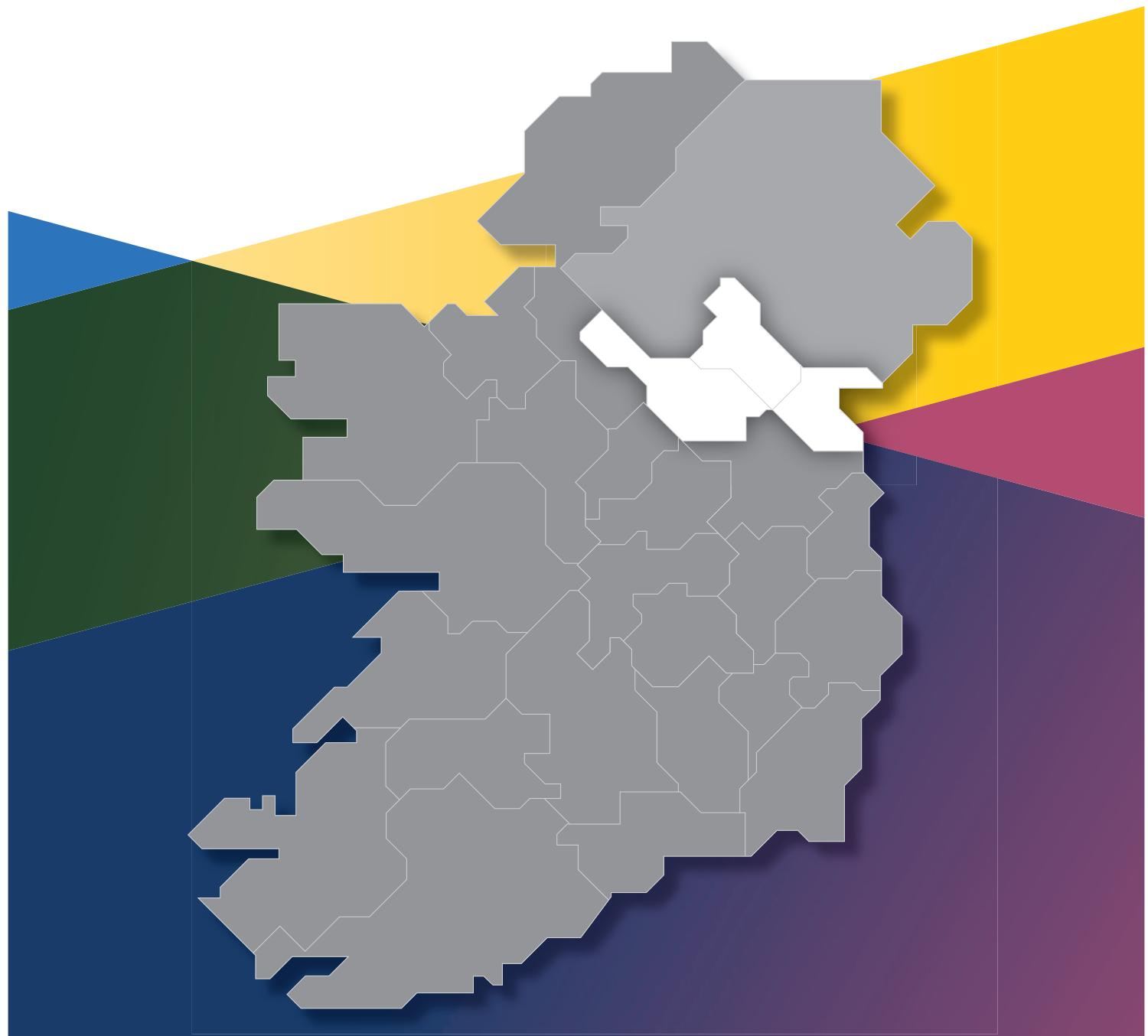




Ríaltas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

NORTH-EAST

Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 – First Progress Report



An initiative of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

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1. Introduction

The North-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 is one of nine regional enterprise plans launched in early 2019 by the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation. The Plan was developed by regional stakeholders, and as a ‘bottom-up’ initiative, it complements national level enterprise policies and programmes. The Plan is a ‘live’ agenda that allows new initiatives to be considered in addition to the strategic focus it currently contains.

The principle underpinning the Regional Enterprise Plans is collaboration between regional stakeholders on initiatives that can help to realise each region’s enterprise development potential, adding value to the core activities being delivered by the enterprise agencies, LEOs and other bodies in the region.

Implementation of the Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 for the North-East is being delivered by the North-East Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee, which is chaired by Richard Hanlon, EMEA Managing Director, Aon Cyber Solutions. Ronan Dennedy who acted as an interim Programme Manager, appointed jointly by the three Local Authorities in the North-East, has provided project management support to the initiative. The North-East Steering Committee has met on three occasions during 2019, and as part of the implementation process has formed smaller Working Groups to drive delivery of actions or groups of actions.

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has oversight of the nine Plans nationally, and in September 2019 facilitated collective engagement between the Chairs of the Steering Committees with the Minister. This meeting provided an opportunity for updating on progress, sharing good practice, and identifying areas for potential inter-regional cooperation.

Climate Action Plan 2019 has tasked each of the Regional Steering Committees with considering ‘Just Transition’ as part of their ongoing agenda. On 7th November 2019, Just Transition was included as an Agenda item for the first time by the North-East Steering Committee and this facilitated a discussion on the topic and identified actions to be developed.

The North-East Regional Enterprise Plan is focused around five Strategic Objectives to positively influence enterprise and job creation in the region. The North-East Plan is looking to leverage the full extent of talent in the region, implement a holistic approach to workforce development, strengthen SME resilience, drive a higher level of economic success in the region by building on niche strengths and strengthen the attractiveness of the region as a tourism destination.

This Year 1 Progress Report details of the progress that has been made to date on the North-East Plan. It also reports on the outcomes from the Enterprise Agencies and LEOs’ core activities in the region during the year. Of particular significance for the region in 2019 is that in excess of €4 million has been secured for the North-East under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) (detailed in Appendix 1).

Finally, overall employment creation and levels of unemployment continue on a positive track in the North-East. Since the first Regional Action Plan for Jobs was introduced in Q1 2015, 14,400 more people are in employment in the Border region and the region currently has an unemployment rate of 3.9 percent, down from 8.6 percent in Q1 2015.

2. Enterprise Agencies and LEO activities in the North-East in 2019

In order to achieve the 2020 employment targets and maintain strong regional enterprise and job creation performance, the Strategic Objectives and collaborative actions identified for the North-East region in the Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 are complemented by the ongoing core activities of the Enterprise Agencies (IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland) and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs).

Representatives of the Enterprise Agencies and three LEOs are active members on the REP Steering Committee in the North-East and will continue to work with regional stakeholders on key regional enterprise ecosystem strengthening initiatives in the region in 2020.

The Enterprise Agencies each have corporate strategies which include national level objectives as well as frameworks for bespoke regional activities that support regional enterprise investment and development potential and leverage regional assets and opportunities.

IDA Ireland is currently completing work on its new five-year strategy which will focus on attracting foreign direct investment across all regions. Enterprise Ireland launched its regional plan 'Powering the Regions' in 2019, and in 2020, will commence the preparation of a new corporate strategy, the successor to 'Build Scale and Expand Reach 2017-2020'.

Over the course of 2019, the enterprise agencies and the LEOs have achieved impact in a number of areas as they continue to roll out their core activities across all of the regions. The following summarises some key results and developments during the year.

Enterprise Ireland Activities

During 2019, Enterprise Ireland published a new plan 'Powering the Regions' to accelerate growth throughout Ireland's regions. The plan is built on four key pillars, each of which support the nine Regional Enterprise Plans.

4 Key Pillars

1. Maximising growth of Enterprise Ireland clients in the regions
2. Strengthening regional infrastructure to maximise future growth of Irish enterprise in the regions
3. Support entrepreneurship in all regions
4. Work in collaboration to deliver regional growth

In 2019 16,971 new jobs were created by clients of Enterprise Ireland in all regions with 66% of this growth delivered outside of Dublin. Enterprise Ireland clients employed a record high of 221,895 during the year.

€24m was invested in 127 startups with 42% of these located outside Dublin.

During 2019, Enterprise Ireland ran a third competition for projects under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund. Minister Humphreys announced in January 2020 that under the fund 26 projects across every region were approved funding of over €40m and these will make an important contribution to the delivery of the Regional Enterprise Plans. This builds upon nearly €60m already approved under the Fund.

In December 2019, Ministers Humphreys and McHugh announced €4.6m in government funding under the Enterprise Ireland Regional Technology Clustering Fund to establish 12 technology clusters in partnership with the Institutes of Technology across the country.

In 2019, the Local Enterprise Offices also worked successfully with their clients to assist 162 companies transfer to Enterprise Ireland to help them scale.

In 2019, 18,045 people were employed in 338 Enterprise Ireland supported companies in the North-East, up 3% from 2018.

Recent EI announcements include:

- EMCA – 42 jobs in Cavan
- XOCLEAN – 60 jobs in Louth
- Mullan Lighting – 30 jobs in Monaghan
- Newbase – 60 jobs in Monaghan

LEO Activities

In 2019, the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) continued to be the 'first stop shop' providing entrepreneurs with advice, guidance, financial assistance and other supports available to assist with starting or growing their own businesses, with 31 offices spread throughout the country the LEOs are truly operating at the coalface of job creation and regional development in Ireland, providing a 'signposting' service for all the relevant supports available through the state.

The LEOs offer grant aid to businesses employing less than 10 people in manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors which have the potential to develop into strong export entities. They approved 291 priming grants to new start-ups, 80% of the approvals were to companies regionally.

To assist in their remit of developing regional employment, the LEOs also offer 'soft' supports by way of training (85%) mentoring (75%) and targeted programmes such as LEAN for micro (90%)*. Participation in these has been successfully targeted by the LEO teams in each of the regions.

In particular, the LEO's have awarded €2.5m in funding to 16 successful applicants through the LEO Competitive Fund, applications were open to individual LEOs; collaborative projects between two or more LEOs; and LEOs working with other local groups like Chambers, Community Enterprise Centres, Education or training bodies, Local Authorities or colleges. All projects are aligned with the strategic objectives in the Regional Enterprise Plans and the ambitions in Future Jobs Ireland.

The LEOs supported 38,535 jobs across 7,400 client companies in 2019 of which there was an additional 148 companies outside of the Dublin region. 3,149 net jobs were created during the year and 78% of these were produced outside of the Dublin region with an even distribution across the regions. This is the 6th year of continuous employment growth for the LEOs since their inception in 2014. LEOs saw increases across all supports in 2019 including training, mentoring and funding. The number of those trained in 2019 was up 6.4% last year with 37,306 availing of training through their Local Enterprise Office. There was also an 10.5% increase in mentoring assignments completed, with 10,756 clients benefitting from LEO mentoring.

Over €20million was invested in LEO clients and start-ups last year, up from €18.2million in 2018.

There were an additional 296 net jobs created in the North-East in LEO supported companies in 2019.

*Shows the regional percentage of the overall excluding Dublin.

IDA Activities

IDA Ireland is the State's inward investment promotion agency. The mission of the agency is to partner with multi-national companies to win and develop foreign direct investment, providing jobs for the economic and social benefit of Ireland. Regional development is a key pillar of IDA's strategy.

Supporting the execution of the Regional Enterprise Plans across the country through our Regional Manager network and through working with strategic FDI stakeholders, has helped support and drive collaborative Regional enterprise objectives.

IDA Ireland concluded strategy, 'Winning: Foreign Direct Investment' 2015-2019 in December 2019. The Strategy set out ambitious targets to support the delivery of its mission to win and develop Foreign Direct Investment in Ireland. These targets included a focus on;

- Winning 900 new investments for Ireland
- Supporting clients in creating 80,000 new jobs
- Growing market share and helping maximise the impact of FDI investments
- Driving greater balanced Regional Development

For the first time, ambitious investment targets were set for each region. IDA targeted a minimum 30% to 40% increase in the number of investments for each Region outside Dublin.

Following the conclusion of 'Winning: 2015 - 2019, the key highlights and impact for Regional Development in Ireland are as follows;

- 516 investments overall were won across Regions over the past five years
- 50% uplift in investments for Regions recorded over the course of the five-year strategy
- Every Region delivered the five-year Strategy target of a 30-40% uplift in investments on previous Strategy
- 54,868 jobs were created outside of Dublin over the past five years
- 33,118 additional direct jobs (net) on the ground in Regions
- 57% of total FDI employment is now located in Regional locations

To deliver on these ambitious targets IDA Ireland has;

- Worked with public bodies and the private sector on regional action plans
- Worked with existing clients to retain and strengthen their presence in each region
- Increased Global Business Services and High-Tech Manufacturing investments
- Aligned IDA business sectors with regional strengths to develop sectoral ecosystems
- Worked more closely with EI and its client companies to identify synergies, enhance clusters, participate in site visits and maximise benefits for the region through the Global Sourcing Program
- Delivered property solutions in designated regional locations
- Increased IDA Ireland's regional footprint to adequately support the regional strategy

In addition to direct employment and skills transfer, IDA Ireland's client companies have a hugely positive effect on the local economy with over eight jobs being created for every 10 jobs in an FDI company. 50% of the €5.7bn in annual capital expenditure by IDA client companies occurs outside of Dublin. These investments have been won despite the demographical challenges that exist and international trends of greater urbanisation.

IDA Ireland is committed to playing its part in the economic development of Ireland's regions. However, winning investments is a challenge and will require a continued collaborative effort by all national and regional stakeholders.

Regional locations must continuously demonstrate the capability to deliver on a number of exacting criteria which generally inform the location decisions of multinationals.

An assessment of investments delivered for regions since 2015, would confirm the strategic importance of the following key criteria in actually influencing the investment decision;

- Critical mass in population
- The ability to attract and develop appropriate skills
- The presence of Third Level Institutes
- The existence of clusters of companies in specific industry sectors
- Regional Infrastructure
- Regional Place Making Strategies
- Availability of high spec standard manufacturing and commercial office properties

To support the delivery of IDA's current strategy and the attraction of investments into different parts of the country, a €150m property investment plan was announced in 2015. IDA Ireland's approach of developing strategic sites and developing advanced buildings has proven to be hugely successful. In 2019, IDA Ireland continued its building programme with the design and construction underway of advance buildings in Sligo, Dundalk, Athlone, Waterford, Galway, Monaghan and Limerick.

IDA Ireland is currently completing work on a new five-year strategy. This strategy will take account of the changing nature of work and the impact of technology on specific sectors. Profound changes are occurring in the world of work and this is already reflected in the jobs being created by the IDA Ireland client base. We can see an increasing complexity in the roles being created, technology skills becoming ubiquitous across roles, increasing demand for business professionals and a fall in the number of low-skilled jobs including back office support and basic manufacturing. This transition is likely to impact the nature and type of roles across the regions of Ireland.

Building on the success achieved to date, IDA will continue to collaborate with all stakeholders and parties in the regions to realise the economic potential and ambition of Ireland's regions under the Regional Enterprise Plans to 2020.

In 2019, the North-East had 44 IDA supported companies employing 5,899 people. Combined with North-West, the Border region is up 8.5% from 2018.

Recent IDA announcements include:

- Liberty Insurance – 120 jobs in Cavan over three years
- PublicRelay – 20 jobs in Cavan
- WuXi – 200 jobs in Louth

3. North-East Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 – Progress Report

NORTH-EAST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

Leverage the full extent of talent residing in the North-East to drive new enterprise investment and growth.



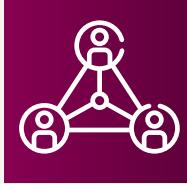
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

Implement a holistic approach to workforce development in the North-East region, matching workers' skills to needs in the region's enterprises and further developing the knowledge, skills and competencies of those currently in the workplace.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

Strengthen SMEs' resilience in the North-East so as to achieve development and growth in the face of external challenges.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

Drive a higher level of economic success in the North-East by building on niche strengths and fostering clustering among enterprises.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

Strengthen the attractiveness of the North-East as a destination to visit.

2019 Highlights



Under the third call of the €40 million Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) three projects from the North-East region were awarded funding of over €4.5m.



A demographic and skills profile of the greater Louth catchment (around Dundalk and Drogheda) has been completed. The results have been developed and published for marketing purposes.



The Business Studies Department of DkIT with a specific focus group of industry leaders in the region have developed and validated a new part time Level 6 Certificate in Management Fundamentals and an MSc in Leadership that directly addressed needs of regional industry.



A policy framework for employee development opportunities has been launched in 2019 that provides specific funding models with the ETBs called “Skills to Advance”.



Puca an international ‘Halloween’ Festival was launched with a base in Drogheda Co. Louth. It achieved a target of over 20,000 visitors and engaged with 191 businesses as part of the delivery of the festival.



The Connected Health, Wellbeing Innovation & Learning Hub in DkIT received funding of over €3.75 million under Call 3 of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund and over €0.28 million from the Regional Technology Clustering Fund.

Detailed Action Updates

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

1

Leverage the full extent of talent residing in the North-East to drive new enterprise investment and growth.



Action 1:

Using the methodology from the Louth County Council AIRO study on commuting, along with the Dundalk IT catchment study, extend and expand the study to cover the whole of the North-East region.

Working Group Members:

Local Authorities, DkIT, IDA Ireland

Timeframe for delivery:

Q2 2020

Status:

Work commenced and continuing in 2020.

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

To use the methodology from the Louth AIRO study on commuting patterns and the Dundalk IT catchment study to expand this study to cover the entire North-East region. The study will be started by Q2 2019 and completed with the findings published by end of Q2 2020.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

This action is progressing well and is on schedule to be completed in 2020. The demographic studies completed in 2019 identified workforce, skills and commute patterns in the North-East region, as well as the strong flow of daily commuters to work outside the region.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Taking each of their demographic study findings, the three Local Authorities and their LEOs, alongside DkIT, will collaborate on a regional study. The results will be published and used for marketing purposes by the Local Authorities, DkIT, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and the private sector including Chambers of Commerce and location consultants. There are numerous target groups – inward investors, State agencies, regional businesses, second site prospects and the commuter population.

Action 2:

IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland will use the results of the regional study as part of their marketing and promotional material for both domestic and foreign investment.

Working Group Members:

IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland

Timeframe for delivery:
Q2 2020
Status:
Work to continue in 2020
What were the milestone(s) for 2019?
IDA and Enterprise using the results from the regional study to market and promote the region.
What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?
IDA Ireland continues to market and position the North-East to potential investors from across the globe, particularly in the areas of Manufacturing and Global Business Services and it is utilising the available demographic studies in its engagement with prospective investors.
What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?
IDA Ireland will be promoting the region as a location for second site solutions, high value manufacturing, fintech and remote working. IDA will continue to work closely with Enterprise Ireland and its indigenous base of companies to identify synergies, enhance clusters, participate in site visits and maximise benefits for the region.
IDA Ireland will use the results of the study compiled as part of the marketing and promotional material to attract further foreign investment.
Action 3:
Strengthen the value proposition of the North-East for new enterprise investment by examining the potential of greenfield/brownfield sites in the region that can be made client ready in order to secure a second-site win.
Working Group Members:
IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Local Authorities
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Status:
Work started in 2019 and is continuing in 2020
What were the milestone(s) for 2019?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery in Q4 2019 of a c. 34,000 sq/ft office building in Dundalk• Obtain planning permission and commence the construction of a c.15,000 sq/ft technology building in Monaghan• Apply for planning permission for a c. 34,000 sq/ft technology building in Dundalk.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

- IDA Ireland has worked with stakeholders including Local Authorities, the three Local Enterprise Offices, commercial property owners and property agents to influence the requirements for regional property solutions for marketing purposes. Specifically, IDA Ireland has completed the delivery of:
 - » The opening of Cavan Digital Hub in June 2019 which marked a significant achievement for County Cavan, as the provision of high-quality enterprise space, supporting digitally focused companies, led to the first US Media analytics firm to locate a second site outside of Dublin and in the North-East Region.
 - » Public Relay chose Cavan Digital Hub as their preferred second site location, highlighting the strategic importance of investing in appropriate infrastructure to support FDI and indigenous company expansions within our Region.
- Completed the delivery in Q4 2019 of a c. 34,000 sq/ft office building in Dundalk.
- Construction of a c.15,000 sq/ft technology building commenced in Monaghan.
- Planning permission obtained for a c. 34,000 sq/ft technology building in Dundalk.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

IDA will continue to proactively engage with various stakeholders including various development/construction firms and international investors to influence on the requirements for regional property solutions for marketing to future investment opportunities and outlining the success of IDA and others in successfully marketing regional commercial properties of scale in recent years and will continue to progress the review of locations and available commercial property with a focus on the region and will continue to invest in and market its business and technology parks and strategic greenfield sites in the region.

Action 4:

Consider opportunities to better position the North-East to enhance attractiveness of the region in which to live and work.

Working Group Members:

Local Authorities, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland.

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2019

Status:

Delayed and will carry over to 2020.

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Action Plan to be drawn up and in place to deliver.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Work on this Action was delayed and is planned to begin in 2020

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

- Key to promoting the North-East as an attractive place to live and work is positioning and strengthening the Region as a knowledge-based economy, to retain and attract talented people. In this regard the Committee must support DkIT in its efforts to seek Technological University status.
- The success of this action is also contingent upon the North-East region being positioned positively from a cost of living, quality of life, tourism and economic perspective. While each county promotes its merits individually, cohesive messaging is needed to unify the Region. This action, within Strategic Objective 1, will greatly benefit from the appointment of a Programme Manager, who can work to co-ordinate the placemaking messages from the three counties of Cavan, Monaghan and Louth.
- Continue to work with successful REDF projects to enhance the economic infrastructure and job creation opportunities of the Region. The appointment of a Programme Manager will help to enhance collaboration and strengthen future REDF projects from the region.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

2

Implement a holistic approach to workforce development in the North-East region, matching workers' skills to needs in the region's enterprises and further developing the knowledge, skills and competencies of those currently in the workplace.



Action 1:

As part of the Skills for Growth initiative the Regional Skills Forum (RSF) will assist local enterprises in the North-East Identify their skills needs through a variety of audit tools to ensure that the Region has the effective use of skills to support economic and social prosperity. Once skill needs have been identified, Regional Skills Fora will link companies with the education and training providers best suited to responding to identified skills needs.

Working Group Members:

Regional Skills Forum, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Education and Training Board, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2019

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Continue to engage with Industry to identify skills needs, difficult to fill vacancies and up-skilling of existing staff. Reporting these skill needs at regional level through the North-East Regional Skill Forum and at national level to inform regional gaps and future course provision. Signposting course provision to Employers and liaison with local training and education providers to provide solutions.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Since commencing the role in August 2019, the Regional Skills Forum Manager has met over 20 companies, audited same and attended many events and industry seminars and fairs. The Regional Skills Forum Manager continues to engage with Enterprise Ireland companies through the Spotlight on Skills process.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

- Help employers connect with the range of services and supports available across the education and training system.
- Provision of more robust labour market information and analysis of employer needs to inform programme development.
- Greater collaboration and utilisation of resources across the education and training system and enhancement of progression routes for learners.
- Establish a structure for employers to become more involved in promoting employment roles and opportunities for career progression in their sectors.
- Establish and manage a strong network of working relationships between the stakeholders in the region with particular focus on liaison between enterprise and educational and training stakeholders (Further Education and Higher Education) in advancing the objectives of the Skills Forum.

Action 2:

Double the number of participants on the EXPLORE Programme over the 2018 figure. The EXPLORE programme is designed to address the need for enhanced digital skills among older workers in manufacturing sectors within the Region.

Working Group Members:

Regional Skills Forum and Education and Training Board.

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2019

Status:

Work commenced and completed in 2019

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Double the number of participants on the EXPLORE programme over the 2018 figure. The EXPLORE programme is designed to address the need for enhanced digital skills among older workers in manufacturing sectors within the region.

The target for EXPLORE Programme was to commence an EXPLORE training programme in the North-East, to have completed the programme and funding submission by November 2019.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

All the above targets were met.

EXPLORE programme was completed with 14 participants from Combilift and Callaghan Electrical.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Waiting on direction to see if the EXPLORE programme will be mainstreamed or remain under the auspices of the Regionals Skills Forum Manager in 2020.

Action 3:

Support education and training providers preparing applications under Springboard +2019 in collaboration with local enterprise in order to increase provision of programmes for up-skilling and re-skilling within the Region.

Working Group Members:

Regional Skills Forum, Higher Education Institutes

Timeframe for delivery:

Q2 2019

Status:

Work commenced and completed in 2019

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Prepare applications under Springboard+ 2019 to increase provision or programmes for up-skilling and re-skilling in the North-East.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Springboard+ course provision offered through DkIT increased and offered a diverse range of programmes for employers, employees and individuals as identified below:

January 2019

Course Title	Level	Credits	Duration
Certificate in Digital Marketing and Digital Media Management	7	30	1 Year
Certificate in Data Analytics for Business	7	10	1 Semester
Certificate in Applied Electrical Engineering	6	30	1 Year
Certificate in Sound Design and Implementation for Interactive Media	7	40	1 Year
Higher Diploma in 3D Digital Animation	8	60	2 Years

September 2019

Course Title	Level	Credits	Duration
Certificate in Digital Marketing and Digital Media Management	7	30	1 Year
Certificate in Fundamentals in Food Production Management	6	30	1 Year
Higher Diploma in Data Analytics	8	60	2 Years

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Continuation of Springboard+ programme provision through DkIT and addition of new programmes that are required/identified within the North-East region for levels ranging from 6 to 8 on the NFQ.

Action 4:

Establish good working relationships with the above Training and Education providers. Support all actions in the Regional Enterprise Plan where linkages to Education and Training Providers are required.

Working Group Members:

Regional Skills Forum

Timeframe for delivery: 2020

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Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Support all actions in the Regional Enterprise Plans actions where linkages to education and training providers are required.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

The Regional Skills Forum Manager engaged with numerous meetings with education and training providers across the region, namely Louth Meath Education and Training Board, Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Regional Skills and Training Centre, Drogheda Institute of Further Education, M1 Skillnet and Dundalk Chamber Skillnet.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Continue to work with all education and training providers to progress the actions of the Regional Enterprise Plan 2020 and the work of the North-East Regional Skills Forum.

Identify employers' skills needs and work with the most relevant training and education providers to provide solutions.

To catch up and meet remaining Heads of Schools and Departments in the Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Action 5:

Communicate to employers the services available through the Regional Skills Forum services to assist with resolution of emerging skills needs.

Working Group Members:

Regional Skills Forum

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Communicate to employers the services available through the Regional Skills Forum to assist with resolution of emerging skills needs.

Increase awareness and engagement with employers.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019

- The Regional Skills Forum Manager has met with over 80 companies to date in 2019.
- Use of social media tools such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Website now very active and continues to spread awareness of the Regional Skills Forum and various supports available to employers.
- Regional Skills Forum has engaged with companies referred by Enterprise Ireland.
- Regional Skills Forum has attended various employer related events, fairs and seminars.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

- Continue to promote the work of the North-East Regional Skills Forum and the Regional Enterprise Plan 2020.
- Continue to engage with industry to ascertain their skills needs and identify solutions and/or supports for these skills.
- Work with Enterprise Ireland to increase the referral rate of Enterprise Ireland companies through the Spotlight on Skills referral process.

Action 6:

Support the Regional Skills Forum in establishing formal engagement between Dundalk IT, the Education and Training Boards and specific industries (precision engineering, fintech, and bioeconomy) in the Region and developing apprenticeships, with particular regard to planning for new and emerging skills sets over the longer term.

Working Group Members:

DkIT, Education and Training Board

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

- Resource allocation in DkIT School of Business and Humanities to facilitate part-time course development
- Roll out of the DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme
- Include this action at Regional Skills Forum steering committee meetings
- Leverage Springboard + funding

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

- DkIT in its School of Business and Humanities have invested in and appointed a dedicated Head of Section of part-time and bespoke training whose role is to support the development of industry-facing programmes.
- As part of its Corporate Partnership Programme (CPP) DkIT have signed MoUs with a number of progressive companies that included exploration of upskilling for ABP Food Group and linked food sector companies with two part-time courses developed including a Certificate in Health and Safety (Manufacturing Industry) and Certificate in Fundamentals of Food Production, an MoU with STATSports that led to an updating of course module content to include utilization of best in class technology, an MoU with Creative Spark that led to a Certificate in Digital Design and Fabrication developed under the Springboard + initiative.
- DkIT with a specific focus group of industry leaders in the region and the Department of Business Studies have developed and validated a new part-time Level 6 Certificate in Management Fundamentals and an MSc in Leadership that directly addresses the needs of regional industry upskilling requirements and will be offered to industry through the DkIT Lifelong Learning Centre.
- There was a vacancy in the role of Regional Skills Forum Manager for the North-East region and this position was filled in August 2019.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

- Roll out of course provision for specific DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme
- Develop additional DkIT Corporate Partnership Programme memberships to include clusters/networks e.g. M1PC, North-East Focused Engineering Network.
- Leverage Regional Skills Forum Steering committee
- Leverage Human Capital Initiative funding, Springboard + funding and Skills to Advance funding for industry upskilling

Action 7:

The education and training providers in the Region, including the Education and Training Boards and Dundalk Institute of Technology, will explore development of a model where collaborative opportunities are initiated to address skills gaps with both short-term pre-employment and existing employee upskilling training interventions.

Working Group Members:

DkIT, Education and Training Board.

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2019

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Identify models with Education and Training Board and Higher Education Institutes for industry upskilling and funding

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Two models are being leveraged:

1. There is a recently launched new policy framework for employee development opportunities that provides specific funding models with the Education and Training Boards called Skills to Advance http://www.solas.ie/SkillsToAdvance/Documents/SupportingWorkingLives_EnterpriseGrowth_PolicyFramework_Sept2018.pdf

In summary the Education and Training Boards will provide three access routes to all levels of Further Education and Training provision for employees and employers, as follows:

Route 1: Direct employee access – where employees can access further education and training in Education and Training Boards directly by enrolling for relevant development options

Route 2: Access via enterprise engagement – where employees access further education and training through their employer partnering with an Education and Training Board.

Route 3: Regional initiatives – where employees participate in further education and training as a result of a particular identified regional skills development initiative.

2. Secondly, the Springboard+ multi annual funding call for industry focused programmes has now been opened-up to learners, irrespective of their employment status (it was previously focused on the unemployed) giving substantially subsidised training and upskilling options for employers. Following intensive consultation with industry, DkIT have developed Springboard+ funded upskilling courses for industry including Data Analytics, Digital Marketing, Applied Electrical Engineering and food entrepreneurship through the Springboard + 2018/19 programme and in the 2019/20 programme addition courses have been developed such as Robotics, Digital Design and Fabrication (in conjunction with Creative Spark Enterprise Centre, Augmented and Virtual Reality, Distributed Ledger Technology (Blockchain) and Food Production Management. Those courses that were on the 2018/19 Springboard+ funding but have not received 2019/20 funding will be offered through the DkIT part-time provision on an unsubsidised basis.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Continue to leverage funding models Skills to Advance and Springboard + for upskilling industry.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE**3**

Strengthen SMEs' resilience in the North-East so as to achieve development and growth in the face of external challenges.

**Action 1:**

Deliver a new PLATO programme across the North-East region which will support SMEs through mentoring and networking.

Working Group Members:

Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland.

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2019

Status:

Work started in 2019 and is continuing in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Set up PLATO Programme in the North-East.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

The PLATO Programme was established as planned and a manager was appointed.

Four business clusters have been formed in Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Cavan. An additional two clusters have been formed in Northern Ireland – one in the Newry and Mourne/Down area and the other in the Armagh Council region.

Parent companies have been recruited.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Support the PLATO Programme and its manager as the PLATO working model is applied and implemented across all counties involved.

Action 2:

Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Offices will encourage and support participation at national and international tradeshows.

Working Group Members:

Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices.

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and is continuing in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

- Promote awareness of European market potential to micro enterprises and SMEs.
- Approvals of Technical Assistance for Micro Exporters Grant (TAME) supported by the Local Enterprise Offices.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

27 TAME applications were approved by the Local Enterprise Offices to support small businesses to explore and develop new export market opportunities, including attendance at national and international trade shows. A Border Local Enterprise Office regional event “Breaking Into New Markets” took place on July 4th 2019 to promote and create awareness of potential business opportunities in the German market. This event was also supported by the European Enterprise Network.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

The Local Enterprise Offices will continue to promote awareness of all supports available to small businesses to look to international markets. One of the key supports is the TAME financial support instrument, promoted by the Local Enterprise Offices, which will be available in 2020 to encourage and assist small businesses to explore the potential of growing their market share internationally.

Action 3:

Increase the number of agri-food companies that are supported by the LEAN Six Sigma Green Belt programmes at DkIT.

Working Group Members:

Local Enterprise Offices, DkIT

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and is continuing in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

DkIT and Local Enterprise Offices in Cavan, Louth Monaghan to devise a collaborative model aimed at regionally based agri-food companies.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

- DkIT Regional Development Centre and Lifelong Learning Centre met with Louth, Monaghan and Cavan Local Enterprise Offices. It was agreed that Louth, Monaghan and Cavan Local Enterprise Offices will engage with DkIT to address this action. Options discussed were to run a specific course where all three Local Enterprise Offices placed companies on the course up to a maximum 12 participants or alternatively for logistics reasons Louth Local Enterprise Office take a number of places on the DkIT hosted course and Local Enterprise Offices in Cavan and Monaghan take a number of places on the course hosted in the Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre.
- DkIT shared case study material and course promo material.
- In 2019 DkIT ran one dedicated Lean programme in Lakeland Dairies, and two public Lean Programme in Cavan Innovation and Technology Centre.
- The three Local Enterprise Offices engaged with a number of clients who completed the Enterprise Ireland Lean for Micro programme on a one-to-one basis.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain

The focus for 2020 is on further roll-out of the Enterprise Ireland LEAN for Micro on a collaborative basis between the LEOs and DkIT.

Action 4:

Develop Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) driven volunteer mentor programme.

Working Group Members:

Local Enterprise Offices and Enterprise Ireland

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

- Select, approach and secure a large company, in the North-East, to act in a mentor capacity to Local Enterprise Office clients from Cavan, Monaghan and Louth

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

- Following a lengthy engagement process with a multinational company regarding the initiative, the company, in the end, was not able to facilitate.
- The initiative was put on hold to be revisited in Q4 2019.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

- Re-engage with Enterprise Ireland Mentor Programme team.
- Re-connect with Heads of the Local Enterprise Offices in Cavan, Monaghan and Louth.
- Target and recruit a large company, in the North-East, to fulfil the mentor role.
- Select Local Enterprise Office clients (from Cavan, Monaghan and Louth) to participate on the programme.
- Commence first company engagement meetings on CSR Mentor Programme

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

4

Drive a higher level of economic success in the North-East by building on niche strengths and fostering clustering among enterprises.



Action 1:

Support the establishment of the Focussed Engineering Network and engage with its stakeholders to boost this niche industry in the North-East.

Working Group Members:

Focussed Engineering Network DAC

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Establish an engineering network in the North-East

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

The Network has been established and the manager has been appointed.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Support the manager and the network as the task of defining the sector's needs is undertaken and an implementation plan is agreed by all stakeholders. The focus in 2020 will be to define the needs of the sector through the Network members and develop and implement an agreed plan of action for the Network.

Action 2:

Leverage the opportunities presented by the recent funding of the Bioconnect Innovation Centre to advance the bio-economy industry.

Working Group Members:

Bioconnect Innovation Centre CLG

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020.

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Appoint a manager to oversee the entire project.

Appoint architect team to plan the construction phase.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

BioConnect, a REDF Call 2 project, was launched in October 2019, which represents the first step toward positioning Co. Monaghan, and the North-East as a centre of excellence for biotechnology research in the agri-food sector and an opportunity to position the region on the national research map.

Consulting Engineers and Design appointed to plan the construction phase.

Recruitment process for appointment of CEO is ongoing.

BioEconomy Day held with a large attendance and companies who attended expressed interest in the project.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Appoint manager for the project and continue the design process.

Put project out to tender.

Begin construction by Q4 2020.

Action 3:

Explore the establishment of similar networks in financial services, payments and agri-food sectors to support the sharing of ideas and peer to peer learning within the region. Seek to extend and connect these networks with aligned activities outside of the Region and on a North-South basis.

Working Group Members:

Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, InterTrade Ireland.

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020.

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Working groups formed to drove this action.

Funding secured from InterTrade Ireland and other steering group partners to drive development of the M1 Payments Corridor.

M1 Payments Corridor Programme Manager in place.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

DkIT received €287,928 in funding from the Regional Technology Clustering Fund for the development of a Connected Health and Wellbeing Industry Cluster in the North-East, capitalising on internationally recognised research, innovation and business development strengths and expertise at DkIT.

A Steering Group has been established to drive the development of the M1 Payments Corridor (M1PC), an initiative to grow a cluster of fintech and payments businesses in the North-East along the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor. Louth County Council and Local Enterprise Office, InterTrade Ireland, The Mill Enterprise Hub are central to this initiative.

Other members of the M1 Payments Corridor Steering Group include academic partners DkIT, DCU, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland with a strong involvement from the private sector. The M1 Payments Corridor has an ambitious vision for the M1 region from Dublin to Belfast to become a significant hotbed of innovation capitalising on the widespread opportunities created within the new eCommerce payments landscape as it converges with wider fintech.

The steering group to drive this cluster was expanded to include partners from Northern Ireland, so that the full extent of the Dublin-Belfast corridor can be leveraged.

Programme Manager recruitment undertaken in Q4 2019.

The Agri-Food sector network has not progressed in 2019.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Programme Manager to be appointed to lead the M1 Payments Corridor initiative.

The Programme Manager will fulfil the primary leadership role in the M1PC, with responsibility for the development and delivery of a programme to build an active and collaborative cross border network of payment companies resulting in new start-ups and job creation.

Under the LEO Competitive Fund, the E-Commerce Cluster project was awarded €56,640 in funding and will bring online retailers together, to share experience, best practice, access online expertise and support members to develop and grow their online business domestically and internationally. This cluster will be established to help local businesses that have been trading online for at least the past 12 months get to the next level of online sales, increase turnover and profit with the objective of supporting and educating online retailers in the North-East.

The North-East Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee will initiate a working group to explore the establishment of a network of Agri-Food enterprises in the Region.

Action 4:

Develop more opportunities between Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland Global Sourcing events.

Working Group Members:

Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Local Enterprise Offices

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and is continuing in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

- Seek agreement from Enterprise Ireland to host a Global Sourcing event in the North-East Region in 2020

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Two Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) Meet the Buyer events were held in the North-East Region in 2019:

- EENGINEX Engineering Meet the Buyer and Matchmaking event, held in Monaghan.
- FOOD eir-EEN Meet the Buyer and Matchmaking Event, held in Drogheda.

(Enterprise Ireland co-ordinates the Enterprise Europe Network in Ireland in partnership with the Local Enterprise Offices and the Chambers in Dublin and Cork. The EEN helps Irish businesses innovate and grow internationally.)

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

- Work with successful REDF and Regional Technology Cluster Fund projects that help drive competitiveness, innovation and resilience among industry sectors in the Region.
- Agreement, in principle, has been secured to host an EI/IDA Global Sourcing event in the North-East Region in 2020

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

5

**Strengthen the attractiveness of the North-East
as a destination to visit.**



Action 1:

Support the areas of the Visitor Experience Development Plans that deliver on the Priority Development Projects identified through stakeholder collaboration and industry workshops in the North-East.

Working Group Members:

Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities, OPW

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Develop a Visitor Experience Development Plan (2020-2024) for the region incorporating Meath.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

- 64 Industry partners engaged in developing the Plan.
- Two destination wide industry workshops completed.
- Commitment to the Visitor Experience Development Plan has been secured from all Local Authorities and discussions are on-going with OPW on the final draft of Plan.
- 29 Projects/initiatives have been identified across four strategic Pillars.
- Environmental Assessments are continuing into 2020.

Louth and Monaghan

In 2018, Louth & Monaghan welcomed 1% of the 9,609 million overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending 1% of the €5,217bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland. Irish residents took 220,000 trips to Louth and Monaghan (2% of the 10,918 million domestic trips in 2018) spending €29mn (1% of domestic tourist spend).

The following businesses were offered:

- 3 Fáilte Ireland Workshops with 56 Business attending them
- 4 Inhouse Training workshops for 4 hotels
- 2 Business Mentoring interventions Through Brexit Supports for a Hotel and Attraction
- 15 key Account meetings and 7 Stakeholder meetings

Cavan

In 2018, Cavan welcomed 1% of the 9,609 million overseas tourists who came to Ireland, spending 1% of the €5,217bn overseas tourism expenditure in Ireland.

Irish residents took 222,000 trips to Cavan and Leitrim (2% of the 10,918 million domestic trips in 2018) spending €29mn (1% of domestic tourist spend).

The following businesses were offered:

- Seven Fáilte Ireland Workshops were delivered with 54 Business attending them.
- Two Business Mentoring interventions Through Brexit Supports for a Hotel and Attraction.
- 12 key account meetings and three stakeholder meetings took place.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain:

Louth

- Deliver a masterplan for Drogheda.
- Drogheda Destination Town activation.
- Boyne Valley Drive review.
- Develop 'Puca' as a festival of scale in Drogheda.
- Boyne access and navigation plan.
- Carlingford and Drogheda industry and experience clusters.
- Accommodation capacity study.
- Craft and food sector supports.

Monaghan

- Monaghan Destination Town Activation
- Carrickmacross Industry Experience Cluster
- MICE and Castle Leslie
- Patrick Kavanagh Centre Experience Development Plan
- Monaghan County Museum Commercial Development Plan
- Craft and Food Sector supports

Cavan

- Cavan Destination Town Activation
- Virginia/Oldcastle Industry Experience Cluster
- Cavan County Museum Commercial Development Plan
- Craft and Food Sector supports

Action 2:

Develop the ancient visitor experience for the area within the North-East (incorporating Meath and Louth) by identifying Ancient and Sacred sites that have the potential to increase the appeal of the destination and offer opportunities for employment growth.

Working Group Members:

Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities OPW

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

- Increase visitor numbers for ancient and sacred sites.
- Lengthen the tourist season for ancient and sacred sites.
- Increase employment in tourism associated with ancient and sacred sites.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

4 strategic Pillars were identified to assist in the development of the destination

These four pillars are:

- Unlocking the Historic Assets
- Reveal the Natural Landscape
- Introduce the Ancient Legends
- Develop the Industry Base

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

The overarching objective of the AVEDP is to sustainably increase the economic benefit of tourism to the area. Specific KPIs will be baselined and monitored throughout the lifecycle of the plan. The impact of the AVEDP will be measured through the monitoring of key metrics that examine the commercial development of tourism across the area.

The plan framework adopts the VICE model as a means of measuring success. The VICE Framework identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that serves them, the Community and culture that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the environment where it all takes place.

Action 3:

Identify and activate the Destination Town concept for the North-East ensuring visitor expectations are exceeded. Explore how the Hidden Heartlands can be leveraged in Cavan.

Working Group Members:

Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities, OPW

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and continues in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

The following towns were identified as destination towns by their respective Local Authorities in 2019.

- Louth – Drogheda
- Monaghan – Monaghan Town
- Cavan – Cavan Town

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Applications were made by all three Local Authorities to draw support from the Fáilte Ireland Destinations town fund in June 2019 – The fund specifically looked at boosting the attractiveness and tourism appeal of towns nationwide.

All 3 were successful in their bid and will draw up to €500k each – Announcements made December 2019

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Fáilte Ireland will support the activation of the Destination Town Plans by working with the Local Authority to deliver the following:

- Evening economy Plan
- Event strategy
- Develop ‘Puca’ as a major international attractor
- Deliver Drogheda a key location for ‘Puca’

Action 4:

Support the development of a major international festival for the region.

Working Group Members:

Fáilte Ireland, LA's, OPW

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 & continuing in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

- Delivery of All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil – Drogheda August 2019
- Delivery of International Halloween event ‘Puca’ – Drogheda Oct/Nov 2019

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Puca

- Achieved its target of 20,000 visitors in year 1
- €650,000 was invested in the event in year 1
- 191 businesses engaged as part of the festival delivery
- 15 International media attended the event
- Total reach was 418 million

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

- Develop 'Puca' as a major international attractor
- Deliver Drogheda a key location for 'Puca'
- All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil – Drogheda August 2019 attracted the largest numbers ever to an All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil - 700,000

Action 5:

Fáilte Ireland will work with the relevant Local Authorities to Identify and support capital investment for projects that enhance tourism infrastructure.

Working Group Members:

Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities, OPW

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Status:

Work started in 2019 and is continuing in 2020

What were the milestone(s) for 2019?

Identify capital investment/funding initiatives and support applications for projects to them that will enhance tourism infrastructure (from 2015) in the North-East.

What progress was made in reaching the milestone(s) in 2019?

Programmes were open from the following funding sources

- Fáilte Ireland Ireland's Ancient East small grant
- Fáilte Ireland development support
- Fáilte Ireland Ireland's Ancient East large grant
- Fáilte Ireland Destination Towns
- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)
- Town and Village renewal scheme.

The following applications were successful:

Ireland's Ancient East Small Grants

- Castle Saunderson – Cavan €60,175
- Louth Adventures – Louth €50,590
- Patrick Kavanagh Centre – Monaghan €198,600
- Glaslough Heritage Audio Trail – Monaghan €35,000

Fáilte Ireland Development Stage 1

- Story of Drogheda – Louth €40,000

Fáilte Ireland Strategic partnership (OPW)

- Carlingford Castle – Louth €400,000

RRDF and Town and Village Renewal scheme:

Go to page 34 for information on successful North-East projects under the RRDF and Town and Village Renewal scheme.

What will the Workplan for 2020 contain?

Continue to Identify capital investment/funding initiatives and support applications for projects to them that will enhance Tourism infrastructure.

Appendix 1: Regional Funding approved for the North-East supported by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation

Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF)

The Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) was launched in May 2017 with the overarching aim of driving enterprise development and job creation in each region throughout Ireland.

Administered by Enterprise Ireland, it supports new collaborative and innovative initiatives that can make a significant impact on enterprise development in the region/across regions, or nationally.

Over the three calls under the REDF, the North-East Region secured funding of just over €10.2 million across six projects:

REDF Call	Project	Location	Description	Grant amount
1	Monaghan County Enterprise Board	Monaghan	Food CoE & Food Product Development Supports	€202,800
1 Shared	Leitrim County Enterprise Fund	Leitrim/Cavan/Longford	3 Digital and innovation Hubs	€1,284,000
2	Focused Engineering Network DAC	Monaghan, Cavan, Louth	North-East Engineering Cluster	€250,000
2	Bioconnect Innovation Centre CLG	Monaghan, Cavan	Office, Lab and Biotechnology Research Capabilities	€4,976,880
3	DkIT Connect Designated Activity Company	Louth	A connected Health & Wellbeing Innovation & Learning Hub	€3,774,337
3	Monaghan County Enterprise Fund	Monaghan	Workspace to support SMEs	€577,960
3	Creative Spark CLG	Louth	Workspace and training facilities to start-ups and established enterprises	€500,000
				Call 1 Total €202,800
				Call 1 Total (incl shared) €1,486,800
				Call 2 Total €5,226,880
				Call 3 Total €4,852,297
				Total (incl shared) €11,815,977
				Grand Total €10,281,977

Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) successful Call announcement dates:
 REDF Call 1: 4th December 2017
 REDF Call 2: 3rd December 2018
 REDF Call 3: 8th January 2020

Regional Technology Clustering Fund

Under Project Ireland 2040 Government identified an ambition to build sectoral clusters of Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) at regional level. This ambition will be delivered through initiatives supporting the development of business-led clustering of competitive advantage.

As one of the Government initiatives in this area, a multi-annual fund for Regional Technology Clustering was announced in Budget 2019.

An initial €2.75 million budget will be administered by Enterprise Ireland on behalf of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation to support this initiative. This will be in the form of a competitive fund open to the Institutes of Technology (IoT) / Technological Universities (TU).

Applicant Name (Correct Legal Entity Name)	Stream	Project Summary	Fund awarded (€)
Dundalk IT	1	Development of a Connected Health & Wellbeing Industry Cluster in the North-East, capitalising on internationally recognised research, innovation and business development strengths and expertise at DkIT.	€287,928
Total			€287,928

Regional Technology Clustering Fund successful announcement date:
4th October 2019

Funding under LEO Competitive Fund

The LEO Competitive Fund is to encourage LEO projects aligned with the pillars of Future Jobs Strategy and the Regional-Enterprise-Plans. It supports LEOs to collaborate within the network and enterprise eco-system.

Project & Summary	Lead Local Enterprise Office	Partners collaborating in the project	Funding
The E-Commerce Cluster project will bring online retailers together, to share experience, best practice, access online expertise and support members to develop and grow their online business domestically and internationally. The cluster will be established to help local businesses that have been trading online for at least the past 12 months get to the next level of online sales, increase turnover and profit. Its objective is to support and educate online retailers in the region	Monaghan	N/A	€56,640
Total			€56,640

LEO Competitive Fund successful announcement date:
4th October 2019

Appendix 2: Other Funding approved for the North-East

Project Ireland 2040 Funds

In 2018, the Government launched Project Ireland 2040 and committed €4 billion in funding under the Rural regeneration and Development Fund, Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund and the Climate Action Fund.

The four funds are a major innovation in Project Ireland 2040 and rather than allocating funding in a 'business as usual' way to Government Departments, money was allocated competitively to the best projects, which leverage investment from other sources thereby ensuring that the impact of this investment goes further.

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)

As part of Project Ireland 2040, the Government has committed to providing an additional €1 billion for a new Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) over the period 2019 to 2027. Initial funding of €315 million is being allocated to the Fund on a phased basis over the period 2019 to 2022. The Fund will provide investment to support rural renewal for suitable projects in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. It will be administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The new Fund provides an unprecedented opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, to make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities, and to address depopulation in small rural towns, villages and rural areas. It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the National Planning Framework, and in particular to achieve Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities – one of the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF.

Call	Project	Location	Grant amount
RRDF Call 1	Cootehill Industrial Estate access	Cavan	€867,174
	Ardee Castle	Louth	€2,147,000
	Castleblayney Enterprise Centre	Monaghan	€2,138,560
	Ballyjamesduff Regeneration Strategy	Cavan	€90,000
	Cootehill Technology Park	Cavan	€56,000
	Ardee Regeneration	Louth	€526,744
	Carrickmacross Town Centre Renewal	Monaghan	€632,000
	Ballybay Regeneration	Monaghan	€410,400
	Clones Regeneration	Monaghan	€377,250
	The Clones Terminus	Monaghan	€325,000
			Call 1 Subtotal €7,245,129
RRDF Call 2	Virginia Civic Centre	Cavan	€3,963,525
	Castleblaney Market Square Regeneration	Monaghan	€2,611,150
			Call 2 Subtotal €6,574,675
			Call 1 & 2 Total €13,819,803

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) successful Call announcement dates:
 RRDF Call 1: 14th February 2019
 RRDF Call 2: 6th November 2019

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

The €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) is intended to drive regeneration and rejuvenation of strategic and under-utilised areas within Ireland's five cities, key regional drivers and other large towns. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) has responsibility for implementing the fund, which has €100m available for expenditure in 2019 and an overall allocation of €550 million allocated to the fund up to the end of 2022. The fund will operate on a competitive, bid-based Exchequer grant basis, with proposals being required to demonstrate that they will be:

- Innovative and transformational urban regeneration projects;
- Public-sector led and with the option of community and/or private sector partners;
- Matched by at least 25 percent direct funding from other public and/or private sources;
- A minimum bid of €2m;
- A catalyst for development that would not otherwise occur; and
- Likely to leverage significant further public and private sector investment

Call	Project	Location	Grant amount
URDF Cat A	Long Walk Quarter Dundalk	Louth	€533,000
Total			

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) successful Call announcement date: URDF Call: 26th November 2018

Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2019

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is an initiative under the Action Plan for Rural Development and is part of a package of national and local support measures to rejuvenate rural towns and villages throughout Ireland through the Government's Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration Programme. The Scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and administered by the Local Authorities.

Local Authorities will be required to advertise for expressions of interest from towns/villages in their area and can select up to 12 proposals for development into detailed applications to be submitted to the Department by the end of June. Selection of projects will be by means of a competitive process, with the final project selection being made by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Project & Summary	Town	County	Funding
Landscape and develop Ballyconnell Park.	Ballyconnell	Cavan	€33,440
Regenerate the Square in Ballyhaise by replacing footpaths, removing overhead cables, installing of decorative lighting	Ballyhaise	Cavan	€80,000
Install a bus shelter, public seating areas and flower boxes throughout the village.	Butlersbridge	Cavan	€26,457
Upgrade lighting, village green redevelopment, safety bollards.	Gowna	Cavan	€80,000
Revitalise Market Square in Killeshandra, through enhancements including new signage, new kerbing, planting, seating, lighting and painting.	Killeshandra	Cavan	€44,000
Install new footpaths on Barrack Road and Church Road, to erect a speed activated speed indicator sign and to paint the facade of 20 buildings.	Kilnaleck	Cavan	€85,917
Develop an outdoor recreational amenity between Mount St Joseph and Cabra View housing estates.	Kingscourt	Cavan	€95,140
Carry out a range of physical improvements in Mullagh from facade painting to the installation of new footpaths.	Mullagh	Cavan	€80,000
Develop a Geopark Outdoor Pursuits and Services Hub.	Swanlinbar	Cavan	€80,000
Cavan Total			€604,914
Installation of additional phase of footpaths and public lighting on the Rock Road.	Blackrock	Louth	€100,000
Upgrade of purpose-built Community Centre.	Darver	Louth	€38,000
Build footpath to link Greenore village and existing footpaths, with local deep-water port and Carlingford Ferry.	Greenore	Louth	€100,000
Provision of footpath from Termonfeckin village to Seapoint Beach.	Termonfeckin	Louth	€100,000
Louth Total			€338,000
Provide a safe pedestrian footpath between Drumakelly housing estate and the village of Annyalla.	Annyalla	Monaghan	€78,657
Extend existing public lighting, and enhancement of entrance to Ballybay Park.	Ballybay	Monaghan	€80,000
Develop of a Playground in Carrickroe village.	Carrickroe	Monaghan	€73,594
Public Realm Works in the Village.	Inniskeen	Monaghan	€20,000
Installation of a new footpath.	Lough Egish	Monaghan	€100,000
Clean a section of the Ulster canal, carry out appropriate planting and turn this section of Ulster Canal Greenway into a haven for wildlife.	Monaghan	Monaghan	€57,600
Installation of a memorial garden in Oram.	Oram	Monaghan	€60,246
Construct a pedestrian bridge between Scotstown village park and Redhills Road.	Scotshouse	Monaghan	€99,440
Monaghan Total			€569,536
North- East Grand Total			€1,512,455

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme successful announcement date:
1st November 2019

Appendix 3: Brief profile and statistical snapshot – North-East

Constituent counties	Cavan, Monaghan and Louth	
Regional Population & change (1996-2016)	196,423 (1996): 266,446 (2016)	increase of 70,023*
GVA ¹ per person 2000 and 2015	€16,147: €19,060*	
Total in employment	183,900 ²	
Labour Force Participation rate	59.3% ³	
Unemployment rate	3.9% ⁴	
Unemployment blackspots ⁵	6 ⁶	
Percentage employed in Manufacturing: Services: Public sector	14%: 13%: 28% ⁷	
Educated to third level in North-East: State	36%: 45%	
Third Level Students (full-time & part-time)	4,970 ⁸	
Number of enterprises ⁹ (micro: small: medium: large) (2016)	11,612: 790: 117: 8*	
Number of Enterprise Ireland High Potential Start-Ups ⁸ (HPSUs) North-East: State (2019)	0: 91	
EI supported employment & no. client Companies 2016 - 2017	2018 Jobs: 17,470 Companies: 553	2019 Jobs: 18,045 Companies: 338
IDA supported employment & no. client companies (2018 -2019)	2018 Jobs: 5,354 Companies: 44	2019 Jobs: 5,899 Companies: 44
LEO supported employment & no. client companies (2018 - 2019)	2018 Jobs: 378 Companies: 604	2019 Jobs: 296 Companies: 602
Number of LEO Priming Grants ¹¹ North-East: State (2019)	11: 291	

1. Gross Value Added (GVA) is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

2. CSO Labour Force Survey Quarterly Series Q4 2019

3. CSO Labour Force Survey Quarterly Series Q4 2019

4. CSO Labour Force Survey Quarterly Series Q4 2019

5. Unemployment Blackspots are defined as Electoral Districts with at least 200 people in the labour force and an unemployment rate of 27% or higher

6. Unemployment blackspots in the Region: Donegal (6)

7. CSO Labour Force Survey Quarterly Series Q4 2019

8. Institute of Technology Sligo (3,698) & St. Angela's College, Co. Sligo (1,272)

9. A Small Enterprise is defined as: an enterprise that has fewer than 50 employees and has either an annual turnover and/or an annual Balance Sheet total not exceeding €10m: A Medium Sized Enterprise is defined as: an enterprise that has between 50 employees and 249 employees and has either an annual turnover not exceeding €50m or an annual Balance Sheet total not exceeding €43m: A Large Enterprise is defined as: an enterprise that employs greater than 250 employees, has either an annual turnover of greater than €50m or an annual balance sheet of greater than €43m

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

11. A Priming Grant is a business start-up grant, available to micro enterprises within the first 18 months of start-up.

* Latest available update

Appendix 4: Employment creation and unemployment – Progress against targets set to 2020

Target for North-East Region to 2020

Since the launch of the Regional Action Plan for Jobs (RAPJ) there has been an increase of 346,800 people in employment across the State since Q1 2015 to Q4 2019, with 222,600 people in the regions outside of Dublin entering employment in that period.

The RAPJ initiative was a central pillar of the Government's ambition to create 200,000 new jobs by 2020, 135,000 of which are outside of Dublin.

The new Regional Enterprise Plans to 2020 continue the focus on delivery to these targets:

- employment growth of between 10 and 15 percent; and
- an unemployment rate reduced to within one percentage point of the State average.

Utilising data from the CSO Labour Force Survey (LFS), the rate of growth and unemployment rates achieved for the Border region during the period Q1 2015 up to Q4 2019 are as follows:

	Numbers Employed				Unemployment Rate	
	Q1 2015	Q4 2019	Change Q1 2015 to Q4 2019	Growth Q1 2015 to Q4 2019	Q1 2015	Q4 2019
Border	169,200	183,900	14,400	8.4%	8.6%	3.9%
State	2,014,400	2,361,200	346,800	17.2%	10.5%	4.5%

Source: CSO Labour Force Survey, Q4 2019

The Border region has reached the target of having an unemployment rate reduced to within one percentage point of the State average but is still to reach the target of having employment growth of between 10 and 15 percent.

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