

# ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS --- 2015



Third Progress Report

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## Commentary

This is the third report of 2015 from the Monitoring Committee established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the *Action Plan for Jobs 2015*. It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the third quarter of 2015. The Monitoring Committee comprises representatives of the Department of the Taoiseach, the Office of the Tánaiste, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The high-level goal of the Action Plan for Jobs, first introduced in 2012, was to create the environment where the number of people at work will have increased by 100,000 by 2016 (from 2012 base). We reached, and indeed exceeded this target in Q1 2015, and have since added a new target to restore all the jobs lost in the recession by 2018 and to get unemployment down to 6% by 2020.

The Government published the fourth in its multi-annual *Action Plan for Jobs* series in January this year. This Plan, which contains 382 actions to be implemented in 2015 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 additional to the over 900 actions already implemented under *Action Plan for Jobs 2012, 2013* and *2014* cumulatively, and reported on by the Monitoring Committee in its previous quarterly reports (see [www.djei.ie](http://www.djei.ie)).

The latest official statistics on employment and unemployment in Ireland (from CSO QNHS Quarter 2 2015) show that 57,100 extra jobs were created in the past 12 months, with 19,000 jobs created in Q2 alone, bringing total employment to 1,958,700. There was an increase in full-time employment of 56,800 in the year and an increase in part-time employment of 300. Over the period since the launch of the Action Plan for Jobs at the beginning of 2012, 126,000 additional jobs have been created in the Irish economy. The rate of unemployment (using the CSO Standardised Unemployment Rate) was 9.4% in September 2015, down from a high of 15.1% in February 2012.

### **Actions due in Quarter 3**

In the third quarter of 2015, Departments and agencies were to deliver 83 measures relating to 43 of the Action Plan's 382 actions. 65 of the measures due in Quarter 3 of 2015 have been delivered, giving a completion rate of 78%.

In delivering 65 third quarter measures under the Plan, the Government has, for example:

**As part of Disruptive Reform on National Talent Drive**

- Rolled out an additional 1,061 places on core ICT courses at NFQ levels 8-9 (Action 3).
- Completed training of Jobs Ambassadors who promote both the Supporting SMEs and Skills to Work campaigns at jobs fairs (Actions 19).
- Continued the rollout of the British-Irish Visa Scheme which provides for travel to and around the Common Travel Area between UK and Ireland, for tourism and business purposes, on a single visa. Applications in August saw an increase of 67% on the same month in 2014 (Action 25).

**As part of Disruptive Reform on Intellectual Property in Enterprise**

- Knowledge Transfer Ireland co-hosted the annual PraxisUnico conference, marking the first time the highly respected two day event was held in Dublin. Nearly 300 delegates including members of the international knowledge transfer community attended (Action 72).
- A Review of the National Intellectual Property Protocol was undertaken involving extensive stakeholder consultation, following which recommendations were submitted to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Minister of State for Skills, Research and Innovation. An updated National Intellectual Property Protocol is now being progressed, and will be published in Q4 2015 (Action 75).

**As part of Disruptive Reform Manufacturing Step Change**

- IDA has introduced a pilot programme on LEAN for SMEs which focuses on supporting productivity improvements and more effective ways of working; to date, 10 IDA companies have been approved for the Programme (Action 79).
- The Apprenticeship Council has entered into a detailed development phase with all of the 25 new apprenticeship proposals assigned Category 1 status, to progress these proposals into sustainable Apprenticeships as soon as is practical (Action 81).

**As part of Disruptive Reform Local Enterprise Offices**

- Concluded a mid-year review of Local Enterprise Offices' performance versus targets, which are being used to drive and improve performance across the LEO network (Action 99).

**And more broadly, in Q3 Government has for example:**

**Under Finance for Growth:**

- SME State Bodies Group hosted a policy conference at the end of September focusing on alternative SME financing instruments (Actions 121 and 122).

- In developing proposals for how best to support SMEs in building their financial capabilities, a review of the Skillnets initiative has been completed, proposals have been agreed and the associated actions to capture the legacy of the programme are at an advanced stage of implementation. These include 8 short training videos, access to a financial health check for SMEs and access to an on-line financial training tool (Action 115).

**Under Growing Irish Enterprise and Foreign Direct Investment:**

- A new national enterprise policy document, Enterprise 2025, which will set the strategic direction over the next decade to 2025 has been developed and will be published in early November (Action 167).
- In September the Taoiseach officially opened the Health Research Board's Clinical Research Facility in Galway following a full fit-out. Funding has been provided and a team is currently being established to develop a suite of tools and services to improve the feasibility, time lines and quality of multi-site clinical trials in Ireland (Action 171).

**Under Entrepreneurship:**

- The First Food Academy Advance programme is completed. It provided 30 high potential Food Academy Start graduates with retail business development support and helped them secure a 3 month trial of their products on the shelf in their local SuperValu stores (Action 215).
- Terms of reference are currently being finalised for a scoping study for the development of a Coastal Resource Hub and Marine Innovation Park at Páirc na Mara, Cill Chiaráin, Co. Galway (Action 206).
- Completed a review of the effectiveness of the 3 year tax relief for new start-up companies, which examined the continued relevance, costs, impacts and efficiencies of the relief; the outcome of the review will be announced as part of Budget 2016 (Action 209).
- Enterprise Ireland launched a Manufacturing & Agricultural Competitive Start Fund (CSF) call for applications; the fund is designed to enable the companies involved to reach key commercial and technical milestones (Action 212).

**Under Competitiveness:**

- Building Control Regulations were amended in September to allow owners of single dwellings and domestic extensions to opt out of the requirements for statutory certification of compliance with Building Regulations (Action 237).
- As part of Enterprise Ireland's 'Graduates 4 International Growth Programme', 27 graduates from the 2013-2015 programme are due to graduate in November with their

post graduate diploma in International Business Development; 21 graduates from the 2014-2015 programme are in international markets working for Enterprise Ireland client companies; and the 2015-2016 programme is currently open for applications (Action 254).

**Under Research, Development and Innovation:**

- Bord Bia has recruited 10 new Origin Green Ambassadors who are in their second semester, which started in September and will be followed by three five month placements in international food and drinks companies (Action 308).
- A Directory of innovation supports, providing an overview of "who does what" across the national science, technology and innovation ecosystem in Ireland has been developed. The directory will make clear the full landscape for supporting research and development in Ireland and the key research and technology centres supported by the State (Action 268)

**Under Stimulating the Domestic Economy:**

- In September, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine led a trade mission in the USA, based around Chicago, to launch Irish beef on the mid-west market, and to promote Irish dairy companies and products in the region. He also hosted inward Ministerial delegations from key export markets, including China and Vietnam (Action 298).
- Bord Bia have recruited 10 new Origin Green Ambassadors who commenced the 2nd programme on 7 September. They will partake of a 23 month programme, with the first 5 months focusing on the academic elements of sustainability. This will then be followed by 3 five month international placements (Action 308).
- The Food Wise 2025 Report of the Agri-Food Committee was officially launched in July (Action 313).

**Under New Sources of Growth:**

- A total of 15 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions have engaged with the Irish Design 2015 (ID2015) programme to date, and an 'Education to Enterprise' toolkit for 3rd level students and recent graduates is under development for pilot delivery in Q4. To date over 8,000 schoolchildren have engaged with the education and outreach programmes, over 6,000 designers have received training and over 1,600 business professionals have received design training during 2015 (Action 346).

**Under Evaluations and Reviews to inform future policy development:**

- The Annual Report on Energy Usage in the Public Sector was published in April 2015 (Action 369)

- Evaluation of the Post Graduate Programme of Professional Practice is complete and the results will be fed into the development of the National Skills Strategy (Action 373).
- The development of a strategy to improve the performance of Irish business in relation to securing contracts with International Financial Institutions has been progressed, with “terms of reference” for a research report now agreed, and the final report expected within three months of consultations being engaged (Action 382).

However, 18 of the 83 Q3 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *Review the National Skills Strategy and publish a new Strategy in 2015; Develop a new National Skills Strategy* – Action 1. Department of Education and Skills is working with the various stakeholders on a new National Skills Strategy and hope to publish it before year-end.
- *Devise and implement a programme around a single website portal, through industry and agencies working together, to attract international technical talent; Launch of New Portal and Marketing Campaign* – Action 5. A national programme for the design, development and operation of a National Talent Branding Programme and associated online (digital) presence has been approved, and Enterprise Ireland has undertaken a competitive tendering process for the design. The submitted tender proposals were evaluated by a team comprising representatives from Enterprise Ireland, the IDA, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation. The successful tender has been notified and finalising of the contract is underway. It is envisaged that the launch of the portal proposed to take place by the end of Q1 2016
- *Develop and commence implementation of a new Foreign Languages Strategy; Finalise the foreign languages in education strategy* – Action 20. It was decided to expand and extend the consultation process to ensure a broad range of views were considered and it is now expected that Strategy will be complete by the end of the year.
- *Progress curricular change in the context of the phasing in of the Junior Cycle reform with the new Specification for English being implemented from September 2014; Introduction of revised Junior Cycle Science specification in Schools by Q3 and begin development work on new Junior Cycle modern languages and art, crafts and design specification* - Action 22. Public consultation is complete and specifications for Junior Cycle Science have been approved by the National Council for Curriculum Assessment in November but are not published. Development work on the new Junior Cycle modern languages and art, craft and design specifications is on schedule
- *Implement the new Rural Development Programme following the agreement of the Programme with the European Commission; final approval of the financial allocations for each approved Local Development Strategies* - Action 49. The Operational

Programme was only agreed by the Commission in May 2015 accordingly the roll out of the Programme has been delayed. While each county has been awarded a financial allocation under the Programme, the selection of the Local Development Strategies (LDS) is on-going with some drafts expected before the end of September 2015. In line with European Commission guidance the Expression of Interest applicants have been given a minimum of 6 months to prepare their LDSs i.e. January 2016. A number of counties have indicated that they will require the full 6 months. It is however, expected that some areas will submit and have their LDSs approved before the end of the year.

- *Establish a National Health Innovation Hub (HIH) based on a competitive process; Announce national HIH; and Select host for national HIH – Action 85 (2 measures).* A competitive call, for hosting the NHIH was launched in early 2015, and three applications were received; a decision on the successful bid is to be made shortly with an announcement expected in late Q4.
- *Support a further cohort of new food entrepreneurs under Food Works 3 and promote market outlets for food start-up companies; Entrepreneurs are investor ready - Action 194.* This phase will not be completed until late in Q4.
- *Develop a joint strategy for the positioning of Ireland to take advantage of new opportunities in the Electronic Payments sector, so as to support innovation, entrepreneurship and attract mobile investment; As per headline action – Action 195.* The process of developing a strategy for the Payments Industry has commenced and will expand in Q4 to involve key industry representative bodies and other stakeholders.
- *Develop an interface with the NTA to supply the supporting evidence electronically to enable small public service vehicles (taxi, hackney and limousines) to be taxed online; as per headline action – Action 232.* The proposed development of an interface with NTA to supply supporting evidence electronically to enable small public vehicles to tax online has been delayed due to the priority of the development of a driving licence web service interface for An Garda Síochána and the Courts Service associated with implementation of recommendations contained in the Garda Inspectorate Report on the penalty points system. The revised implementation date is Q1 2016.
- *Further develop the Building Control Management System (BCMS); Develop BCMS to incorporate/accommodate FSC, applications for waivers and dispensations, etc. – Action 236.* The work referenced in the Q3 measure is now scheduled for delivery in Q1 2016. This follows a necessary reprioritisation of BCMS functionality where statistical reporting, lodgement of statutory certificates of compliance on completion and, following the review of S.I. 9 of 2014, the decision to provide owners of single dwellings or domestic extensions with the facility to opt out of statutory certification have been given precedence over incorporating FSC/waiver applications. Ongoing development of BCMS will continue to receive priority attention.

- *Continue the implementation of actions outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation in the Energy, Communications and Broadcasting sectors; Publish White Paper on Energy Policy which will include a commitment to review the regulatory framework and mandate – Action 265.* The White Paper on Energy is now scheduled for publication in late Q4.
- *Continue to drive implementation of Research Prioritisation through the Government's Prioritisation Action Group and complete the review of the Independent Panel established to review progress; Bring the integrated approach to Government for approval – Action 266.* The relevant findings and recommendations by the expert panel are being considered in the context of the new Science, Technology & Innovation Strategy, along with other key inputs to the strategy. The Strategy will be brought to Government in Q4 2015.
- *Based on the 2014 SME Innovation network pilot exercise implement roll out a national SME Innovation Network; As per headline action – Action 276.* It is hoped that the regional clusters of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will provide the venue for the networks to meet. A 4<sup>th</sup> network meeting will be held in the South West region hosted by UCC in November. A full national rollout will depend on the HEIs tapping into a source of long term funding, which could come from a number of sources including applications to the regional fund but this is not yet certain.
- *Publication and enactment of Technological University Bill; Enactment of Technological University Bill – Action 293.* The Bill is currently being drafted by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and is at an advanced stage. The bill will not be enacted in Q4. The Office of Parliamentary Council has informed the Department that the Bill will be published in December 2015.
- *Use the standardisation system intelligently to expedite the commercialisation of new technology and to reduce the risk of project failure; In conjunction with Enterprise Ireland and Athlone IT host a Horizon 2020 Application workshop – Action 294.* Following consultation with Enterprise Ireland staff involved with the Horizon 2020 Programme, NSAI considered that a single generic event would not achieve the desired objective because of the differences in interests and needs of the research areas, and that a number of smaller events, focused on key areas of Horizon 2020 such as Health, ICT and Energy would be more effective. NSAI has had discussions with NUI Galway, Waterford IT and Dundalk IT as possible venues for these events. This action will now be completed by Q4. In preparation for the 3 focused events on key research areas to be held in Q4 the National Standards Authority of Ireland, NSAI, has had discussions with NUI Galway, Waterford IT and Dundalk IT as possible venues for the events. Confirmation is awaited.
- *Publish a detailed "Tourism Action Plan" to deliver initial actions required over the period 2015-2018 in order to achieve the objectives set out in the Tourism Policy*

*Statement. The Tourism Policy Statement sets a target of 250,000 people employed in the tourism sector by 2025; In order to identify and prioritise the initial actions required to achieve the policy objectives in the Tourism Policy Statement, publish a three-year Tourism Action Plan to cover the period 2015-2017 - Action 316. The Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport has appointed a Tourism Leadership Group, which is currently engaged in a programme of meetings with key tourism stakeholders. This dialogue will inform the actions to be included in the Tourism Action Plan, which is now expected to be published in Q1 2016.*

- *Facilitate, in conjunction with industry stakeholders and statutory agencies, the transition of voluntary Construction Industry Register Ireland to a statutory register by end 2015; Publish Draft Bill on registration of Builders/Contractors – Action 377. Draft heads of a Building Control Bill to place the Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) on a statutory footing are under preparation and will be finalized by Q4 2015. The timing of a Memorandum for Government on this matter will be kept under review in the context of the management of the delivery of the Department’s extensive legislative programme. CIRI continues to be available to industry operators and consumers on a voluntary basis.*

## Quarter 3 Measures

## 2. Disruptive Reforms

### 2.1 National Talent Drive

**Action 1:** Review the National Skills Strategy and public a new Strategy in 2015

**Q3 Measure:** Develop a new National Skills Strategy. (DES)

**Update:** Delayed to Q4

A public consultation paper on the development of the NSS will be published on 2 November with a 4 week deadline for submissions. Meetings with key stakeholders will be held during this time, and it is planned to finalise the Strategy and bring it to Government in end-December/early January, to be published thereafter.

**Action 3:** 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:** Further round of incentivised ICT places underway. (HEIs, HEA)

**Update:** Complete

Following a Call for additional places to be provided in Autumn 2015, the HEA received proposals from 17 Higher Education Institutes for additional places on core ICT courses at National Framework Qualification levels 8-9 Roll out of an additional 1,061 places is underway.

**Action 5:** Devise and implement a programme around a single website portal, through industry and agencies working together, to attract international technical talent.

**Q3 Measure:** Launch of New Portal and Marketing Campaign. (DJEI, EI/IDA)

**Update:** Delayed

A national programme for the design, development and operation of a National Talent Branding Programme and associated online (digital) presence has been approved. The programme will be overseen by a delivery team, which includes representatives from key stakeholders - Enterprise Ireland, the IDA and industry - and is under the direction of a Steering Committee co-chaired by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation and the

Department of Education and Skills.

The objective of the proposed programme is to deliver a fully managed service which will:

- Promote Ireland as a location for top tech career opportunities and job openings.
- Brand Ireland as a recognised, exciting, accessible and attractive destination for top tech talent (targeting both non-nationals and recent Irish emigrants), to live and work.
- Effectively promote the message directly to talented and experienced professionals, together with their families.
- Provide a single, focal point for information geared to make moving easier (evidencing accessibility) and less stressful for those talented professionals and their families. This focal point should also provide signposting to company and industry career sites.

Enterprise Ireland is undertaking a competitive tendering process seeking to enter into a contract with a single provider or consortium to meet its requirements for the design, development, operation and effective impact monitoring of this programme.

Due to design issues and resource constraints it was not feasible to publish the request for tender document until Q3 2015. The request for tender was issued on 14th August, with a deadline of 9th September for proposals. The submitted tender proposals were evaluated by a team comprising representatives from Enterprise Ireland, the IDA, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation. The successful tenderer has been notified and finalising of the contract is underway. It is envisaged that the launch of the portal proposed to take place by the end of Q1 2016.

**Action 7:** 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:** Complete

To date over 7,000 training days have been delivered to over 200 unemployed persons on the Skillnets ICT Conversion Programme. Programmes include the following:-

- Cloud Careers
- Software Engineering
- Fundamentals in JAVA Programming

The networks are on target to deliver the agreed conversion programmes in 2015. Some trainees have already commenced their placements.

**Action 15:** Target provision to meet regional employer needs, identified through regional labour market profiles and through local and regional employer engagement.

**Q3 Measure:** Compile and publish regional labour market profiles. (SOLAS, ETBs, HEIs)

**Update:** Complete

The Regional Skills Bulletin 2015 is complete and will be presented to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs with a view to publication before the end of September 2015. The Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS is actively involved in supporting the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in the establishment of 9 Regional Skills Fora; the SLMRU is disseminating labour market information to the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) on request in forms of presentations, discussions, tables, charts etc. The SLMRU is currently working on producing labour market information tailored to 16 ETBs to support their planning.

**Action 16:** Develop new Apprenticeships in response to proposals from key sectors of the economy.

**Q3 Measure:** Consideration by Minister of the financial and other implications of the recommendations and decision on allocation of funds. (DES, SOLAS, HEA)

**Update:** Complete

The Minister for Education and Skills has accepted the recommendations of the Apprenticeship Council who assigned Category 1 status to 25 new Apprenticeship programmes, meaning they are both sustainable and at an advanced stage of design, planning and industry/education collaboration. The Apprenticeship Council have entered into a detailed development phase with all 25 Category 1 proposers, to progress these proposals into sustainable Apprenticeships as soon as is practical.

Costs associated with the expansion and development of the new apprenticeships are being discussed with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in the context of the 2016 Estimates.

**Action 19:** Promote and support development of the Skills to Work brand to increase awareness of re-skilling options for jobseekers.

**Q3 Measure:** Implement strategy through promotion and appearance at jobs fairs, exhibitions. (DES, DSP, Dtaoiseach, SOLAS, HEA, Skillnets)

**Update:** Complete

Following provision of the 2015 budget by Department of Education and Skills, the implementation of the promotion of the “Skills to Work” brand is underway.

This involves the roll out of an online media campaign and the training of Jobs Ambassadors for the promotion of the brand and associated programmes, at job fairs and events. “Skills to Work” was represented at the *Career Zoo* event which took place in Convention Centre in Dublin in September.

**Action 20:** Develop and commence implementation of a new Foreign Languages in Education Strategy.

**Q3 Measure:** Finalise the foreign languages in education strategy. (DES)

**Update:** Delayed

Work is ongoing on the Foreign Languages Strategy and is expected to be complete before the end of the year. The Strategy was not finalised before end of Q3 as it was decided to expand and extend the consultation process to ensure a broad range of views are considered.

**Action 22:** Progress curricular change in the context of the phasing in of the Junior Cycle reform with the new Specification for English being implemented from September 2014.

**Q3 Measure:** Introduction of revised Junior Cycle Science specification in schools/ Development work on new Junior Cycle modern languages and art, craft and design specifications. (DES)

**Update:** Delayed

The specification for Junior Cycle Science will be available in Q4 this year instead of Q4 Public consultation is complete and specifications for Junior Cycle Science have been approved by the National Council for Curriculum Assessment in November but are not published. Development work on the new Junior Cycle modern languages and art, craft and design specifications is on schedule

**Action 25:** Continue implementation of the British-Irish Visa Scheme allowing for travel to and around the Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK, for tourism and business purposes, on a single visa.

**Q3 Measure:** Continue rollout of Phase 2. (D/Justice and Equality, (INIS))

**Update:** Complete

There has been a significant increase in visa applications since the introduction of the scheme – an overall increase of 33% in Irish visa applications, however the peak holiday season in August saw an increase of 67% on the same month in 2014.

Overall, the scheme has been received very well. The roll-out of the scheme is being progressed in conjunction with our UK partners.

**Action 26:** Continue to ensure employers are able to secure Employment Permits for the critical skills they need, including ICT skills.

**Q3 Measure:** Review progress on a quarterly basis. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

The employment permits system is closely aligned with the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) of SOLAS on top of and connected to the evolving needs of industry. This ensures that the critical skills list, on which the grant of Critical Skills Employment Permits is based, remains relevant to the needs of enterprise as the Irish economy strengthens. In order to maintain the flexibility and relevance of the Employment Permits system, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has committed to ensuring biannual reviews of the critical skills list for employment permits continues to reflect the skills shortages relevant to enterprise.

	Jan – Aug 2014	Jan – Aug 2015	% Increase
Application Received	5,939	7,827	32%
Total Issued in respect of ICT	1,298	1,348	4%
Green Card/Critical Skills EP	1,187	1,285	8%
Intra-Company Transfer EP	501	570	14%

The employment permits system is closely aligned with the work of the EGFSN and SLMRU of SOLAS on top of and connected to the evolving needs of industry. This ensures that the critical skills list, on which the grant of Critical Skills Employment Permits is based, remains relevant to the needs of enterprise as the Irish economy strengthens.

In order to maintain the flexibility and relevance of the Employment Permits system, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has committed to ensuring biannual reviews of the critical skills list for employment permits continues to reflect the skills shortages relevant to enterprise.

The first 2015 review of the Critical Skills List was completed, following broad-based consultation with stakeholders, and was included as a Schedule of the Employment Permits (Amendment) Regulations 2015. These Regulations commenced on 1 September 2015.

### **Changes to Highly Skilled Occupations List and Ineligible List - 1 September 2015**

Skills in short supply:

Arising from evidence that the Irish labour market is experiencing a shortage in certain areas, some occupations were removed from the Ineligible List - telecommunications engineers, IT engineers, Chiropractors (who are members of the Chiropractic Association of Ireland), mobility instructors for the visually impaired, and meat boners (A limited number of General Employment Permits in respect of boners (meat) were made available to eligible applicants from that date).

Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List:

In response to changing skills needs in the medical sector, radiation therapists, orthotics and prosthetics were deemed highly-skilled occupations, while healthcare practice managers and senior social services managers and directors were removed.

Ineligible Categories of Employment for Employment Permits List:

There is evidence that no shortages exist in the Irish labour market for a range of services managers, such as betting shop managers, graphic design managers, library managers, plant hire managers, production managers, and property, housing and estate managers. These occupations were added to the range of occupations that are not eligible for employment permits. This is also the case with dispensing opticians.

**Action 27:** Initiate a Trusted Partner Registration Scheme for Employment Permits open to all eligible employers.

**Q3 Measure:** Roll out and complete Pilot Phase of Trusted Partner Registration Scheme with

Enterprise Agency clients. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

The Trusted Partner Initiative is designed to streamline the employment permit application process for all employers granted Trusted Partner status. The initiative entails splitting the current employment permit application process into two parts, the initial Trusted Partner registration, followed by a shorter permit application process.

Those who are granted Trusted Partner status enjoy a streamlined process which takes the form of a 'tell once' burden on employers to provide details upfront in relation to their business, connections with Foreign Employers, and Contract Service Agreements in place with Irish clients, for the purposes of future Employment Permits applications. When applying for employment permits thereafter, only information in relation to the foreign national and the employment is required. The benefits of Trusted Partner status, which is valid for 2 years, include reduced paperwork and a faster turnaround for employment permit applications. There is no fee to become a Trusted Partner.

The scheme was launched on 12 May 2015 by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, 5 months ahead of schedule. Up to 16 September 50 companies have been registered for Trusted Partners status.

Outreach presentations to encourage more Enterprise Agency Clients to register are planned for the end of September.

**Action 30:** Establish the Low Pay Commission (LPC), to undertake analysis and make a recommendation on the appropriate level of the national minimum wage.

**Q3 Measure:** Submit the first LPC recommendation to the Minister on the appropriate level of the national minimum wage. (LPC)

**Update:** Complete

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) was formally established by statute on 15 July 2015, and the LPC, which had been operating on an interim basis since the end of February, submitted its first report and recommendation to the Minister for Business and Employment on the appropriate level of the national minimum wage on 17 July. The report recommended a new minimum wage of €9.15 per hour, an increase of 50c on the current rate (set originally in 2007 and re-instated in 2011 following a temporary reduction). The report also recommended that certain anomalies in relation to the operation of PRSI and USC, which could impact on both employee pay and employer costs, be addressed as a matter of urgency.

**Action 31:** Conduct a study on the prevalence of zero hour contracts (ZHC) and low hour contracts (contracts of 8 hours or less per week (LHC)) among Irish employers and their impact on employees, and make policy recommendations to Government.

**Q3 Measure:** Complete study and submit to Minister for consideration of any policy recommendations to Government deemed necessary on foot of the study. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

The University of Limerick report is completed. The intention is to bring it to Government with a view to publication in early October and to provide a period for stakeholder responses to the findings of the study, following which the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will formulate policy responses to the study for consideration by Government.

## 2.2 Delivering Regional Potential

**Action 47:** Education Training Boards and higher education institutions to target provision to meet local and regional employer needs, identified through regional labour market profiles and through local and regional employer engagement.

**Q3 Measure:** Compile and publish regional labour market profiles. (SOLAS, ETBs, HEIs)

**Update:** Complete

The Regional Skills Bulletin 2015 is complete and will be presented to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) with a view to publication before the end of September 2015. The Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS is actively involved in supporting the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in the establishment of 9 Regional Skills Fora; the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) is disseminating labour market information to the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) on request in forms of presentations, discussions, tables, charts etc. The SLMRU is currently working on producing labour market information tailored to 16 ETBs to support their planning.

**Action 49:** Implement the new Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 following agreement of the Programme with the European Commission.

**Q3 Measure:** Final approval of the financial allocations for each approved Local Development Strategy.

**Update:** Delayed

The Operational Programme was only agreed by the Commission in May 2015 accordingly the roll out of the Programme has been delayed. While each county has been awarded a

financial allocation under the Programme, the selection of the Local Development Strategies (LDS) is on-going with some drafts expected before the end of September 2015. In line with European Commission guidance the Expression of Interest applicants have been given a minimum of 6 months to prepare their LDSs i.e. January 2016. A number of counties have indicated that they will require the full 6 months. It is however expected that some areas will submit and have their LDSs approved before the end of the year.

## 2.3 Intellectual Property in Enterprise

**Action 72:** Host a National Knowledge Transfer symposium.

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

**Update:** Complete

The two day annual PraxisUnico Conference, co-hosted by Knowledge Transfer Ireland, was opened by the Minister of Jobs, Employment and Innovation, in Croke Park on 10 June.

The event provided a unique forum with high-profile speakers leading cutting edge debate, workshops and special interest groups. It also offered an unparalleled opportunity to network with other practitioners involved in delivering impact through research commercialisation activities.

**Action 74:** Publish an international Knowledge Transfer benchmarking report.

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

**Update:** Complete

The International Knowledge Transfer (KT) benchmarking Report on KT Policy and Investment was delivered to KTI (under a tendered contract) by Technopolis Consulting. The objective was to review policy and intervention for Knowledge Transfer, and in particular the support for Technology Transfer (TT) infrastructure, comparing Ireland with six similar sized comparator countries.

The Report serves as a backdrop to Ireland's strategy for Knowledge Transfer and research commercialisation and the investment in technology transfer within RPOs through the Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative (TTSI).

A final draft of the report was disseminated to a range of stakeholders (including industry and investors and the major State research and innovation agencies) at the end August in advance of its publication at the end of September.

**Action 75:** Review and make initial recommendations to update the national Intellectual Property Protocol to reflect ongoing changes in the industry-academic research landscape and to ensure that the Protocol remains an industrially relevant “living” document.

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

**Update:** Complete

A Review of the National Intellectual Property Protocol was undertaken involving extensive stakeholder consultation. Arising from that review, recommendations were made to reflect ongoing changes in the industry-academic research landscape and to ensure that the Protocol remains an industrially relevant “living” document.

These recommendations were submitted via the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation. Following the endorsement of these recommendations the drafting of an updated National Intellectual Property Protocol is in progress and is expected to be published in Q4 2015.

**Action 76:** Develop a proposal for the continued support and evolution of the national Technology Transfer System.

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

**Update:** Complete

A proposal for the continued support and evolution of the Technology Transfer System Initiative (TTSI) programme has been developed, drafted and discussed with key stakeholders including the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), the Interdepartmental Committee (IDC), the Knowledge Transfer Stakeholder Forum, the Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) Industry Advisory Board, Enterprise Ireland and Higher Education Institution stakeholders.

## 3. Progressing Disruptive Reforms from 2013 & 2014 Action Plans

### 3.1 Manufacturing Step Change

**Action 79:** In 2015 the IDA will launch a new programme to support transformation and productivity improvement in the sector with funding of €1.5m provided for 2015.

**Q3 Measure:** Develop a program with appropriate human resources, metrics and focused promotional plan to ensure successful rollout. (IDA)

**Update:** Complete

Working with Enterprise Ireland, IDA has put in place a pilot programme on LEAN for the small to medium sized companies in its portfolio. This programme focuses on supporting productivity improvements and more effective ways of working. It was rolled out through a campaign of events (8 in total) held regionally around Ireland and through a brochure outlining the service to all IDA small client companies. To date, 10 IDA companies have been approved for the Lean Programme.

**Action 81:** As part of the National Talent Drive Disruptive reform (see above), develop new Apprenticeships in response to proposals from key sectors of the economy.

**Q3 Measure:** Consideration by Minister for Education and Skills of the financial and other implications of the recommendations and decision on allocation of funds. (DES, SOLAS, HEA)

**Update:** Complete

The Minister for Education and Skills has accepted the recommendations of the Apprenticeship Council who assigned Category 1 status to 25 new Apprenticeship programmes, meaning they are both sustainable and at an advanced stage of design, planning and industry/education collaboration. The Apprenticeship Council have entered into a detailed development phase with all the 25 Category 1 proposers to progress these proposals into sustainable Apprenticeships as soon as is practical. Costs associated with the expansion and development of the new apprenticeships are being discussed with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in the context of the 2016 Estimates.

## 3.2 National Health Innovation Hub

**Action 85:** Establish a National Health Innovation Hub based on a competitive process.

**Q3 Measure:** Announce National Health Innovation Hub. (DJEI, DoH, EI)

**Update:** Delayed to Q4

The competitive process to establish a National Health Innovation Hub (NHIH) is drawing to a conclusion. A competitive call, managed by Enterprise Ireland, for hosting the NHIH was launched in early 2015. Three applications, all from consortia involving a range of Higher Education Institutes, were received. All applicants were required to demonstrate how they will develop a viable and sustainable interface with the national health system and provide the infrastructure and scale to optimise engagement with the relevant industrial sectors. An independent expert panel comprising membership, both national and international, from the healthcare system and industry, were tasked with carrying out a comprehensive evaluation of the bids received. A decision on the successful bid is to be made shortly with an announcement expected in late Q4.

**Action 85:** Establish a National Health Innovation Hub based on a competitive process.

**Q3 Measure:** Select host for national HIH. (EI, Joint Agency Project Team).

**Update:** Delayed to Q4

The competitive process to establish a National Health Innovation Hub (NHIH) is drawing to a conclusion. A competitive call, managed by Enterprise Ireland, for hosting the NHIH was launched in early 2015. Three applications, all from consortia involving a range of Higher Education Institutes, were received. All applicants were required to demonstrate how they will develop a viable and sustainable interface with the national health system and provide the infrastructure and scale to optimise engagement with the relevant industrial sectors. An independent expert panel comprising membership, both national and international, from the healthcare system and industry, were tasked with carrying out a comprehensive evaluation of the bids received. A decision on the successful bid is to be made shortly with an announcement expected in late Q4.

### 3.3 Local Enterprise Offices

**Action 99:** Continue to develop and promote the Local Enterprise Offices as the first-stop-shop providing advice and supports to entrepreneurs and new business in the micro and small sector.

**Q3 Measure:** Conduct mid-year review of performance versus targets. (EI, LEOs)

**Update:** Complete

The Action Plan for Jobs 2015 aims to further develop and promote the new Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) network. 2014 saw the establishment of the 31 newly branded LEO offices, and commitment of additional staff. Since then the LEO's focus has been on the development of 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 the installation of oversight structures.

Now that the LEO network is successfully up and running the focus will continue to be on setting ambitious business targets, strengthened customer service and improved communications and promotion of LEO supports, activities and successes. Key to this is the continuing development and promotion of the Local Enterprise Offices as the first-stop-shop providing advice and supports to entrepreneurs and new business in the micro and small sector. This is the action set out for the LEOS in the 2015 APJ. There are 13 deliverables under this action.

A mid-year review of LEOs performance versus targets was undertaken and concluded at the end of September. As part of the process all 31 LEOs were reviewed against an array of targets including: Job Approval Grant (priming/expansion); Start Your Own Business Programmes; Mentoring assignments; Online vouchers; Microfinance Ireland (MFI) applications; Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneurs Completion, and a general review of the protocols partners such as the Department of Social Protection; Microfinance Ireland (MFI), and Community Enterprise Centres (CECs). These review sessions are being used to drive and improve performance across the network.

**Action 99:** Continue to develop and promote the Local Enterprise Offices as the first-stop-shop providing advice and supports to entrepreneurs and new business in the micro and small sector.

**Q3 Measure:** Review the Service Level Agreement between EI and Local Authorities. (EI, LAs, DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

A Review of the Service Level Agreement between Enterprise Ireland and Local Authorities commenced in early September. The review, of the working relationship between the

agency and local authorities, highlights the many ways in which they are working well together to support entrepreneurs and new business in the micro and small sector.

## 4. Finance for Growth

### 4.1 Effective Implementation to Maximise Benefits to SMEs

**Action 107:** Implement the recommendations of the review of the MicroEnterprise Loan Fund Scheme.

**Q3 Measure:** Implement recommendations as appropriate. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

A number of changes were recommended as a result of the Review of Microfinance Ireland (MFI) which was published by the Minister for Business and Employment on 1 April 2015.

The recommended changes contained in the review include:

- A new Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme, which will remove the requirement to be refused bank credit.
- An automatic bank referral system for all bank declines of microenterprise loans.
- A renewed communications and marketing strategy.

The new Microenterprise Loan Fund Scheme is being introduced through the introduction of a new Statutory Instrument which will remove the requirement to have a bank refusal before seeking funding from MFI. The Statutory Instrument is currently awaiting Ministerial signature and will then be laid before the Oireachtas.

MFI is currently in one to one engagement with the 3 main banks on referral systems and processes. There is also engagement with the Banking Payments Federation of Ireland (BPF) on industry wide changes in application forms and processes.

MFI has recently supplied the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation with the revised Communications and Marketing Strategy in line with the review deadline of end-Q2, 2015. MFI has also recently requested a meeting with Enterprise Ireland/Local Enterprise Office network to develop a local marketing plan pilot scheme and implement other measures which involve Local Enterprise Offices and Enterprise Ireland. MFI is also in discussion with the GAA on possible promotional campaigns.

MFI has also initiated credit policy review measures to ensure ongoing balance of risky versus sustainable lending in line with the MFI Review and have submitted an application under EU/EASI guarantee scheme which will cover an element of MFI's bad debts, and await the outcome of this application which has a potential value of some €3m to MFI. MFI has also been approved for a technical assistance funding package by the European Investment

Fund which will bring training and systems development opportunities aimed at improving both MFI's lending and collections practices and credit policies.

**Current position:** In relation to Microfinance Ireland, a new Scheme has been signed off by the Ministers for Public Expenditure and Reform, Finance, and Business and Employment. The Statutory Instrument dealing with this new Scheme was laid before the Oireachtas on 24 September 2015.

**Action 105:** Detailed data from AIB and Bank of Ireland will be collated and examined, on a monthly basis ensuring a more informed understanding of the SME bank lending environment, with a particular focus on new lending.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (D/Finance, Credit Review Office)

**Update:** Complete

Latest figures received from AIB and Bank of Ireland. Both banks show significant increased lending to SMEs and farms in the first half of 2015.

## 4.2 The LEOs Network – Enterprise Capacity Building

**Action 115:** Explore how best to support SMEs in building their financial capabilities.

**Q3 Measure:** Develop proposals for how best to support SMEs in building their financial capabilities. (D/Education and Skills, DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

A review of the Skillnets initiative has been completed. Proposals have been agreed and the associated actions to capture the legacy of the programme are at an advanced stage of implementation. These include 8 short training videos, access to a financial health check for SMEs and access to an on-line financial training tool.

## 4.3 Diversify the Range of Financing Options for SMEs

**Action 119:** The Department of Finance to work with the relevant stakeholders in raising awareness of the Employment Investment Incentive Scheme (EII) and promoting it as vehicle for channelling investment to grow enterprises and support employment.

**Q3 Measure:** Implement agreed set of actions to both raise awareness of and promote the EII Scheme as vehicle for investing in growth and employment. (D/Finance, DJEI, State

Bodies Group).

**Update:** Complete

The Employment Investment Incentive Scheme (EII) continues to be promoted through the Supporting SMEs Online Tool, supported by the work of the State Bodies Group (SBG) Communications Team.

**Action 121:** The SME State Bodies Group to produce recommendations to further support the development of alternative SME financing instruments.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (SME State Bodies Group)

**Update:** Complete

A policy conference was held on 29 September, which focused on alternative SME financing instruments. Following the presentations at that conference, the SME State Bodies Group will draw up a list of relevant recommendations and submit by 30 September.

#### 4.4 Policy Impact, Evaluation & Learning

**Action 122:** Host a policy conference on Financing the Growth Potential of SMEs.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (D/Finance)

**Update:** Complete

The policy conference took place on 29 September, with a focus on alternative SME financing instruments.

#### 4.6 Trade Credit and Prompt Payments

**Action 125:** Examine and report on the feasibility of incorporating the government decision for all public bodies to pay suppliers within 15 days into national legislation.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

Examination of the proposal to legislate for all public bodies (excluding commercial semi-state bodies) to pay their suppliers within 15 days of receiving a valid invoice is underway, with the aim of improving payment performance in Ireland.

A public consultation process on the proposal to incorporate into national legislation the government decision for all public bodies to pay suppliers within 15 days was launched on 4 September 2015 with a closing date of 2 October for receipt of submissions. A final report on feasibility is due for completion following full analysis of submissions received.

**Action 126:** Examine the potential for introducing prompt payment criteria in public procurement guidelines to:

- prevent or discourage companies from paying their suppliers late or imposing unreasonably long payment terms
- requiring contracting authorities to include terms in their contracts passing the benefits of prompt payment down their supply chain

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

The aim of introducing such criteria is to improve cash flow for businesses and driving a change in the payment culture in Ireland.

A meeting was held in mid-September between the Minister for Small Business, officials of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Mr. Paul Quinn, Chief Procurement Officer, Office of Government Procurement to initiate discussions on this proposal.

## 5. Growing Irish Enterprise and Foreign Direct Investment

**Action 158:** Work to increase SME awareness of public procurement opportunities.

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

**Update:** Complete

To increase SME awareness of the opportunities presented by this programme Enterprise Ireland ran a “Meet the Buyer” series of events which took place on 15, 16 and 18 September in locations in Dublin, Waterford and Mayo. Enterprise Ireland’s ‘meet the buyer’ events are a proven element of our approach to widening the access for Irish sub-supply companies to lucrative contracts within the public sector.

These free events were open to construction suppliers and enterprises in a wide variety of supply categories. Facilities Management subcontractors with expertise in areas such as planned preventative maintenance and cleaning services are also invited to participate. Attendees found out how to become a sub-supplier through a series of short 5 minute “pitch” meetings.

There was also an Enterprise Support zone at these events, where attendees could access information on business supports through the Local Enterprise Office network and Enterprise Ireland. The Department of Social Protection will also provide delegates with information.

**Action 161:** Develop metrics to assess the market during the procurement process to improve future procurement competitions.

**Q3 Measure:** Improve and publicise the business profiling available to Economic Operators who are registered on the eTenders System (DPER/OGP)

**Update:** Complete

The Office of Government Procurement broadcasted an email notification on 3 July 2015 to all registered suppliers on eTenders without business alerts configured on their company profile. The notification included instructions on how to set up business alerts using the Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) coding. This allows suppliers select codes which match the category of goods and services that their company can provide. When Public Sector bodies publish tender notices with these CPV selected, suppliers will get alerts in relation to this competition notice.

The Office of Government Procurement is also promoting and building awareness of the

business alerting available on the eTenders system at the 'Meet the Buyer' events and 'Taking Care of Business' seminars which are held regular throughout the year.

**Action 167:** Develop Ireland's national enterprise policy that will set the strategic direction over the next decade to 2025 and framework for action across Government.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

Enterprise 2025 will be presented to Cabinet in October with a view to publishing in early November 2015. This new enterprise policy to 2025 will set the strategic framework to ensure coherence across government departments to focus our resources in order to foster a better future and to deliver sustainable enterprise growth and jobs. The strategy is broad and encompasses the whole of enterprise and sets out our ambition for sustainable job creation and growth - growth that will be driven by (net) exports underpinned by economic activity; growth that will be driven by innovation, productivity and competitiveness across the economy.

Actions are focused on three main areas:

- Realising a significant uplift in enterprise performance and export growth;
- Investing in areas where we can differentiate what Ireland has to offer in the context of an intensely competitive global environment – and specifically in terms of Talent, Place-making, Innovativeness and Connectedness; and
- Excelling at getting the business right in our business environment – including cost competitiveness, finance for growth, taxation, infrastructures.

Enterprise 2025 will set the strategic direction to inform more specific actions by Government departments, agencies and bodies that will be reflected in APJ 2016 to drive implementation.

**Action 171:** Take steps to establish Clinical Research Facilities (CRFs) in Dublin, Cork and Galway and provide a collaborative framework to link all CRFs by 2016.

**Q3 Measure:** Complete fit out and open facility at Health Research Board Galway Clinical Research Facilities in conjunction with National Univeristy of Ireland Galway and Galway Univeristy Hospital

**Update:** Complete

The facility fit out has been completed, and the team, previously in temporary accommodation, moved into the new premises in June 2015. The Taoiseach formally opened the Health Research Board Galway Clinical Research Facilities Galway on 28 September 2015.

**Q3 Measure:** Set up coordination centre for collaborative delivery of multi-site clinical trials between the HRB CRFs and other Clinical Research Centres nationally. (HRB)

**Update:** Complete

Funding for the coordination centre called HRB Clinical Research Coordination Ireland (HRB-CRCI) commenced in May 2015. A team is being established to develop a suite of tools and services to improve the feasibility, time lines and quality of multi-site clinical trials in Ireland.

**Action 177:** Commencing 2015 the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) will implement a 3 year development strategy with objectives to develop:

- Capacity to adequately service large multinational Medical Device companies with a presence in Ireland;
- Capacity to adequately service indigenous Irish companies emerging within the industry; and
- A significant contributor to the advancement of patient safety within the European Union healthcare system through timely access for patients to safe new technology Medical Devices.

**Q3 Measure:** Increase technical staff resources by 6. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

The six business cases have been submitted and approved with the sanctions granted on a staggered basis. Two medical device file managers have been recruited and recruitment of the 4 remaining technical staff has commenced.

## 6. Entrepreneurship

### 6.1 Progressing Entrepreneurship Policy Statement

**Action 182:** Student Enterprise Award: Building on the successful 3rd Level Student Enterprise Award Programme target a greater number of student participants (Target 500) and enhance the quality of the applications contributing to a greater Entrepreneurial spirit in this student cohort.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (EI)

**Update:** Complete

Two thirds of all new jobs come from start-ups in the first five years of existence, according to Central Bank data. That is why we have put start-ups right at the centre of our jobs plan – in Ireland we have great entrepreneurs and start-ups, we just don't have enough of them.

Positive entrepreneurial role models, fostering positive attitudes to risk taking, communications skills, combined with positive recognition of entrepreneurial achievement and commercialisation of academic innovation, are central to achieving optimal results in the area of entrepreneurship. Inspiring and encouraging untapped potential in specific categories of society such as young people, graduate, females and migrants will provide significant opportunities in this regard. It is in this context that the Student Enterprise Award aims to strengthen the Entrepreneurial spirit amongst this cohort of potential entrepreneurs.

The Student Entrepreneur Awards 2016, which will open for submissions in mid-October 2015, are open to all full time third level students in Ireland and are Ireland's biggest and longest established student enterprise competition for third level student teams.

The priority is to get students thinking now about starting their own business as a career option once they graduate. The sponsors (Enterprise Ireland, Cruickshank Intellectual Property Attorneys, Grant Thornton and Intel) also bring their expertise to nurturing the finalists in the competition to Commercialise their business by providing them with expert guidance in areas such as intellectual property, market research, finances, technology development, public relations and advertising, all aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs to develop viable businesses and create jobs.

**Action 184:** Develop a new, disruptive, societal impact scheme including public consultation on topics to be funded.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. Ensure that widespread public and professional input is

captured. (SFI)

**Update:** Complete

Millward Brown has completed the public survey on behalf of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), capturing public attitudes towards science in addition to assessing the public's priorities for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. A full scheme has not yet been run on the advice of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

**Action 194:** Support a further cohort of new food entrepreneurs under Food Works 3 and promote market outlets for food start-up companies.

**Q3 Measure:** Entrepreneurs are investor ready. (Board Bia/ EI/ Teagasc)

**Update:** Delayed

This phase will not be completed until Q4.

**Action 195:** Develop a joint strategy for the positioning of Ireland to take advantage of new opportunities in the Electronic Payments sector, so as to support innovation, entrepreneurship and attract mobile investment.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action (EI/IDA)

**Update:** Delayed

There is a positive relationship between international trade and economic growth. As a country with a small domestic market and as one of the most open economies in the world, exports are crucial to Ireland's economic growth. The potential exists to further expand Irish Exports by taking advantage of new sectoral opportunities. The Electronic Payments sector has been identified as a sector presenting opportunities for Irish companies. Under this action Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland will develop a joint strategy to best position Ireland to take advantage of new opportunities in the Electronic Payments sector.

The process of developing a strategy for the Payments Industry has commenced and will expand in Q4 to involve key industry representative bodies and other stakeholders.

**Action 206:** Initiate scoping study for development of a Coastal Resource Hub & Marine

Innovation Park at Páirc na Mara, Cill Chiaráin, Co. Galway.

**Q3 Measure:** Begin scoping study. (ÚnaG)

**Update:** Complete

Terms of reference are currently being finalised.

**Action 209:** As announced in Budget 2015, extend the existing 3-year tax relief for new startup companies until end-2015.

**Q3 Measure:** Review effectiveness of the Scheme. (D/Finance)

**Update:** Complete

As part of the public consultation on Tax and Entrepreneurship, the Department of Finance invited views from the public and interested parties on the use and effectiveness of the 3-year tax relief for new start-up companies. The review takes account of consultation responses while examining the continued relevance, costs, impacts and efficiencies of the relief. The outcome of the review will be announced as part of Budget 2016.

**Action 212:** Competitive Start Fund (CSF) for the Agri-Sector: Following the launch of the Competitive Feasibility for the Agri-Sector in September 2014, explore launching a Competitive Start Fund to further support potential startup businesses in this sector.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (EI)

**Update:** Complete

The Action Plan for Jobs supports enterprise growth and job creation in every region of the country. The pace of progress in the regions – and 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 Start Funds is 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.

Enterprise Ireland's Manufacturing & Agricultural Competitive Start Fund (CSF) call for applications opened on 16 September and will close on 30 September. The Manufacturing & Agricultural CSF hopes to accelerate the growth of start-up companies, in this sector, that have the capability to succeed in global markets. The fund was promoted strongly at the Ploughing Championships.

The fund is designed to enable those companies reach key commercial and technical milestones, for example: Evaluate overseas market opportunities and reach firm conclusions regarding the viability of the proposed business; Build a prototype; Secure a reference site; Develop a market entry plan for exploiting international opportunities; Secure partnership deal or strategic alliance; Identify suitable channels to international markets, and Secure third party investment e.g. business angel, Venture Capital.

**Action 215:** 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 completed.

**Q3 Measure:** Food Academy Advance Programme completed. (Bord Bia)

**Update:** Complete

The first Food Academy Advance Programme provided a retail business development support structure to 30 high potential Food Academy Start graduates over a nine month period, from November 2014 to July 2015. 29 companies completed this programme, and secured to a three month trial on shelf in their local SuperValu stores.

## 7. Competitiveness

### 7.1 Easier to do Business

**Action 232:** Develop an interface with the National Transport Authority (NTA) to supply the supporting evidence electronically to enable small public service vehicles (taxi, hackney and limousines) to be taxed online.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DTTAS, NTA)

**Update:** Delayed

The proposed development of an interface with the National Transport Authority (NTA) to supply supporting evidence electronically to enable small public vehicles to tax online has been delayed due to the priority of the development of a driving license web service interface for An Garda Síochána and the Courts Service associated with implementation of recommendations contained in the Garda Inspectorate Report on the penalty points system. The revised implementation is Q1 2016.

**Action 234:** Revoke outdated Dangerous Substances legislation and replace it with a streamlined, lower cost and enterprise friendly system for the licensing of petroleum storage and dispensing facilities. This should help stimulate the economy by providing certainty to those seeking to invest in new or upgraded facilities.

**Q3 Measure:** Conclude stakeholder engagement. (HSA, DJEI, DECLG)

**Update:** Delayed

Representatives from DJEI and the HSA will meet the Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Planning Committee of the County and City Management Association (CCMA) on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015 to discuss the approach to delivering upon reform of the Dangerous Substances legislation. The local authorities are the licensing authorities under the current Dangerous Substances legislation. There has been a positive response from industry stakeholders to the proposed revocation of the outdated legislation. A report will be presented to the Minister by end 2015 with recommendations on a “fit for purpose” regulatory regime based on the outcome of stakeholder consultations.

**Action 236:** Further develop the Building Control Management System (BCMS).

**Q3 Measure:** Develop BCMS to incorporate/accommodate FSC, applications for waivers and dispensations, etc. (DECLG)

**Update:** Delayed

The work referenced in the Q3 measure is now scheduled for delivery in Q1 2016. This follows a necessary reprioritisation of BCMS functionality where statistical reporting, lodgement of statutory certificates of compliance on completion and, following the review of Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2014, the decision to provide owners of single dwellings or domestic extensions with the facility to opt out of statutory certification have been given precedence over incorporating FSC/waiver applications. Ongoing development of BCMS will continue to receive priority attention.

**Action 237:** Review the operation of the Building Control Amendment Regulations 2014 (Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2014) after 12 months of operation and report with recommendations on matters arising.

**Q3 Measure:** Report with recommendations to inform future regulations (DECLG)

**Update:** Complete

The review of Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2014 is now complete and a report on the public consultation process was submitted to Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government on 30 June 2015 and published on 31 July 2015. A copy of the report is available at:

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/BuildingStandards/FileDownload,42398,en.pdf>.

The Building Control Regulations 1990-2015 were amended by Statutory Instrument No. 365 of 2015. The new regulations allow owners of single dwellings and domestic extensions to opt out of the requirements for statutory certification of compliance with Building Regulations, remove the exemption from building control requirements previously available to local authorities and clarify certain aspects of the regulations. Statutory Instrument No. 365 of 2015 took effect on 1 September 2015.

**Action 246:** Following on from the action in 2014 to institutionalise the drive for competitiveness, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, and other Cabinet Committees as appropriate, will continue to monitor progress on competitiveness issues identified by the National Competitiveness Council and others and consider further actions to improve Ireland's international competitiveness and consider initiatives to make it easier to do business in Ireland. The Cabinet Committee(s) will be supported by the relevant Senior Officials Group and the APJ Monitoring Committee in this work.

**Q3 Measure:** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, and other Cabinet Committees as appropriate, will monitor progress on competitiveness issues, and consider

actions to improve Ireland's performance. (Department of Taoiseach, All Departments)

**Update:** Complete

The work programmes of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs (CCERJ) and of other relevant Cabinet Committees reflect the priority that the Government attaches to safeguarding, and building on, Ireland's hard-won competitiveness gains. In July, the National Competitiveness Council's (NCC) Competitiveness Scorecard was considered by Government and it was published on 31 July. In addition, the NCC prepared and published 3 Bulletins on different aspects of competitiveness during the quarter, on Capital Investment and Competitiveness; The Labour Market and Competitiveness; and WEF Competitiveness Rankings.

These Reports are available at: <http://www.competitiveness.ie/Publications/>

## 7.2 Enhancing Firm-Level Productivity

**Action 254:** Embed graduates in international markets for Enterprise Ireland clients to help them to internationalise and grow their business in new or existing markets through the Graduates 4 International Growth Programme (G4IG).

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (EI)

**Update:** Complete

To support the development of key skills amongst graduates and develop their future management capabilities Enterprise Ireland's Graduates 4 International Growth Programme (G4IG) embeds graduates in international markets for Enterprise Ireland client companies to help them to internationalise and grow their business in new or existing markets.

The G4IG programme has been on offer for six years. To date, 183 graduates have participated on the programme assisting companies to internationalise in new markets or assisting companies to expand existing markets. 27 graduates from the 2013-2015 programme are due to graduate in November with their post graduate diploma in International Business Development.

Presently 21 graduates from the 2014-2015 programme are in international markets working for Enterprise Ireland client companies. The 2015-2016 programme is currently open for applications, with a planned programme launch of November 2015. In April 2015, the G4IG programme won an award for the Best Training and Development Programme. This was awarded by GradIreland – the leading on-line graduate recruitment website.

### 7.3 Regulating for a Better Future

**Action 265:** Continue the implementation of actions outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation in the Energy, Communications and Broadcasting sectors.

**Q3 Measure:** Publish White Paper on Energy Policy which will include a commitment to review the regulatory framework and mandate. (DCENR)

**Update:** Delayed

The White Paper on Energy Policy is now scheduled for publication in Q4.

## 8. Research, Development and Innovation

**Action 266:** Continue to drive implementation of Research Prioritisation through the Government's Prioritisation Action Group and complete the review of the Independent Panel established to review progress.

**Q3 Measure:** Bring the integrated approach to Government for approval. (DJEI, RPAG)

**Update:** Delayed

The findings and recommendations by the independent, expert panel have been presented to both the Research Prioritisation Action Group (RPAG) and the Inter-Departmental Committee overseeing the development of the new Science, Technology & Innovation Strategy. The relevant findings and recommendations by the panel are being considered in the context of the new strategy, along with other key inputs to the strategy (independent studies and submissions to the open consultation). The strategy will put forward an integrated approach to all of the key issues raised. The Strategy will be brought to Government in Q4 2015.

**Action 268:** Develop directory of innovation supports to make our offering clear to enterprise.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DJEI, EI, IDA, SFI)

**Update:** Complete

A directory describing the full landscape for supporting research and development in Ireland and the key research and technology centres supported by the State has been developed and will be published imminently. The directory provides an overview of "who does what" across the national science, technology and innovation ecosystem in Ireland and responds to a strong need expressed by industry and other stakeholders during the consultations on a successor to the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation.

**Action 272:** Ensure research centres landscape offers the full continuum of support to companies from basic to applied research facilities.

**Q3 Measure:** Take steps towards initiating a pilot initiative on the basis of recommendations from the study on market focussed research centres in Ireland. (DJEI with relevant Agencies)

**Update:** Complete

The recent study on the market focused element of the research landscape concluded that

there is an unmet demand for the provision of external RDI services to Irish-based companies by the Irish research system, especially at the upper-middle and high Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) and in short-term applied and contract research. For an internationally competitive research ecosystem for the future, it is recommended that Ireland should begin to build capacity in these areas through evolving and strengthening the existing research centre base.

The report recommended that the market focused research centre landscape should evolve and that a Research and Technology Organisation (RTO) model should be considered and introduced on a pilot basis. This could build on a number of “RTO-like” entities that already exist in Ireland. The market focused research centre landscape would therefore comprise three centre models: Research Centres (RCs), consolidated Technology Centres (TCs), and a small number of broad adapted and flexible RTOs. Together these models can provide a comprehensive and coherent portfolio of research capacity across the entire TRL scale and deliver the range of research functions offered to industry in leading market focused research ecosystems internationally.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), with relevant agencies, is currently progressing the evolution of the research centre landscape as recommended. The case for a potential pilot RTO initiative is being progressed and will be considered in the context of a successor to the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, which is still in development.

**Action 276:** Based on the 2014 SME Innovation network pilot exercise implement roll out a national SME Innovation Network.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (EI)

**Update:** Delayed

Measures to promote innovation are an important component of Ireland’s research, development and innovation (RD&I) systems. Innovation support makes a critical contribution to enterprise policy, and to the goal of developing a competitive national economy, through the stimulus given by innovation to high value economic activities and jobs. By encouraging the development of new economic activities RD&I policy measures strengthen Ireland’s competitive advantage and build potential new areas of economic activity.

Ireland has a diverse range of policy measures in support of enterprise innovation for both indigenous firms and multinational companies. Many of these measures are now well established and have helped to increase RD&I activity and investment. In addition to the existing measure new initiatives are being developed to further support the promotion of

innovation. One such initiative is the roll out a national SME Innovation Network, this initiative is based on the 2014 SME Innovation network pilot exercise.

The objective of this initiative is to provide an open innovation meeting place for local SMEs where they can exchange ideas and provide mutual support for each other on innovation issues.

It is hoped that the regional clusters of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) will provide the venue for the networks to meet whilst also providing the companies with insight into opportunities that are available to them from the HEIs. A 4<sup>th</sup> network meeting will be held in the South West region hosted by UCC in November. A full national rollout will depend on the HEIs tapping into a source of long term funding. This could come from a number of sources including applications to the regional fund but this is not yet certain

**Action 281:** Following on from the launch of the Small Business Innovation Research in 2014, identify a pipeline of potential SBIR projects and expand SBIRs to 2 new contracting authorities.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (EI)

**Update:** Complete

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) is a mechanism which enables public sector bodies to connect with innovative ideas and technology businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific Public Sector challenges and needs. This Initiative is part of the Government's campaign to get more businesses devising creative solutions that not only provide cost efficient innovative services but also help create new jobs. The SBIR represent a great opportunity for SMEs to develop highly innovative solutions for the public sector with potential to sell globally, leading to job creation.

Enterprise Ireland has identified a pipeline of potential SBIR projects. A second SBIR was released on Friday 11 September in the area of building regulations. SBIR Smart Technology Solution for Homeowner Utilisation, Presentation, or Interpretation of Building Energy Rating (BER) datasets.

This Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) competition, a collaboration between SEAI and Enterprise Ireland, aims to develop a number of smart technology solutions. These solutions should help BER end-user accessibility, presentation and interpretation of the data available from the BER process. The objectives are to make the BER a more significant factor in property purchase/rental decisions and also to better inform home upgrade opportunities.

SBIR refers to the public procurement of research and development on new innovative

solutions before they are commercially available. It involves different suppliers competing through different phases of development, while the risks and benefits are shared between the procurers and the suppliers under market conditions. Developments are 100% funded and focused on specific identified needs, increasing the chance of exploitation.

Successful tenderers will be selected by an open competition process and retain the intellectual property generated from the project, with certain rights of use retained by the SEAI.

Launched in June 2014 Ireland's first Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) competition a collaboration between EI & SEAI and ESB eCars targeted smart solutions for charging Electric Vehicles (EVs) in communal parking areas such as apartment blocks for which up to €200,000 being made available to develop the prototype. Phase 1 of this SBIR project is reaching its conclusion. An evaluation process for phase 2 will commence in October.

SBIR is in the process of being expanded to 2 new contracting authorities Dublin City Council and Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The partners are at present in the final stages of formalising individual challenge briefs, which are expected to be finalised shortly.

**Action 293:** Publication and enactment of Technological University Bill.

**Q3 Measure:** Enactment of Technological University Bill. (Department of Education and Skills)

**Update:** Delayed

The Bill is currently being drafted by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel and is at an advanced stage. The bill will not be enacted in Q4. The Office of Parliamentary Council (OPC) has informed the Department that the Bill will be published in December 2015.

**Action 294:** Use the standardisation system intelligently to expedite the commercialisation of new technology and to reduce the risk of project failure.

**Q3 Measure:** In conjunction with EI and Athlone IT host a H 2020 Application workshop. (NSAI)

**Update:** Delayed

Following consultation with Enterprise Ireland staff involved with the Horizon 2020 Programme, NSAI considered that a single generic event would not achieve the desired objective because of the differences in interests and needs of the research areas, and that a number of smaller events, focused on key areas of Horizon 2020 such as Health, ICT and Energy would be more effective. NSAI has had discussions with NUI Galway, Waterford IT and Dundalk IT as possible venues for these

events. This action will now be completed by Q4.

In preparation for the 3 focussed events on key research areas to be held in Q4 the National Standards Authority of Ireland, NSAI, has had discussions with NUI Galway, Waterford IT and Dundalk IT as possible venues for the events. Confirmation is awaited.

During Q3 NSAI carried out briefing sessions with the Director of Research UCD and Chair of the Irish Universities Association (IUA), and the Research Programme Coordinator of the Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI) on the advantages and benefits of standards with a view to carrying out further information sessions with university and institute staff.

## 9. Stimulating the Domestic Economy

### 9.1 Agri-food

**Action 298:** Roll out a schedule of food related Ministerial Trade and Investment Missions to boost exports to priority markets and attract additional inward investment.

**Q3 Measure:** Development agencies and DAFM to develop programme with clients. (DAFM/EI)

**Update:** Complete

In September, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine led a trade mission in the USA, based around Chicago, to launch Irish beef on the mid-west market, and to promote Irish dairy companies and products in the region. He also hosted inward Ministerial delegations from key export markets, including China and Vietnam.

Planning is at an advanced stage for two EI/Bord Bia trade missions to be led by the Minister in Q4: to China and other Asian markets in early November; and to West Africa in early December.

**Action 301:** Support innovation in Irish meat companies to develop new products and extend shelf-life thereby creating larger export market potential.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (Teagasc)

**Update:** On schedule

Teagasc was successful in being invited to submit a full submission for the establishment of a Meat Technology Innovation centre.

**Action 304:** Implement a new strategy for development and growth of Moorepark Technology Ltd to drive innovations and growth in Ireland's food industry.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DAFM)

**Update:** Complete

The Strategy has been agreed with the industry shareholders who have committed to provide their share of the funding. Sanction has been received for the investment from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. A committee of Teagasc and industry shareholders is now working on detailed building and equipment specification. Moorepark Technology Ltd turnover increased in

2014 by 12.4% compared to 2013, and activity/turnover to date in 2015 is 6% higher than 2014, in line with the projections in the Strategy.

**Action 308:** Bord Bia will appoint 10 new Origin Green Ambassadors and assign to global food and drinks companies as part of their M.Sc. in Business Sustainability programme.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DAFM)

**Update:** Complete

Bord Bia has recruited 10 new Origin Green Ambassadors who commenced the 2nd programme on 7 September. They will partake of a 23 month programme. The first 5 months focus on the academic elements of sustainability. This will then be followed by 3 five month international placements.

**Action 313:** Establish Agri-Food Strategy 2025 Committee and launch report in July 2015.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DAFM)

**Update:** Complete

Food Wise 2025, the report of the Agri-Food Strategy 2025 Committee was officially launched by the Taoiseach on 2 July. The first meeting of the High Level Implementation Committee will take place on 30 September to begin designing a robust implementation process to monitor progress and deliver on the ambitious projections in Food Wise 2025.

Environmental consultants were engaged to carry out an Environmental Analysis Report (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment). The draft report is now available on the Department's website. The work of the Environmental Analysis was carried out in a parallel process to the work of the 2025 Agri-Food Strategy Committee and has fed into Food Wise 2025. Public consultation on the draft Environmental Analysis closed on 28 August. The external consultants and the Department are examining the submissions, and the final report of the Environmental Analysis Food Wise 2025 will be presented to the Department at the end of September. Implementation of Food Wise 2025 will be influenced by the final Environmental Analysis Report.

## 9.2 Marine

**Action 314:** Progress the implementation of Ireland's Integrated Marine Plan – Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth.

**Q3 Measure:** Host the Second HOOW Conference, in association with Imerc, aimed at highlighting the social, cultural and economic benefits of Ireland’s Marine Sector. This will include demonstration of solid progress in key areas, promote investment, jobs and growth an. (Marine Coordination Group (MCG))

**Update:** Complete

The second ‘Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth’ Conference was held on 10 July, 2015 in Ringaskiddy, Co Cork. The Conference reviewed ongoing progress on the implementation of the Government’s Integrated Marine Plan and was attended by over 500 delegates from the public and private sector with an involvement in the marine sector. A review of the progress in implementing Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth in 2014 was published at the Conference. In addition, the Report of the Our Ocean Wealth Development Task Force Report was published at the same time.

On 11 July, the Taoiseach opened the Beaufort Research Laboratory in Ringaskiddy. The 4,700m-squared five-storey building with state-of-the-art wave simulators, test tanks, workshops and offices provides Ireland with world-class infrastructure for renewable energy and maritime research. Also Seafest, Ireland's national maritime festival took place in Cork Harbour on the Saturday. The SeaFest programme included a seafood fair, seafood cookery demonstrations and seafaring family fun, tours of Irish Navy ships, a Parade of Sail ending in Cork City, leisure craft and boats, the Lee Swim, exhibits on marine life and festival entertainment for every age group. Approximately 10,000 people attended Seafest.

## 9.3 Tourism

**Action 316:** Publish a detailed “Tourism Action Plan” to deliver initial actions required over the period 2015-2018 in order to achieve the objectives set out in the Tourism Policy Statement. The Tourism Policy Statement sets a target of 250,000 people employed in the tourism sector by 2025.

**Q3 Measure:** In order to identify and prioritise the initial actions required to achieve the policy objectives in the Tourism Policy Statement, publish a three-year Tourism Action Plan to cover the period 2015-2017. (DTTAS)

**Update:** Delayed.

The Minister for Transport Tourism and Sport has appointed a Tourism Leadership Group, which is currently engaged in a programme of meetings with key tourism stakeholders. This dialogue will inform the actions to be included in the Tourism Action Plan, which is now

expected to be published in Q1 2016.

## 9.4 Retail

**Action 324:** Review the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee report on Town Centre retailing; develop an action plan to advance recommendations which are considered feasible for delivery, and monitor progress in implementing those recommendations through the Retail Consultation Forum.

**Q3 Measure:** Monitor progress in delivering the action plan. (Retail Consultation Forum)

**Update:** Complete

A special meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum was held in West Court Hotel, Drogheda, on 27 April 2015 to consider the report of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, *“Policy Options to Support Business Growth and Job Creation and Retention in Town and Village Centres”* which was published in March.

Arising from the consideration by the Retail Consultation Forum of the report of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the priority areas for action were identified, recorded and presented to a subsequent meeting of the Forum on 15 June 2015. Initial steps to follow-up on these actions were also identified.

As agreed at the June meeting, the Secretariat to the Forum has been following up with other members of the Forum to move these issues forward with a view to setting up a number of working groups comprised of members of the Forum and relevant experts to examine issues relating to on-line retailing, energy costs and town centre strategic plans/town team management. Progress will be considered by the Forum at its next meeting in October.

## 9.5 Construction and Housing

**Action 338:** We will launch a public consultation and consider whether measures are required to encourage the timely development of zoned and serviced land.

**Q3 Measure:** Examine in the context of the Finance Bill what taxation measures, if any, might be taken to penalise land owners who do not develop land that is already zoned and serviced. (D/Finance)

**Update:** Complete

The Department of Finance’s public consultation on the potential of taxation measures to

encourage the development of zoned and serviced land received 24 submissions between its launch in February 2015 and the completion of the submissions phase in May 2015. These submissions along with other pertinent information and developments have been considered, and a submission has been made to the Minister for Finance setting out their recommendations based on that consideration. The outcome of this process will be announced in due course.

## 10. New Sources of Growth

### 10.1 Growing Sales Through Leadership in Design

**Action 346:** Develop a series of National Design Enterprise and Education initiatives including design hubs, design networks, startup and investment platforms, cross-sectoral collaborations, design challenges and funded design development programmes.

**Q3 Measure:** Develop a digital platform to act as a one-stop-shop for anyone interested in finding the latest tools and techniques for applying design, making connections with peers, and finding the latest research. (DCCoI, Irish Design 2015)

**Update:** Complete

Building upon the success of the Design Island App launched in July 2015, work continues with ID2015 technology partner IBM as well as key sectoral membership organisations and regional networks in developing a design directory and B2B design resource website. Work is underway with a detailed brief completed and a development team assigned, with a website scheduled for launch in Q4 2015 as a legacy of Irish Design 2015.

**Action 346:** Develop a series of National Design Enterprise and Education initiatives including design hubs, design networks, startup and investment platforms, cross-sectoral collaborations, design challenges and funded design development programmes.

**Q3 Measure:** Develop toolkits and programmes for design-led education initiatives from primary to third level to ensure the ongoing development of design talent and expertise in Ireland. (DCCoI, ID2015)

**Update:** Complete

A total of 15 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions have engaged with the ID2015 programme to date. An 'Education to Enterprise' toolkit for 3<sup>rd</sup> level students and recent graduates is under development for pilot delivery in Q4. designED, a design innovation programme and toolkit for 2<sup>nd</sup> level that seeks to embed design thinking and entrepreneurship into the curriculum, has been developed and a pilot successfully delivered, with a national rollout planned for 2016. The young designers toolkit has been distributed to 3,145 2<sup>nd</sup> level students to use as a resource. CRAFTed, a 1<sup>st</sup> level programme introducing pupils to design and craft originally developed and launched by DCCoI in 2009 has been enhanced and rolled out to 1,725 primary school pupils during 2015.

A range of education activities and CPD activities supporting the ID2015 exhibition, conference and events programme such as Faultlines, the first Irish design education

research conference in collaboration with Carlow IT and the launch of Iterations, the first peer reviewed Irish design research journal in June 2015. An ongoing programme of match-funded design lectures and design masterclasses, has been delivered in partnership with Goethe Institute, Alliance Francaise, British Council and others.

To date over 8,000 schoolchildren have engaged with the education and outreach programmes, over 6,000 designers have received training and over 1,600 business professionals have received design training during 2015.

**Action 346:** Develop a series of National Design Enterprise and Education initiatives including design hubs, design networks, startup and investment platforms, cross-sectoral collaborations, design challenges and funded design development programmes.

**Q3 Measure:** Support a range of design-led initiatives across the regions through a match funded design innovation fund exploring, promoting and celebrating Irish design and designers through events and activities. (DCCoI, ID2015)

**Update:** Complete

Following two call outs, the ID2015 Design Innovation Fund has funded a range of projects, events and activities throughout Ireland including:

- 15 regional and sectoral networks
- 44 design exhibitions
- 32 design events
- 24 design symposia and conferences
- 8 design websites and online platforms
- 27 design talks
- 10 short design films
- 4 design residencies
- 50 design workshops
- 17 design publications

Other design led initiatives include:

- A design voucher scheme to assist 50 micro businesses and SMEs to implement design strategy in their businesses has been developed. Entitled Design 4 Growth, the pilot project is being delivered in partnership with DCC, PIVOT Dublin and Dublin LEOs.

- A Start-up programme for creative industry entrepreneurs has been developed in partnership with a training provider with a view to 40+ designers/SMEs being selected in partnership with EI and LEOs to receive training.
- A Competitive Start Fund with special allocation of €250K for design-led companies has been developed and launched in partnership with Enterprise Ireland to provide funding to 5 successful applicants.
- A research audit into the design sector is underway, led by DJEI in collaboration with ID2015/DCCol, EI, SFI and IDA, in order to inform a policy document which is due for completion by the end of Q4 2015.

A commissioned collection of collaborative products involving Irish designers, makers and manufacturers to mark Irish Design 2015 has been developed and launched at London Design Festival 2015, with a website and film produced to promote the project internationally. The collection will also be showcased at Dutch Design Week in October 2015 and at Showcase – Ireland’s Creative Expo in January 2016.

## 10.2 Innovative / Advanced Manufacturing

**Action 356:** A business case will be prepared for consideration of the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation for the establishment, governance and funding of an innovative manufacturing facility which would significantly enhance Ireland's strategic assets in innovative/advanced manufacturing (e.g. additive manufacturing, automation, systems integration, advanced packaging). The business case should address the needs of industry across the full range of supports required to including training, research, flexible manufacturing and demonstration spaces, manufacturing technology simulation etc. The facility should have the objectives of future proofing Ireland's manufacturing workforce, attracting leading national and international manufacturing innovators/ researchers and to serve as a beacon internationally for advanced manufacturing in Ireland.

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

**Update:** Complete

A joint agency proposal will be submitted to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) this month for consideration by the Department.

## Annex 1: Evaluations and reviews to inform future policy development

**Action 369:** Monitor public sector energy usage and publish an annual report on energy usage in the public sector.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DCENR)

**Update:** Complete

The Annual Report on Energy Use in the Public Sector has been published, and is available at:

[http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Your\\_Business\\_Publications/Public\\_Sector/Energy\\_Use\\_in\\_the\\_Public\\_Sector.pdf](http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Your_Business_Publications/Public_Sector/Energy_Use_in_the_Public_Sector.pdf)

**Action 370:** Undertake a qualitative research project to follow-up on key issues identified in the national employer survey.

**Q3 Measure:** Commission and undertake follow up research. (DES, HEA, SOLAS, QQI)

**Update:** Complete

**Action 372:** Continue to systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of the Springboard initiative to further strengthen the contribution of the programme to supporting job creation and retention, 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. Higher Education Authority (HEA)

**Update:** Complete

A third trend analysis of Springboard employment outcomes 2011 – 2015 was published in June 2015, and is available at:

<https://www.springboardcourses.ie/pdfs/Trend%20Analysis%20Part%203%20summary%20>

[version.pdf](#)

**Action 372:** Continue to systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of the Springboard initiative to further strengthen the contribution of the programme to supporting job creation and retention, reducing unemployment and meeting the skills needs of emerging industries.

**Q3 Measure:** Analyse findings and outcomes from Springboard 2015. (HEA)

**Update:** Complete

The evaluation framework for Springboard provides for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of outputs.

**Action 373:** The Post Graduate Programme of Professional Practice programme, currently in pilot phase, will be evaluated.

**Q3 Measure:** Commence an evaluation of the pilot phase of the PGPP programme. (HEA, HEIs, DSP, American Chamber of Commerce, employers)

**Update:** Complete

The evaluation of the pilot phase of the Post Graduate Programme of Professional Practice programme is complete and will feed into the development of the National Skills Strategy.

**Action 377:** Facilitate, in conjunction with industry stakeholders and statutory agencies, the transition of voluntary Construction Industry Register Ireland to a statutory register by end 2015.

**Q3 Measure:** Publish Draft Bill on registration of Builders/Contractors (DECLG)

**Update:** Delayed

Draft heads of a Building Control Bill to place the Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) on a statutory footing are under preparation and will be finalized by Q4 2015. The timing of a Memorandum for Government on this matter will be kept under review in the context of the management of the delivery of the Department's extensive legislative programme. CIRI continues to be available to industry operators and consumers on a voluntary basis.

**Action 381:** Execute a joint review of the Science Foundation Ireland /Enterprise Ireland commercialisation programme to establish the programme’s impact on the creation of spinout companies and licensing opportunities.

**Q3 Measure:** As per headline action. (DJEI)

**Update:** Complete

A joint review of the Science Foundation Ireland/Enterprise Ireland commercialisation programme is being executed to establish the programme’s impact on the creation of spin-out companies and licensing opportunities. The aim of this review is to evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Technology Innovation Development Award (TIDA) programme and to invite strong, independent recommendations for improving the programme.

A Request for Tender (RFT) to conduct an evaluation of the TIDA programme and the funding awarded under this programme during the years 2009-2014 inclusive was published in June 2015 with the response for tender in July 2015. All eligible tenders were assessed by a panel of reviewers. A company was chosen to execute the review after a panel review meeting. This review is currently ongoing with results expected in November 2015.

**Action 382:** Develop a strategy to improve the performance of Irish business in relation to securing contracts with International Financial Institutions.

**Q3 Measure:** Complete Report. (EI, Public Sector Group)

**Update:** Complete

The Action Plan for Jobs sets out a number of evaluations and reviews to be undertaken in 2015, the results of which will help inform future policy development. One area of interest in this context is the performance of Irish business in relation to securing contracts with International Financial Institutions. Successful firms will benefit from the opportunity afforded by these contracts which can serve as reference points for competing in overseas markets, in addition they will serve to raise awareness of the capabilities within innovative Irish firms to deliver at international level.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Finance and private sector representatives having agreed “terms of reference” for a research report into the International Financial Institutions will now seek to appoint an appropriate consultant to carry out the Research report. Delivery of the report is expected within three months of the consultant’s appointment.