Q3 Measure: Per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Implementation of Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth is led by the inter-Departmental Marine Coordination Group, chaired by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The annual Our Ocean Wealth Conference took place in NUI, Galway on 1 July as part of the 2016 SeaFest programme. The conference was attended by 400 delegates including four Government Ministers and leading maritime experts. The broad theme was “Into the Blue – Innovating for Our Marine Future”. The Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth Progress Review for 2015 was published at the conference. The conference was preceded (on the 30 June) by other associated events such as the BIM National Seafood Conference, the Digital Ocean Conference, and the Marine Industry Awards which also took achieved high attendance rates. The public access elements of SeaFest, Ireland’s national maritime festival, took place from 2-3 July in Galway Harbour, achieving a record attendance of 60,000 visitors over the two days. The SeaFest programme of events included a seafood fair, seafood cookery demonstrations with celebrity chefs and seafaring family fun along with tours of ocean going vessels, leisure craft and boats, and exhibits on marine life.

Tourism

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.

Q3 Measure: Roll-out a comprehensive Ireland’s Ancient East brand strategy, with international activation. (Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland)

Update: Activation of the Ireland’s Ancient East brand progressed further during Q3 with the launch of <http://www.irelandsancienteast.com/> targeted at domestic and international visitors; and continued brand building on the ground through work with the local tourism trade and key visitor attractions.

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.

Q3 Measure: Activate a suite of festivals that complement the Wild Atlantic Way, e.g., Galway International Arts Festivals, Fleadh Cheoil and Rory Gallagher Festival. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Several initiatives were undertaken with a view to spreading demand more evenly across the season and across the area. These include:

- Funding new and existing attractions outside of the Wild Atlantic Way's visitor hotspots;
- Encouraging international operators and buyers to programme more 'less visited' destinations
- 120 businesses participating in season extension activities

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.

Q3 Measure: Work with clusters of circa 150 tourism businesses, mostly in the accommodation sector, to improve their ability to generate international sales. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Fáilte Ireland has assisted over 150 tourism business to generate incremental sales by:

- Helping them to present their offerings in ways that best appeal to target market segments;
- Putting in place lead generation and conversion processes; and
- Partnering with tour operators, i.e. those who package holidays in Ireland for sales in the international market.

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.

Q3 Measure: Identify and build a pipeline of relevant and appropriate bid-worthy events for Ireland through collaboration with strategic partners. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Event Ireland is on track to achieve 2016 targets. To date Event Ireland has:

- Delivered 31 leads with potential estimated value of €17.7m (23,000 participants x €770 Euro);
- Converted 9 leads into actual events, valued conservatively at €5.8m (7620 international participants x €770); and
- Financially and practically supported 16 events, estimated value €21m (27,445 international participants x €770). 7 of these 16 events were hosted outside Dublin.

Action 271: Invest in construction/refurbishment works at the National Library, the National Archives, Cork Event Centre and in regional arts and cultural centres nationwide.

Q3 Measure: Start construction phases. (DAHG, National Cultural Institutions, LAs, OPW)

Update: The National Library and OPW have been working on a design scheme which will be submitted to the Department shortly. Construction would be expected to begin in 2017.

National Archives: On track. 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 later in the 2017.

Cork Event Centre: On track. Cork City Council (CCC) are managing this project with grant assistance 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: On track. A new Arts and Culture Capital Scheme was launched in July 2016 with a closing date for applications of September 16th 2016.

Applications are currently being evaluated.

Retail

Action 272: Progress the implementation of recommendations from the Joint Oireachtas Committee report on Policy Options to Support Business Growth and Job Creation and Retention in Town and Village Centres identified by the Retail Consultation Forum, in particular through the setting up of the following working groups: a working group on reducing energy costs to examine and propose solutions aimed at assisting retailers to reduce their energy costs; . a working group on retail and the digital economy to examine how the retail sector can maximise the opportunities presented by the digital economy; a working group on the revival of the town centre to examine and identify practical ways to give effect to some of the recommendations of the JOC report.

Q3 Measure: As per headline action. (Retail Consultation Forum, relevant Departments and public bodies)

Update: Four working groups have been set up: WG on Reducing Energy Costs; WG on Retail & the Digital Economy; WG on Revival of the Town Centre; and WG on Retail & Skills. The working group on energy costs has had its final meeting and a final report has been compiled for circulation by its members. A key outcome, the piloting of a resource efficiency training programme for retailers, is underway.

The working group on Retail and the Digital Economy is ongoing; including working with DCCA and CSO on securing data about the digital economy, streamlining training currently offered to retailers by member groups, and producing case studies.

The working group on Town Centre Revival is preparing a “Town Centre Revival Framework”, to support towns and villages through their Local Authorities to address the challenges of creating a vibrant and viable town centre. This work has been designed to link in with, and will support the recent launch by Minister Humphreys of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Construction and Housing

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.

Q3 Measure: Establish a Construction Standards Committee to provide high level advice to the National Standards Authority of Ireland from key industry, regulatory and societal stakeholders regarding needs and priorities for standardisation work in the construction se. (NSAI)

Update: The NSAI Board has approved the establishment of the Construction Standards Committee. The decision has been received positively by construction sector stakeholders and NSAI is presently planning the inaugural Committee meeting for December 2016.

New Sources of Growth

International Financial Services Strategy

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

Q3 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 Q3 Progress Reports at its quarterly meeting. The Progress Reports will now be brought to Government for information, following which they will be published.

At end Q3 2016, all ten headline actions set out in the IFS2020 Action Plan 2016 remain broadly on course. The IFS2020 Strategy remains firmly on track to reach its growth target of 10,000 net new IFS jobs by end-2019.

It has been confirmed that the second annual European Financial Forum will take place on 24 January 2017. Keynote speakers will be announced in Q4 2016.

EFF2017 will be run under the IFS Ireland Banner Brand as a flagship initiative to support the IFS2020 job creation target. In July 2016, a new Communications Sub Group of the Public Sector Coordination Group was established to coordinate and plan all communications and promotion surrounding the IFS Ireland banner brand. This group is made up of representatives of the Department of Finance, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland.

Minister of State Eoghan Murphy is scheduled to promote Ireland as a destination for international financial services and launch the banner brand in Asia and North America in Q4.

Audio-Visual

Action 301: 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.

Q3 Measure: Stakeholder consultation process. (DAHG/DCENR and others)

Update: A request for tender was issued and a tender assessment panel met recently to evaluate the proposals. It is expected that a contract will be awarded during October 2016 to conduct the economic evaluation of the audio-visual industry.

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	Arts, Heritage, Regional Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
DCCoI	Design and Craft Council of Ireland
DCCAIE	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	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	SFI
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

