
ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS

2017

Second Progress
Report



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Commentary

This is the second quarterly Progress Report in 2017 from the Monitoring Committee established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the Action Plan for Jobs 2017. It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the second quarter of 2017.

The Government published the sixth Action Plan for Jobs in February, 2017. This Plan contains 164 actions and 430 measures to be implemented in 2017 by all 16 Government Departments and by 46 agencies under the remit of these Departments. It 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 2,800 actions already implemented under Action Plan for Jobs 2012-2016, cumulatively, and reported on by the Monitoring Committee in its previous quarterly reports (see www.djei.ie).

The latest official statistics on employment and unemployment in Ireland (CSO QNHS Quarter 1 2017) show that total employment increased by 68,600 in the year to Q1 2017, bringing total employment to 2,045,100. There was an increase in full time employment of 84,200 and decrease in part-time employment of 15,600. Over the period since the launch of the Action Plan for Jobs in quarter 1 2012, over 200,000 jobs have been created in the Irish economy. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for June 2017 was 6.3%, down from a high of over 15% in 2012.

Actions due in Quarter 2

In the second quarter of 2017, Departments and agencies were to deliver 83 measures under the Action Plan. 18 of the measures due in Quarter 2 of 2017 have not been delivered, giving a completion rate of 78.3%. It should be noted that the rearrangement of some Departmental responsibilities may have had some impact on the delivery of actions in the latter half of Q2.

“Ongoing” actions to be delivered throughout 2017

The Action Plan contains some 114 measures that are described in the plan as “Ongoing” in 2017. In this case the convention has been that Departments and Agencies with responsibility for actions listed as “Ongoing” report progress on them in the Quarter 2 and the Quarter 4 report.

Measures not delivered as planned in Q2

As stated above, 18 of the Q2 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *Lead and implement an integrated communications plan for enterprise supports that increases awareness among all businesses of the broad suite of supports that are available and how to access them; Implement the plan. – Action 21*

While there is a high-level and range of promotional activity underway, DJEI considers there is a need for a resource to ensure the various initiatives of its Department and more generally are streamlined and coherent. The development of this more coordinated approach is currently underway and will be rolled-out from Q3. Examples of activity underway include DJEI and its agencies rolling-out a range of awareness programmes of supports available for firms; Enterprise Ireland launched its Brexit awareness campaign and online SME Brexit Scorecard and Toolkit, as well as a new website and portal to support business productivity, competitiveness benchmarking and improvement; the LEOs have implemented a series of marketing and awareness campaigns and are making the online Brexit Scorecard and Toolkit available to micro and local enterprises. As part of the Government's SME Access to Finance Initiative, a 'Taking Care of Business' event will take place in the autumn, promoting the full range of supports available, and the offices and agencies of the DJEI and other Governmental Departments are also exhibiting at county and regional events as well the National Ploughing Championships.

- *Generate closer links and business opportunities between Irish-owned and foreign-owned enterprises to achieve increased global sourcing sales; Undertake a review of the Global Sourcing Initiative and devise specific metrics for both EI and IDA to ensure progress on the above measures. – Action 29*

The review was delayed to prioritise the Trade & Investment Mission to Ireland and allow for participants feedback to be included in the review. The two-day (17 – 18 May) Trade and Investment Mission to Dublin, Cork and Galway was a joint Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland 'Global Sourcing' initiative. The aim of the mission was to create business opportunities for Irish-owned companies with Multinationals (MNCs) based in Ireland. The May event was the fourth national Trade and Investment Mission in Ireland.

- *Assess the potential and conditions necessary for the strategic development of Ireland's bio-economy across all sectors; Publish a high-level policy statement on the bio-economy in Ireland. – Action 35*

An Interdepartmental Group on the bio-economy was established in November 2016 and a scoping exercise was conducted to identify the current/potential activities in the area including through a workshop with key stakeholders which was held in February 2017. A discussion document, reflecting feedback from the workshop, Teagasc's BioEire project and relevant departments, has been prepared for public consultation and will be published shortly.

- *Create a stronger focus on entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation in schools; Develop new Entrepreneurship Education Guidelines for schools. – Action 49*
The new Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement is currently being drafted. When finalised it will inform the development of the new Entrepreneurship Education Guidelines for schools which are expected to be finalised in Q4, 2017.
- *Roll out an Export Finance Initiative, in congruence with national and EU legislation, to support export orientated SMEs in order to determine the demand from SMEs for export finance; As per headline action. – Action 55*
The Export Finance Working Group had developed a product aimed at providing short-term working capital support for Irish exporting SMEs that was due to be rolled out by end of Q2. Following a request from the Cabinet Committee on the Economy, Trade and Jobs in February 2017 for proposals to assist SMEs with the challenges posed by Brexit, a decision was made to refocus and broaden the work done by the Export Finance Working Group to look at SMEs affected by Brexit. The work undertaken as part of the Export Finance Initiative is now being used to support the development of Brexit mitigation measures; it is anticipated that exporters will be amongst those most impacted. Proposals are currently being developed and funding and approval for these proposals will be considered as part of the budgetary process. It is important that resources are appropriately allocated to policy measures in light of current Government priorities and it is for this reason that the Export Finance Initiative has not been rolled out.
- *Conduct a review of the credit application process with a focus on the administrative burden for SMEs and the time costs to them; As per headline action. – Action 60*
The Credit Review Office (CRO) undertook to lead on this action and has met with key stakeholders including the SME Representative Bodies and Bank representatives. The SME Representative Bodies agreed to circulate a survey to their members to identify potential issues which is now proposed for September. The CRO also engaged with the Banking and Payments Federation Ireland (BPMFI) who see merit in this measure and are considering developing an app to help SMEs with their applications. The CRO in conjunction with the Representative Bodies and the BPMFI will review the survey results on the application process and work on a possible way to address any identified difficulties.
- *Monitor data on lending to SMEs from both bank and non-bank sources, and demand from SMEs for credit to inform policy and ensure that viable SMEs can access appropriate finance; Collate and examine detailed data from AIB, Bank of Ireland and Permanent TSB on a monthly basis. – Action 62*
Quarterly meetings with both AIB and Bank of Ireland (BoI) took place in June 2017. Data to end April 2017 was received from AIB and BoI. Data is usually received with a lag of a month. Reporting changes in BoI have delayed the Q1 analysis. A meeting was held with BoI to discuss this delay, which the bank has committed to addressing. In Q2,

Permanent TSB (PTSB) confirmed with the Minister that they will also submit data on SME credit to the Department and are currently working with officials to put in place a process for the secure delivery of data in the format required. DoF officials have sent feedback on the draft report provided by PTSB.

- *Improve the financial skills of Irish SMEs; Conduct a feasibility study in relation to the provision of a voucher scheme for SMEs wishing to receive financial advice. – Action 64*
In accordance with a decision of the Cabinet Committee for Economy Trade and Jobs in April 2017, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) and Department of Finance (DoF) are doing scoping work on the development of a business advisory hub which would assist SMEs to make informed funding/investment decisions, and help them avail of private market solutions or existing State supports. This would build on the existing supports available and the advice and guidance offered by Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices and the Credit Review Office. DJEI intends to address the need for a voucher scheme on financial advice for SMEs as part of this scoping work.
- *Engage and collaborate with other bodies and policy analysts to leverage their expertise and draw on international best practice for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policy initiatives that will provide SMEs access to appropriate finance to meet their enterprise needs; Host a policy conference on finance for growth. – Action 66*
The SME State Bodies Group Policy Conference on Finance for Growth has been arranged and will take place on 12 September in Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
- *Improve the dissemination of skills requirements and labour market intelligence, nationally and regionally, to inform dialogue between providers and employers and to underpin the provision of relevant skills development opportunities through the establishment of the National Skills Council; Commence the work programme of the National Skills Council in line with the National Skills Strategy. – Action 74*
The National Skills Council was launched by the Minister for Education and Skills and Minister of State for Training, Skills, Innovation, Research and Development on 27 April 2017 and held its first meeting on 15 May 2017. Work has commenced on the development of a Work Programme for this National Skills Council.
- *Develop and publish the 2017 Further Education and Training Services Plan which will provide detail of all SOLAS funded FET provision and funding provided to agencies and bodies to support the FET sector. The skills needs at national level will be informed by the recommendations of the National Skills Strategy and the regional skills needs identified by the Regional Skills Fora; Publish the 2017 FET Services Plan. – Action 81*
The 2017 Further Education and Training Services Plan will be published in Q3.

- *Ensure RDI supports meet enterprise needs and are readily accessible by finalising a review and streamlining the range of State financial aid for RDI and by promoting the benefits of carrying out RDI including raising awareness to increase the level of collaboration across all sectors; Launch a new communications campaign promoting the benefits of enterprise carrying out RDI. – Action 91*

The application of research and innovation to business challenges is critical to the success of the Irish economy. A range of state funded Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) aid provides supports for companies to develop new technologies and processes that will lead to job creation and increased exports. Following an internal review of Enterprise Ireland's in-company RDI support, and as part of the broader process of streamlining the range of State Financial Aid, the Board of Enterprise Ireland approved a new client offering for implementation. In H2 2017, Enterprise Ireland will launch a new communications campaign to outline changes and to promote the benefits to companies of undertaking RDI.

- *Implement the Strategy for Technology Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training, 2016-2019, which builds on existing capacity and good practice in technology-enhanced learning, and expand access to and continuously improve and innovate further education and training provision; Develop a content sharing and management infrastructure to facilitate sharing and development of learning resources among all teachers. – Action 121*

A tender process to delivery this measure is underway and a revised deadline for completion of Q4 has been set.

- *Implement the Strategy for Technology Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training, 2016-2019, which builds on existing capacity and good practice in technology-enhanced learning, and expand access to and continuously improve and innovate further education and training provision; Implement a Bring Your Own Device policy in each ETB. – Action 121*

A Bring Your Own Device policy is in pilot stage with two ETBs prior to roll-out to all ETBs in Q3.

- *Implement the Strategy for Technology Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training, 2016-2019, which builds on existing capacity and good practice in technology-enhanced learning, and expand access to and continuously improve and innovate further education and training provision; Establish a 2016 baseline technology enhanced learning provision in each Education and Training Board using a shared benchmarking exercise. – Action 121*

The Baseline assessment is currently being conducted by each ETB. As the exercise involves intensive meetings with FET staff it was decided during the pilot with CDET B and CMETB to conduct the baseline assessment in conjunction with the action planning exercise, for completion in time for inclusion in the Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting (FARR) process for 2018 (Q4 2017). This is on target.

- *Publish and start to implement the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies to ensure proper planning and sustainable development and the optimal economic and social development at a national and regional level; Publish the draft National Planning Framework, which sets out a long-term national framework to ensure proper planning and sustainable development and the optimal economic and social development of the country as a whole. The framework is to be approved by Q3 2017. – Action 125*

An initial draft of the National Planning Framework (NPF) was circulated to Government Departments at the end of Q2. A draft of the NPF will be subject to public consultation in Q3, with approval of a final draft expected by the end of Q4 2017.

- *Undertake a detailed analysis to benchmark housing delivery input costs in Ireland with a view to identifying economies, and take any steps arising. – Action 161*

A working group, chaired by the Department, was established in December 2016, to undertake a detailed analysis, in conjunction with the construction sector, to benchmark housing delivery input costs in Ireland, in order to facilitate an increased level of housing output into the future. The group has met on a number of occasions and were on schedule to report at the end of Q2 2017. However, the cost study report is still in the process of being finalised and it is expected that it will be complete in the next couple of weeks.

- *Work with public and private sector stakeholders to identify and address skills training needs in traditional building skills and architectural conservation, in order to increase levels of verifiable competence amongst the construction workforce engaged in designing and carrying out repair, maintenance and upgrading of older building stock, to assist regeneration of our historic cities, towns and villages as attractive places to live and visit; Complete the Traditional Building Skills and Conservation Education Action Plan. – Action 164*

Targeted stakeholder consultation (with public and private sector) is in progress. A summary of feedback, to include recommended models for training provision and a suggested framework for implementation, will be circulated to stakeholders for discussion and the agreement of DES prior to completion by end of year.

Update on actions delayed in Quarter 1

As reported at the end of Quarter 1, there were 13 actions delayed. The following 6 measures from this report have now been delivered:

- *Promote and facilitate increased provision of education and training opportunities related to entrepreneurship and identify best practice education and training on entrepreneurship within further education and training provision; Publish a research report and disseminate findings and recommendations – Action 48.*

Research into 'Best practice in Entrepreneurship Education and Training in the Further Education and Training sector' commissioned by SOLAS is complete and published on the SOLAS website.

- *Support all eight Regional Action Plans for Jobs and provide investment of up to €60 million over the period to 2020 to support collaborative approaches to boost enterprise and job creation across the regions. This competitive funding is aimed at accelerating economic recovery in every part of the country by delivering on the potential of local and regional strengths; Launch and roll out the scheme across the regions, with a focus on larger scale, regionally strategic projects. – Action 97*

A competitive Regional Enterprise Development Fund 2017-2020 was launched in May 2017, providing funding of up to €60 million to co-finance the development and implementation of collaborative and innovative projects that can sustain and add to employment at a national, regional and county level. The Scheme has four streams:

- Stream One: to support major regional, multi-regional or national sectoral initiative grants of €2m up to €5m per project in funding towards capital and current costs.
- Stream Two: to support significant county, regional or multi-regional sectoral and or enterprise initiative grants of €250k up to €2m per project in funding towards capital and current costs.
- Stream Three: for local and community enterprise initiative grants of €50k up to €250k per project in funding towards capital and current costs
- Stream Four to support significant Industry Clustering initiatives with grants of €50k up to €250k per project in funding towards current costs.

The launch of the Fund is currently being followed up with a series of 9 Regional Information Sessions, two of which have taken place (both on 8 June). To ensure regional balance, Enterprise Ireland will target €2m to be allocated for the best ranked project/s from each NUTS III region which have attained a minimum score of 60% or higher in the evaluation process.

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- Stream Four to support significant Industry Clustering initiatives with grants of €50k up to €250k per project in funding towards current costs.

The launch of the Fund is currently being followed up with a series of 9 Regional Information Sessions, two of which have taken place (both on 8 June). To ensure regional balance, Enterprise Ireland will target €2m to be allocated for the best ranked project/s from each NUTS III region which have attained a minimum score of 60% or higher in the evaluation process.

- *Support the creation of 500 new jobs in 2017 and continue to help maintain existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post-research and pre-commercialisation units in the life sciences, food and business support services and creative enterprises sectors, as well as for community development initiative; Commence the development of a Marine Innovation Park which will facilitate both research and commercial activities in Cill Chiaráin, Co Galway by: Preparing and completing Full Master Plan, Undertaking and completing an Environmental Impact Study and Preparing and submitting a planning application. – Action 99*

The advisory committee established to assist in preparing the master plan has met on a number of occasions and there have also been meetings with stakeholders and a potential end-users of the Park. The EIS is currently being conducted and the planning application is being prepared and will be submitted by end of year.

- *Through the Rural Recreation Scheme, provide funding for new recreation infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure to support the creation and retention of jobs in rural areas; Launch call for proposals under the Rural Recreation Scheme – Action 103*

The call for proposals for the Rural Recreation Scheme was launched on 28 April with a closing date of 31 May. The Department has assessed applications under the Rural Recreation Scheme and successful projects are scheduled to be announced shortly.

- *Develop and roll out a strategy for eHubs for entrepreneurship, eWorking and business growth as part of county development plans, linking effectively with local enterprise stakeholders and enterprise agencies and support the development of ambitious and sustainable proposals for success in competitive calls for funding; Audit and review current and potential Hubs by county – Action 124*

DJEI, in consultation with the local authorities, the Local Enterprise Offices, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta, has undertaken an audit of existing and planned eHubs around the country. The audit captures information on the availability of office space, hot desks and meeting rooms; the quality of the broadband access; and soft supports available (e.g. advice/mentoring/networking opportunities).

Quarter 2 Measures

Responding to Brexit

Action 2: Intensify work with companies to grow export opportunities and diversify into markets outside the UK.

Q2 Measure: Develop and roll out a client-centric approach to market research in Enterprise Ireland's sectoral and overseas teams to identify market and sector opportunities across its clients' priority areas. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has developed and rolled out a client-centric approach to market research in Enterprise Ireland's sectoral and overseas teams to identify market and sector opportunities across its clients' priority areas. The approach was rolled out initially by Enterprise Ireland to support Aerospace Market research in North America.

Action 18: Provide specific support and advice to food and drinks companies on the impact of Brexit.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM and agencies)

Update: Complete

DAFM have carried out the following:

- Minister Creed hosted a meeting of the Department's Stakeholder Consultative Committee on 11 April 2017, at which all stakeholders from across the food and drinks industry were represented.
- Minister Creed hosted an All Island Sectoral Dialogue for the Alcohol and Beverages sectors on 4 May 2017 and 9 June 2017 for the equine and greyhound sectors to discuss the implications of Brexit for those sectors.
- Minister Creed and Bord Bia met executives from key grocery retailers during May 2017 to discuss the ongoing trade in Irish Agri food products with the UK.
- Minister Creed continued his engagement with EU counterparts when he met the Belgian, Spanish and Cypriot delegations on the margins of AgriFish Council meetings in May and June.
- A Ministerial agri-food Trade Mission, to the US and Mexico took place the middle of June.

Bord Bia: 139 companies completed the Brexit Barometer providing them with customised risk assessments with additional supporting documentation that contained suggested actions to mitigate risk. Just under 90 of the assessments were undertaken with the assistance of Bord Bia Sector Managers. A Brexit seminar took place on the 29 June sharing the aggregated results of the Barometer with industry and set out Bord Bia's response.

BIM has commissioned an external study to provide insights and guidance to BIM on potential impacts of Brexit upon the seafood sector. The report is due in July. It will provide guidance on how companies and the seafood sector can build business planning and future strategies in relation to Brexit.

Teagasc has been involved in providing consultancy and technical support to Bord Bia for a range of exporting companies operating under the food quality assurance programmes. The Agricultural Economics Society and Teagasc hosted a conference titled *Brexit and Beyond: Perspectives on the future of agricultural policy and trade policy* in April 2017. Teagasc continues to monitor and analyse the potential impacts of Brexit on the agri-food sector.

Enterprise Ireland key focus, for its clients exporting to the UK, is on providing support them to drive competitiveness, innovation, export diversification and scale. Where clients have a significant exposure to the UK, Enterprise Ireland is focusing on helping them to develop and address their Brexit plans, consolidate and grow exports in the UK, and also to look at diversifying their exports to other markets, especially in the Eurozone, Northern Europe and North America.

Enterprise Ireland continues to have significant engagement with its Brexit exposed client companies. Being identified as a Brexit exposed client is followed by intense and proactive interaction by Enterprise Ireland with these clients to understand their exposure to the UK market, critical issues facing the company, what supports Enterprise Ireland could offer, what other external supports were important to the client, and an action plan to address the issues.

An Information booklet *Information for Irish exporters following UK decision to leave the EU* was published, outlining some of its plans to support clients including:

- Information and Guidance
- Market Diversification Supports
- International Sector Clustering Strategy
- UK In-Market Supports
- Competitiveness and Market Development Supports

Enterprise Ireland's Brexit SME Scorecard – an online tool to help clients take the first step to self-assess their level of preparedness for Brexit is available at the link: www.prepareforbrexit.ie . The output of the scorecard is a comprehensive report, containing actions / next steps for the clients' consideration, as well as events the client may wish to attend, information and key resources. A significant number of companies have already completed the Scorecard since its launch and the feedback has been very positive.

'Be Prepared' Grant – Enterprise Ireland also launched a new initiative to encourage companies to develop specific plans to respond to Brexit. This new initiative will provide support of up to €5,000 towards the costs associated with preparing a Brexit Action Plan. Once a client's Brexit Action Plan is developed, Enterprise Ireland can work with clients to identify possible opportunities for further support as the client implements its Brexit Plans.

A number of Prepare for Brexit Breakfast Roadshows have taken place in have taken place in Cork; Waterford; Monaghan; Galway; Limerick, and Dublin. The focus of the events is on identifying exposure companies to Brexit, winning international sales and other strategies to address Brexit challenges and opportunities.

Driving Enterprise Growth

Growing and scaling enterprise

Action 25: Enhance leadership capability and address skills gaps by delivering significant Leadership and Management Development programmes to 650 managers and to support the scaling of Irish companies.

Q2 Measure: Establish new “SME learning communities” to facilitate peer-to-peer learning. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland’s tailored mentoring and management development programmes use internal and external sources of expertise to ensure clients have access to high level strategic and sectoral expertise to grow their businesses internationally. Building on this Enterprise Ireland has established new LinkedIn “SME learning communities” to facilitate peer-to-peer learning.

Peer-to-peer learning is an invaluable resource for companies, learning from those who have gone before them who can give practical advice on what to do and the pitfalls to avoid.

The SME learning communities offer participants the opportunity to share their experiences with others and learn from each other. A closed LinkedIn group was established and approximately 900 client companies from recent I4G, P4G & M4G programmes were invited into the group. In due course, Enterprise Ireland will evaluate the effectiveness of the LinkedIn SME Learning Community.

Promoting Trade

Action 38: Deliver the new trading strategy, the successor to the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy and prioritise its implementation in subsequent years.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT, DJEI with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

A new Trade and Investment Strategy, “Ireland Connected: Trading and Investing in a Dynamic World”, was launched on 8 March providing an overarching framework to diversify into new markets and intensify growth in existing markets for Irish exports, inward investment, tourism and international education.

Supporting Entrepreneurship

Action 47: Deliver a new approach to the promotion of entrepreneurship at local level.

Q2 Measure: Launch a pilot Online Competitive Start-up scheme focused on identifying and supporting early stage innovative microenterprise start-ups. (LEOs/EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The new LEO Innovation Investment Fund Pilot, launched in May 2017, aims to enhance and drive

innovation in Micro enterprise. This is an integrated competitive scheme targeting an uplift in innovation from existing LEO Start Ups and Established clients. The call for applications will remain open until 31 July 2017.

There are 4 components to the LEO Innovation Investment Fund offer:

- A €1.5m Investment Fund: targeting investor ready LEO clients. This fund will be available through the network of LEOs and will be approved for individual projects following a competitive process. Up to a maximum Grant Investment of €25k may be approved for successful applicants.
- Online Application: Eligible (M1 & M2) LEO Clients will submit their application and mandatory video through the online form available on the website (www.liif.ie), stating the county in which their business is or will be located. All applications will be routed to the relevant LEOs for review and consideration for participation on the Investor Ready Programme.
- Investor Ready Programme: Based on online applications eligible clients will be selected to participate on a short (4 weeks) highly focused Investor Ready Programme. This programme will work with Investor Ready LEO clients to implement their innovative development plan. The programme will incorporate 1 to 1 mentoring to assist the promotor prepare an investor ready plan.
- Investor Ready Pitch: At the conclusion of the Investor Ready Programme promoters will have the opportunity to make a formal pitch to an Investor Panel to secure a LEO Grant Investment of up to €25k to help fund their innovative business start- up or development.

Both the Investor Ready Programme and the Investor Panels will be regionally based.

Action 48: Promote and facilitate increased provision of education and training opportunities related to entrepreneurship and identify best practice education and training on entrepreneurship within further education and training provision.

Q2 Measure: Stimulate entrepreneurship from Science Foundation Ireland funded research through the SFI/National Science Foundation Innovation Corps (I-Corps) Collaboration to encourage culture change among Irish STEM researchers and support early-career stage researchers to develop entrepreneurship skills that enable them to pursue entrepreneurial ventures based on their research. (SFI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

In March 2017, SFI announced its I-Corps@SFI partnership with the National Science Foundation (NSF) Innovation Corps (I-Corps) making it the first European funding agency to establish such a partnership. Following an Expression of Interest stage, SFI invited 12 full proposal applications by the deadline. These applications were then reviewed by a panel of independent international experts. Following international peer review of proposals, SFI offered awards to all 12 teams. Following this offer, 10 teams accepted awards and will undertake training. Five teams have completed the training component of the programme as of May 2017.

Action 49: Create a stronger focus on entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation in schools.

Q2 Measure: Deliver the highly successful LEO Student Enterprise Awards Programme 2017. (LEOs/EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The LEO-run Student Enterprise Programme, now in its fifteenth year, has since 2003 had more than 150,000 secondary school students participate in the programme which focuses on students researching and setting up their own businesses.

This year's Student Enterprise Programme attracted 22,000 student participants from 620 secondary schools around the country. The year-long programme helps each student to gain the skills and practical knowledge of running a real-life business. On 5 May, 15 years of the student enterprise programme was celebrated by Local Enterprise Offices in Croke Park, Dublin, where a total of 200 teenage entrepreneurs, aged between 13 and 18 and from 77 different enterprises, competed at the National Finals, with every county represented.

The top prizes went to 'ROC Protection' from Clonkeen College in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Senior Category), 'Scott Engine Tables' from Coláiste Chill Mhantáin in Wicklow (Intermediate Category) and 'Daisy's Pawesome Bowties' from Our Lady's Secondary School in Louth (Junior Category).

Delivering Skills for a Growing Economy

Action 69: Develop a Further Education and Training policy framework for employee development to guide Education and Training Board activity to support skills development for those in employment, in consultation with partners, aligning with the National Skills Strategy.

Q2 Measure: Develop the implementation plan for the FET policy framework for employee development. (SOLAS, DES)

Update: Complete

The Implementation Plan for the FET policy framework for employee development has been developed.

Action 72: Implement the ICT Skills Action Plan 2014 – 2018 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.

Q2 Measure: Determine the outcome of the competitive call using an expert panel, in accordance with process and overseen by an independent process auditor. (HEA, DES)

Update: Complete

In February 2017, the HEA issued a competitive call for proposals to be funded under Springboard+ 2017, which incorporates the ICT skills conversion programme. It was open to all public and private higher education providers to submit proposals. Following the call, the HEA established an independent panel with experts from industry and education to examine the proposals. The panel have considered all proposals received and have selected 198 courses to be approved for funding.

Action 72: Implement the ICT Skills Action Plan 2014 – 2018 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.

Q2 Measure: Launch ICT skills conversion courses under Springboard+ 2017. (HEA, DES, HEIs, employers)

Update: Complete

Springboard+ 2017, which incorporates the ICT skills conversion programme, was launched on 24 May 2017 and will provide for 1,995 free full-time and part-time ICT conversion courses in higher education institutions across the country.

Action 73: Create a greater diversity of learning opportunities beyond school through competitive calls for Springboard courses.

Q2 Measure: Determine the outcome of the competitive process using an expert panel, in accordance with process and overseen by an independent process auditor. (HEA, DES)

Update: Complete

In February 2017, the HEA issued a competitive call for proposals to be funded under Springboard+ 2017. It was open to all public and private higher education providers to submit proposals. The call document included information on the types of course sought for 2017. Following the call, the HEA established an independent panel with experts from industry and education to examine the proposals. The panel have considered all proposals received and have selected 198 courses to be approved for funding.

Action 73: Create a greater diversity of learning opportunities beyond school through competitive calls for Springboard courses.

Q2 Measure: Launch Springboard+ 2017. (HEA, DES, HEIs, employers)

Update: Complete

Springboard+ 2017, which was launched on 24 May 2017 will provide for 6,471 free places on 198 courses in higher education institutions across the country. Courses will be delivered in areas of identified skills needs such as: ICT, Manufacturing which includes the biopharma sector, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality and Financial Services. The eligibility criteria for 2017 has been expanded to include homemakers and those in employment including those in self-employment who wish to upskill, reskill or cross skill in the Biopharma/Med Tech sector and those in employment, or self-employment in the ICT sector who wish to upskill from a level 7 to a level 8 qualification.

Action 75: Implement the objectives in the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019.

Q2 Measure: Publish 2017 progress reports for Q1, Q2 and Q3. (DES)

Update: Complete

A Q1 progress report on the Action Plan for Education 2017 was completed and has been published on DES' website.

Action 78: Increase the permitted residence period for high performing students who attain a post graduate award at Levels 9 and 10 to up to two years' residence in the State for the purpose of securing employment. Graduates at Level 8 will be permitted one year's residence.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJE)

Update: Complete

The revised Third Level Graduate Programme was launched on 1 June 2017 and applies to persons who achieve a relevant award in 2017

Action 79: Ensure the Employment Permits System remains aligned with labour market needs.

Q2 Measure: Continue to review the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List (HSEOL) and Ineligible Categories of Employment List (ICEL). (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The first review of 2017 was undertaken and completed in Q2. The report is being finalised for submission to the Tánaiste.

Action 80: Undertake a remuneration review to provide clearly defined criteria for use in an evidence based setting of remuneration thresholds for employment permits.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

A comprehensive review of the remuneration thresholds was completed in Q2. The report is being finalised for submission to the Tánaiste.

Promoting Innovation

Action 83: Build Intellectual Property Capability and strengthen Intellectual Property Management in indigenous enterprise by developing a new financial support to assist SMEs and developing an approach for measuring Intellectual Property activity in the firm base.

Q2 Measure: Develop a new financial support aimed at assisting Enterprise Ireland SME clients to build Intellectual Property Management capability and implement Intellectual Property Strategies. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The design of a new Intellectual Property (IP) related financial offer has been developed and is currently undergoing internal evaluation to ensure that it is compatible with Enterprise Ireland's funding processes and state aid rules.

The offer focusses on supporting companies to develop an 'IP Strategy' as opposed to the normal narrow focus on Intellectual Property protection. This is in order to shift the emphasis from patent

protection toward a wider view of the intellectual assets that can result from R&D (including Trade Secrets, Copyright, Designs and Data as well as Patents) and how they can be exploited by the business. It also recognises the fact that in most R&D projects the option to protect IP only arises toward the end or after the R&D phase.

The 'IP strategy' offer focuses on the IP challenges that arise during the R&D phase which mainly relate to the management of R&D results so that the option for protection in the future is maintained. The offer targets R&D active companies by linking the IP support to existing R&D supports provided by Enterprise Ireland and offers financial support to companies to employ the services of an IP expert to work with them to develop an IP strategy appropriate to their needs. If the internal Enterprise Ireland approval process is successful the immediate plan is to conduct a 6-8 month pilot of the offer with a number of Enterprise Ireland clients, commencing in late Q3 2017.

Action 84: Drive innovation procurement activities through the implementation of a new Small Business Innovation Research initiative and by identifying and developing a systematic approach to innovative public procurement.

Q2 Measure: Progress the Knowledge Development Box (Certification of Inventions) Bill 2016 through the Houses of the Oireachtas to enactment to support the Knowledge Development Box. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Knowledge Development Box (KDB) (Certification of Inventions) Act 2017 was enacted on 12 April 2017 and came into operation on 19 May 2017. The KDB certification scheme is aimed at enabling SMEs to qualify for a lower rate of corporation tax while the re-introduction of substantive patent examination will ensure Irish patents also qualify for the lower tax rate.

Action 85: Provide advice through the newly established Innovation Office on regulatory requirements and general guidance on technical or scientific issues to any individual or organisation that may be developing innovative health products or technologies, with a particular focus on academic researchers and early stage developers in start-up companies and SMEs.

Q2 Measure: Host an Innovation Day for interested stakeholders in Spring 2017. (HPRA, D/Health)

Update: Complete

The Innovation Day was held on 25 May, with 260 participants from a wide range of areas including pharma and medtech companies, universities and research centres involved in life sciences or clinical research, as well as other state agencies. HPRA staff presented on the different supports the agency provides to innovators, the European Medicines Agency explained the supports that agency provides, while presenters from RCSI, HRB-CRCI and the Health Innovation Hub spoke about their own work in the area of innovation and research. Feedback from delegates was very positive.

Action 91: Ensure RDI supports meet enterprise needs and are readily accessible by finalising a review and streamlining the range of State financial aid for RDI and by promoting the benefits of carrying out RDI including raising awareness to increase the level of collaboration across all sectors.

Q2 Measure: Work with all Technology Centres to develop company focused value propositions that will act to raise awareness and increase the level of collaboration across all sectors. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

To date, professional value proposition training has been provided to five Technology Centres and the remaining Centres are scheduled to receive the training through 2017. The initial two Centres who received the training presented their revised Centre Value Proposition to all other Centres at a Centre Directors' meeting in Q1 to demonstrate the outcomes of the training and their new company facing value propositions. This process to increase awareness across the Centres will continue through the two further Centre Directors' meetings in 2017.

Action 91: Ensure RDI supports meet enterprise needs and are readily accessible by finalising a review and streamlining the range of State financial aid for RDI and by promoting the benefits of carrying out RDI including raising awareness to increase the level of collaboration across all sectors.

Q2 Measure: Finalise the review of the full range of State financial aid for RDI to ensure that the needs of small and young firms are being catered for as well as those of larger, established firms. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The overall aim of this study is to identify how best to increase RD&I activity in firms that leads to the development of new products, processes and services that will deliver greater economic impact, focusing both on increasing RD&I spend in a cohort of firms already doing R&D as well as increasing the overall number of firms doing RD&I. External consultants were appointed to undertake this study and have completed their analysis.

This report highlights a number of opportunity areas where there is potential to increase business expenditure on research and development and presents a series of recommendations on increasing/deepening RD&I expenditures; increasing the numbers of RD&I performers; and structures of RD&I support programmes.

Action 92: Develop proposals to put in place a new cycle of Research Prioritisation to align innovation investment with enterprise opportunities through assessment of progress and impact of the current cycle, finalisation of a market horizon scan and identification of technologies that are critical to Ireland's economic and social development.

Q2 Measure: Finalise a market-led horizon scan to identify strategic areas of commercial opportunity in global markets for Irish based enterprise. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The final meeting of the Advisory group was held at the end of May where feedback was provided on the draft report 'Horizon Scan of Global Markets and Identification of Opportunities for Ireland

and Irish based Enterprise', and a proposal on content of the Executive Summary was agreed. The Executive Summary that has been drafted will be reviewed by the Advisory Group by mid-July. The final report will be delivered shortly thereafter.

Action 92: Develop proposals to put in place a new cycle of Research Prioritisation to align innovation investment with enterprise opportunities through assessment of progress and impact of the current cycle, finalisation of a market horizon scan and identification of technologies that are critical to Ireland's economic and social development.

Q2 Measure: Finalise the Technology Futures exercise to identify technologies that are critical to Ireland's economic and social development. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The independent Technology Futures report has identified a series of technology clusters that are critical for Ireland out to 2035 from a social and economic perspective. The process was expert-led and consensus-driven with technology experts, both nationally and internationally, playing an important part in the process.

The main elements of this Technology Futures Exercise consisted of extensive desk research and data analysis; a Delphi type survey engaging national and international experts drawn from the research community, research funders, policy makers, and industry; an extensive validation step. The Technology Futures report will be considered as part of Research Prioritisation and will also serve as an important reference document for a broad range of stakeholders to use as part of the wider policy making process. The project was overseen by a Project Steering group with membership from national and international organisations.

Action 92: Develop proposals to put in place a new cycle of Research Prioritisation to align innovation investment with enterprise opportunities through assessment of progress and impact of the current cycle, finalisation of a market horizon scan and identification of technologies that are critical to Ireland's economic and social development.

Q2 Measure: Complete an assessment of the progress and impact of the current Research Prioritisation cycle. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

An assessment of progress on the current Research Priority Areas has been completed. The assessment aims to gather data in relation to three key questions:

- Is public funding being directed towards priority areas, as planned by Research Prioritisation?
- Are there early signs of increased research activity, outputs and impacts in priority areas?
- Is there evidence of emerging areas of strength outside of the 14 priority areas that should be noted at this stage in the RPE process?

The assessment will form one strand of the evidence base, along with a market-led horizon scan and a technology futures exercise, for the Refresh of Research Prioritisation which is to be completed by end-2017.

Action 94: Drive EU and international research collaboration to maximise the impact of investment in research and innovation including through new international research partnerships, securing €12 million in product development contracts for Irish based companies from the European Space Agency, and by Enterprise Ireland continuing to lead the national drive to secure €1.25 billion in funding for Irish companies and academics by 2020.

Q2 Measure: Develop and progress new international research partnerships including through the:

- Investigators Programme partnership with China (SFI);
- SFI- National Science Foundation (US) Partnerships for International Research and Education (SFI);
- US-Ireland R&D Partnership Programme (SFI, DJEI, DAFM, HRB); and
- Launch of new partnership with the UK Research Council (SFI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Following a press announcement in Q4 2016, SFI launched a call for proposals under a new funding partnership between Science Foundation Ireland and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), with up to €2 million available per project awarded. This initiative will support collaborative research projects between researchers in Ireland and the People's Republic of China. 86 Expressions-of-interest were received; the deadline for full applications was at the end of June 2017.

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is also partnering with the National Science Foundation (NSF) under the Partnerships for International Research and Education (PIRE) Programme. Three full proposals were submitted by 24 April 2017 deadline and are currently under review.

In the US-Ireland R&D Partnership programme, SFI announced three new Centre-to-Centre awards (SFI investment - €2.5m) in November 2016. The three new collaborations are focused on making innovative discoveries and advances relating to renewable energy, new memory cells for electronic devices and biodegradable orthopaedic devices.

The EPSRC-SFI partnership was launched in April 2017 and is now open for applications. In other UK partnerships, since the start of 2016, there have been 12 awards made under the SFI-HRB-Wellcome Partnership amounting to a total of €11m, there have been 6 awards made under the Royal Society-SFI partnership amounting to a total of €2.8m, and there have been 14 awards made under the BBSRC-SFI partnership amounting to €6.7m.

A new Fraunhofer Project Centre at DCU was funded through the Strategic Partnerships Programme. This initiative is jointly funded by SFI and Fraunhofer. This Centre will focus on microfluidic "lab-on-a-chip" technologies in support of the MedTech industry. This Centre is the first Fraunhofer Centre in Ireland. The Minister of State for Employment and Small Business formally launched the Centre on the 9 May.

Stimulating Regional Growth

Regional Enterprise Development

Action 98: Complete construction of three new advance buildings in Sligo, Castlebar and Tralee and develop three new advance buildings in Limerick, Dundalk and Galway.

Q2 Measure: Complete construction in Tralee. (IDA, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Tralee ATB was completed in June 2017.

Action 99: Support the creation of 500 new jobs in 2017 and continue to help maintain existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post-research and pre-commercialisation units in the life sciences, food and business support services and creative enterprises sectors, as well as for community development initiatives.

Q2 Measure: Commence the development of a Marine Innovation Park which will facilitate both research and commercial activities in Cill Chiaráin, Co Galway by:

- Preparing and completing Full Master Plan
- Undertaking and completing an Environmental Impact Study
- Preparing and submitting a planning application (DAHRRGA, ÚnaG)

Update: Complete

An advisory committee has been established to assist in preparing the master plan and a number of meetings have been held. In addition, a number of meetings were held with stakeholders and a potential end-users of the Park. Consultants, Jennings and O'Donovan's, are currently undertaking the EIS and preparing the planning application. Planning application will be submitted by end of year.

Action 99: Support the creation of 500 new jobs in 2017 and continue to help maintain existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post-research and pre-commercialisation units in the life sciences, food and business support services and creative enterprises sectors, as well as for community development initiatives.

Q2 Measure: Develop four innovation hubs (Donegal, Mayo, Galway and Kerry) by refurbishing existing buildings and investing in ancillary infrastructure which supports and develops entrepreneurship and start-up companies in the Gaeltacht Regions. (DAHRRGA, ÚnaG)

Update: Complete

The innovation hubs for Donegal and Kerry are operational. A tendering process for the refurbishment works at the Mayo hub is currently underway and the Galway hub is at preplanning stage with the application expected to be made later this year.

Supporting Jobs for Rural Communities

Action 102: Through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, support the revitalisation of towns and villages to improve the living and working environment for rural communities and increase the potential to support increased economic activity.

Q2 Measure: Design and launch an enhanced phase of the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, building on the 2016 scheme. (DAHRRGA)

Update: Complete

As part of the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development, an enhanced Town and Village Renewal Scheme for 2017 was launched on the 13 April 2017 and will focus on improving the economic development of our rural towns and villages. A fund of €20m has been made available for up to 300 towns and villages over the next 15 months. The closing date for applications was 30 June 2017.

More than 300 proposals were received and these are being assessed with a view to announcing the successful applications in the coming weeks.

Action 103: Through the Rural Recreation Scheme, provide funding for new recreation infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure to support the creation and retention of jobs in rural areas.

Q2 Measure: Assess applications and announce successful projects. (DAHRRGA)

Update: Complete

The call for proposals for the Rural Recreation Scheme was launched on the 28 April with a closing date of 31 May. DAHRRGA has assessed the applications and successful projects were scheduled to be announced in shortly.

Enhancing Competitiveness

Improving the ease of doing business

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DAFM, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The DAFM project team is continuing to work on this Action. DAFM has been in contact with all the agencies under its aegis on licences they may issue. DAFM have yet to provide an update on returns received.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DAHRRGA, DJEI)

Update: Complete

DAHRRGA is in the initial stages of developing an e-licensing system for applications for licences for various activities under the Wildlife Acts. Progress will be contingent on the completion of a major consolidation of IT services due to be completed by end-2017.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DCCAE, DJEI)

Update: Complete

DCCAE's remit includes complex policy areas, oversight of State regulation and service provision across key strategic services such as energy and public service broadcasting, and regulation of sectors such as mining and hydrocarbon exploration. There are various licences, permits, application forms or associated payments related to some of these activities. Given the technical complexity of some of these areas there are certain processes relating to some of these activities which are not, for various reasons, feasible to process completely online. DCCAE has identified 14 licences to achieve the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online as relevant on a progressive basis by November 2017. As of Q2 2017, either the application forms, licences, permits or payment process for 12 of these are now online, and progress is continuing to have the application form and guidance for 2 others completed by Q3 2017.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DCYA, DJEI)

Update: Complete

DCYA operates an online application system for licensing childcare facilities.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Finance towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DoF, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Revenue have identified 88 excise licence categories, 84 of these can be renewed online. Due to small numbers involved there are no plans to put the remaining 4 online. New licence applications are a two part process; part one is a paper based registration process and dealt with by Revenue's National Excise Licence Office (NELO), part two is customer completion of declaration and submission of payment and is fully online. There are currently no plans to move the registration aspect online.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Health towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DoH, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Department of Health has identified 56 licence/permits/notifications under Action 106 of the Action Plan for Jobs. Of these, 44 are now fully available online and a further six are on schedule to be online by the end of Q3 2017. Another two will be partially online by the end of 2017 with remaining elements, depending on progress of the work programme, scheduled to be online during 2018. Three of the remaining four are being assessed in the context of the development of an appropriate ICT infrastructure and consideration of legal restrictions (original signature) with a view to making the certificates of registration available online as quickly as possible. The final one is low volume, has some legislative restrictions and not economically viable to move to an online procedure.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DHPCLG, DJEI)

Update: Complete

In line with the Government's commitment to bring services online for businesses, DHPCLG has

identified a list of 11 relevant licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application and payment-taking 'procedures' to be made available online. As of Q2 2017, 7 of these procedures are now online with plans in place for another 4 to move online by Q1 2018.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Justice and Equality towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DJE, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Department of Justice and Equality has identified 64 licences/permits under Action 106. 47 of which are now either online or expected to be online by the end of 2017. A proposal to develop an online licensing system is under consideration which would bring another 10 licences online.

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

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

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

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Q2 Measure: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. (DTTAS, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has identified 32 licences / permits to achieve the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017. As of Q2 2017, 15 of these licences are now online, and progress is continuing to have the remainder online by November.

Action 108: Increase the level of online applications and computerised applications and payment systems from 75 per cent to 80 per cent for 2017 Basic Payment Scheme applications to reduce compliance burden for farmers.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

87% of farmers applied online for the 2017 Basic Payment Scheme. Significant supports were put in place, including a dedicated telephone helpdesk and extended office opening hours, to assist farmers in making their online applications.

Action 110: Create awareness of the benefits of standards to Irish businesses particularly in relation to improving competitiveness, and reach out to industry and researchers to engage in international standardisation activities related to future manufacturing technologies for businesses of all sizes.

Q2 Measure: Facilitate a standardisation network for Advanced Manufacturing Technology to enable Irish stakeholders from industry, academia, research and societal interests to participate in International and European standards development activities. (NSAI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

NSAI has been appointed chair of the standards sub-committee under the Irish Manufacturing Research (IMR) national steering committee on robots and cobots (humans working with robots). Established in December 2016 membership of the IMR initiative includes manufacturers, researchers, regulators, suppliers in this sector and state agencies NSAI, EI and the IDA. The standards sub-committee facilitates members to access standards under development and revision by international standards organisations (ISO and IEC) in this sector and members of the group from industry and academia are now actively participating in the latest revision of international standards on cobots.

Action 111: Work to increase recognition among businesses of the value of sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility in boosting employment, fostering social cohesion and protecting the environment, in particular through the Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum.

Q2 Measure: Publish the second national plan on corporate social responsibility. (CSR Stakeholder Forum, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Tánaiste launched Ireland's second National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility 2017 – 2020, "Towards Responsible Business" on Monday 26 June. The Plan is action orientated and progress on the implementation of the actions contained in the Plan will be overseen by the CSR Stakeholder Forum, which is comprised of representatives from the business sector, the public sector, academia and other key stakeholders.

Action 111: Work to increase recognition among businesses of the value of sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility in boosting employment, fostering social cohesion and protecting the environment, in particular through the Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum.

Q2 Measure: Complete a baseline assessment research of Corporate Social Responsibility activity in businesses in Ireland. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

A baseline assessment study of CSR activity in Ireland was completed in April 2017. The study examined CSR activity among 1,370 businesses of all sizes and across a range of sectors and how that activity compares at international level.

The results of the study were used to inform the development of Ireland's second National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility 2017 – 2020, "Towards Responsible Business".

Workplace Innovation – Building Resilience and Growing Jobs

Action 112: Develop a toolkit and checklist for enterprises to develop sustainable plans for workplace innovation, with the objectives of sustaining and growing firm level competitiveness, innovation and employment.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, WRC, enterprise agencies)

Update: Complete

Workplace innovation offers significant and sustainable improvements both in organisational performance and in employee engagement, including: improvements in productivity, manufacturing quality, customer service, financial performance and profitability; and increases in employee motivation and well-being, playing a particularly important role in reducing stress, enhancing job satisfaction and mental health, and improving retention. DJEI, in conjunction with the Workplace Relations Commission, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland, has developed a toolkit to help all organisations and their workforces to identify where there is scope to improve their business and their work practices, become more resilient and sustainable, enhance skills, and help maintain and create employment. DJEI also engaged with the Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS.

The toolkit is based around four pillars, working together to form a system of mutually reinforcing practices: employee engagement; innovation; productivity; and training. The toolkit, which builds on existing initiatives to drive competitiveness and support employment, signposts organisations to the relevant supports to help them improve their business performance and work practices.

DJEI consulted representatives of the unions and employer groups in June, who were broadly supportive of the proposed approach. Work is commencing on the testing and pilot rollout of the Workplace Innovation Toolkit.

Realising the Digital Economy Opportunities

Action 114: Establish Ireland as a European leader in the digital economy by ensuring a coordinated whole of Government approach to pursuing the economic opportunities.

Q2 Measure: Host a Data Summit, which will:

- stimulate an inclusive discussion on the role of data in modern society;
- promote greater awareness of individuals' data protection rights more broadly; and
- build on Ireland's reputation as a thought leader in the area of data/data protection. (DoT, other relevant Departments)

Update: Complete

The Data Summit took place on 15 and 16 June 2017 in the Convention Centre Dublin.

The event, a key element of Ireland's work to demonstrate international thought leadership in the area of data and data privacy, brought together more than 80 international, European and national speakers and a wide range of stakeholders to consider and highlight some of the issues arising from the ever expanding role of data in modern life, including:

- Maximising the potential of data driven technologies for our society and economy;
- Achieving the right balance around privacy and personal data, security and innovation;
- Practical steps to prepare for the General Data Protection Regulation;
- How people can manage their own privacy in an online world; and
- Showcasing developments and best practice around positive innovation and societal benefits arising from the good use of data.

Speakers at the event included:

- Vint Cerf, Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist, Google;
- Stewart Baker, a partner with Steptoe & Johnson LLP in Washington and former First Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Homeland Security and former General Counsel with the US National Security Agency;
- Helen Dixon, Ireland's Data Protection Commissioner;
- David Bray, Eisenhower Fellow to Taiwan and Australia; Harvard Executive In-Residence, and Chief Information Officer, US Federal Communications Commission; and
- Prof Joe Cannataci, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy.

Over 900 attendees from the public, private, academic and not-for-profit sectors attended the event and the feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive.

Action 118: Roll out a further 1,000 Trading Online Vouchers through the LEOs and identify further initiatives to enable businesses to maximise the opportunities of the digital economy and trading online in international markets.

Q2 Measure: Following the outcome of the evaluation of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, identify how the scheme might be enhanced to increase the number of businesses trading online and their export potential. (DCCA, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Measures identified in the operational review of the Scheme are currently being scoped, including the development of a national website and centralised web-based infrastructure to enhance the capacity of the Scheme. DCCAE has also embarked on a series of regional events, in collaboration with the LEOs, to showcase the benefits of trading online, provide training and increase awareness of the Government support available. By end-Q2, four regional events were delivered with a further event scheduled for Q4.

Action 119: Host a conference on the Future of Work, which will bring together policy makers and key stakeholders from industry and academia to address the challenges to the traditional employer/employee relationship posed by the new world of work in an Irish context.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The conference was held in Dublin Castle on 12 May with over 180 attendees.

Action 120: Implement the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 -2020 to enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

Q2 Measure: Develop the pilot for the localised UNESCO ICT Competency Framework and ensure that the eLearning planning resource reflects the framework's requirements. (DES, aegis Bodies)

Update: Complete

The development of the pilot for the localised UNESO ICT Competency Framework as a yearlong measure being reported on quarterly. The Working Group is finalising a draft of the pilot, and progressing to plan for the pilot phase.

Action 120: Implement the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 -2020 to enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

Q2 Measure: Improve broadband services to schools, allocate grants for ICT equipment and make available advice and support materials for schools. (DES, aegis Bodies)

Update: Complete

An ICT infrastructure Grant of €30m has been distributed to all schools in respect of the 2016-2017 school year. Queries from schools regarding infrastructure grant being dealt with and tracked for future reference on an ongoing basis. Support Services receiving training modules throughout Q2, will also aid in identifying future training needs. Further Actions for Support Services identified. Interdepartmental working group established and work ongoing to consider how to deliver enhanced broadband services to primary schools.

Action 120: Implement the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015 -2020 to enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

Q2 Measure: Upgrade primary schools to higher broadband speeds - some 800 by end 2016, and at least a further 300 by end of 2017. (DES, aegis Bodies)

Update: Complete

Some 120 schools have received the router upgrade in Q2 2017. Given that schools are off during the summer months, further upgrades will be slower; however Q4 should see the outstanding upgrades completed.

Action 121: Implement the Strategy for Technology Enhanced Learning in Further Education and Training, 2016-2019, which builds on existing capacity and good practice in technology-enhanced learning, and expand access to and continuously improve and innovate further education and training provision.

Q2 Measure: Use funding guidelines to support the expansion of learner access to technology enhanced learning, particularly for disadvantaged learners. (SOLAS, ETBs, DES)

Update: Complete

Funding guidelines to support the expansion of learner access to technology enhanced learning have been used as part of the Funding Allocations, Requests and Reporting System (FARR) process for 2017 and 2018.

Action 124: Develop and roll out a strategy for eHubs for entrepreneurship, eWorking and business growth as part of county development plans, linking effectively with local enterprise stakeholders and enterprise agencies and support the development of ambitious and sustainable proposals for success in competitive calls for funding.

Q2 Measure: Review entrepreneur and enterprise requirements, assess exemplars and best practice models and design framework for Hub concept and development at local level. (DJEI, LAs, LEOs, EI, ÚnaG and IDA)

Update: Complete

To inform the design of the framework for sustainable eHub development, DJEI has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including DAHRRGA, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, the LEOs, Údarás na Gaeltachta and other local stakeholders, to assess enterprise needs and get an understanding of what is happening around the country in terms of best practice models. DJEI has also drawn on the learnings from its engagement at regional level on the delivery of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs. A group of local stakeholders and eHub leaders and managers was convened in late June to discuss the factors for success and the logistics for operating a commercially sustainable eHub. The framework, setting out the principles for sustainable eHub development, has been developed.

Transitioning to a Low Carbon Economy

Action 128: Progress work on the ‘national transition objective’ through the development and publication of the first statutory national mitigation plan and adaptation framework, exploiting any economic opportunities that may arise and establishing a national dialogue to consider key issues to be addressed in meeting the transition objective.

Q2 Measure: Develop and publish the first statutory national mitigation plan. (DCCAE, other relevant Departments)

Update: Complete

The National Mitigation Plan was approved by Government on 27 June and published on 19 July.

Addressing New Labour Market Challenges

Action 131: Develop and reform the State’s public employment services to help ensure that the number of people on the Live Register is reduced as the economy recovers and the labour market responds flexibly and efficiently to employment growth. Under Pathways to Work 2016-2020, this will include consolidation of previous reforms as well as continued prioritisation of long-term unemployed and young unemployed people; as well as expansion of services to currently inactive working age adults with a capacity and a desire to work, that will include lone parents, qualified adults and people with a disability.

Q2 Measure: Lead the development of the dedicated Government ‘Pathways to Work for Jobless Households’ strategy to support adults in jobless households into employment. (DSP/Interdepartmental Group, DSP)

Update: Complete

On 26 April, the Government noted the Minister for Social Protection's intention to publish the Action Plan for Jobless Households (APJH) which will be published shortly. The Action Plan represents a key element of the Government’s approach to delivering on its commitment for an APJH – it focuses on improving employment rates of households with children – both the traditional ‘nuclear’ family and the lone parent family. A number of key policy initiatives/actions to achieve that goal are identified; most notably:

- Extend active engagement with the Intreo employment service to additional groups of economically inactive working age adults. This will be facilitated by:
 - Extending the Jobseeker Transition model to adult dependents on jobseeker claims, with a capacity to work, where there is a child dependent aged between 7 and 14 years of age. This will mean that this group of adult dependants, while not required to comply with the availability and job-search conditions of unemployment payments, will be expected to engage with the activation process;
 - Requiring such dependant adults, where there are no child dependents under 14 years of age, to register as jobseekers in their own right and therefore become subject to the availability and job-search conditions of unemployment payments;
 - In line with the recently published Make Work Pay report, and in consultation with the disability sector, adopting a range of reforms to the main illness and disability payments, including the Disability Allowance payment, in order to support employment, and

engagement with Intreo, among people with a disability who could, with appropriate supports, take up employment.

- Improve incentives and remove barriers for people transitioning from welfare to employment by:
- Completing the roll-out of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), removing disincentives formerly associated with the Rent Supplement scheme;
- Introducing a package of reforms to welfare schemes to support working families;
- Further expanding access to free and subsidised child-care to reduce the cost to families associated with taking up employment; and
- Pilot a family focused employment service/case management approach in five geographical areas. While led by the employment service, this intervention would also allow for the involvement of other public services (or referral to such services) where the engagement process identified wider social issues in the household that affected its members' employment prospects.

Action 138: Examine and advise on the appropriate inflator that should be applied to the board and lodging rates provided for under the National Minimum Wage Act 2000 (National Minimum Hourly Rate of Pay) Order 2000 (SI No.95/2000) and recommend new rates, taking into account the time that has passed since the current rates were set.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (LPC, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The report was submitted to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on 5 May 2017.

Strengthening Clusters

Agri-Food and Marine

Action 139: Support food start-ups through initiatives with retailers including the Food Academy Advance with Musgraves SuperValu and the Taste Buds programme with Tesco.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (Bord Bia, DAFM)

Update: Complete

This measure is occurring throughout Q2-4 and being reported on quarterly. 12 companies are currently participating on Food Academy Advance. This is the third such programme and aims to prepare companies for wider distribution with SuperValu through the Food Academy Fixture. In addition to one-to-one mentoring, participants attended three workshops in this period.

The last round of mentoring for the outgoing cohort under the Tesco Taste Buds programme took place on 26 April. The programme is currently being reviewed by Tesco.

Action 141: Contribute to attracting and developing graduate talent to the agri-food sector through programmes such as Bord Bia Marketing Fellowship and Food Marketing Graduates; the Origin Green Ambassadors programme; and the undergraduate Language Bursary Programme.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (Bord Bia, DAFM)

Update: Complete

Recruitment of 20 Bord Bia Marketing Fellows has been completed and induction took place on 12 June with the previous cohort of 20 graduating in the same month. The Marketing Fellowship has been extended to 18 month programme and Fellows will be allocated three client assignments allowing for more in-depth assignments and business development.

Recruitment for the third Origin Green Ambassador programme has been completed, with 10 ambassadors due to start in Q3.

A new Bord Bia Insight & Innovation Talent Programme will seek to address the skills gap in the sustainable commercialisation of innovation concepts by the Irish food and drink industry. The proposed two-year programme will deliver commercial innovations to market, while at the same time work with Bord Bia client companies to enhance their existing internal insight and innovation skills as they relate to target markets and the consumer. The programme is currently being tendered and is likely to include professional mentoring and graduate placement.

Action 142: Support a further cohort of new food entrepreneurs under Food Works and develop the Food Works Plus supports for those entrepreneurs continuing to pursue their ventures.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (Bord Bia, EI, Teagasc, DAFM)

Update: Complete

This is a yearlong measure and being reported on quarterly.

Food Works is currently in the process of recruiting for the 5th iteration of the programme. The Food Works team (Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland and Teagasc) met all eligible companies prior to the formal application process opening in June 2017, with Introductory Meetings being held in Dublin, Shannon, Dundalk, Galway and Cork. Following an industry led selection process in September, the programme will commence in October 2017. Some of these companies are currently working in the Food Industry Development pilot plant development facilities at Teagasc Ashtown.

Food Works Plus was developed with one entrepreneur in the period concerned.

Design

Action 157: Maximise the potential of the design sector to drive innovation and competitiveness.

Q2 Measure: Examine gaps in supports and identify market opportunities for design-led innovation within companies and deliver proposals to address these. (DJEI, EI, IDA, LEOs, DCCoI)

Update: Complete

In Q1 the Board of Enterprise Ireland reviewed EI's offering to support design innovation and approved eight recommendations which have potential for design focus. The review highlights the applicability of a range of Enterprise Ireland programmes which can support design-driven innovation and establish an approach to stimulate increased design-driven innovation among the Enterprise Ireland client base. Enterprise Ireland is currently developing an implementation plan and is due to report back in the coming weeks on actions & timelines to deliver on the eight recommendations.

Action 157: Maximise the potential of the design sector to drive innovation and competitiveness.

Q2 Measure: On foot of the evaluation of the pilot scheme, roll out a national Design4Growth scheme on a regional basis for micro and small enterprises. (DCCoI, LEOs, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The results of the Design4Growth pilot were delivered to the Minister for Jobs Enterprise and Innovation, and the Dublin Action Plan Group. A workshop of all the stakeholders was held in February 2017 to evaluate and disseminate. The LEO and the Dublin City Council Architects office are working on a second proposal to focus on targeted areas for design and modifying the process arising from the learning's of the Pilot.

DCCoI has included Design4Growth in their National Design Strategy document. It is proposed that this will be included in a formal application for funding to the APJ Regional Competitive Fund.

Enterprise Ireland and the relevant LEO's are scoping out a future roll out of the Design4Growth scheme in the South East region for implementation in H2 2017.

Action 157: Maximise the potential of the design sector to drive innovation and competitiveness.

Q2 Measure: Develop and agree an approach to stimulate increased design led innovation among its client base. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

In Q1 the Board of Enterprise Ireland reviewed EI's offering to support design innovation and approved eight recommendations which have potential for design focus. The review highlights the applicability of a range of Enterprise Ireland programmes which can support design-driven innovation and establish an approach to stimulate increased design-driven innovation among the Enterprise Ireland client base. Enterprise Ireland is currently developing an implementation plan and is due to report back in the coming weeks on actions & timelines to deliver on the eight recommendations.

Construction and Housing

Action 162: Prepare a strategy for the adoption of Building Information Modelling across the public capital programme and to mandate the manner in which it is to be adopted across the public sector.

Q2 Measure: Prepare a strategy for the adoption of Building Information Modelling across the public capital programme and to mandate the manner in which it is to be adopted across the public sector. (OGP, DPER)

Update: Complete

A memorandum outlining the Strategy for the adoption of Building Information Modelling was considered by Government on 18 July.

Ongoing Measures

Responding on Brexit

Action 1: Provide additional market expertise and initiatives, including measures to drive increased company innovation, and additional staffing in Dublin, the UK and third markets, to support companies dependent on the UK market, to sustain existing market share and drive growth.

Ongoing Measure: Place 39 additional staff in the UK and in Dublin to sustain clients' existing business, and open up new opportunities for companies in the UK market. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Working with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and partners across Government, to address the challenges arising from Brexit, Enterprise Ireland is increasing its resources within Ireland, the UK and other strategic markets to support both increased competitiveness and scale in the UK and the diversification of clients' export markets. Of the 39 sanctioned Brexit related posts, 13 have been filled to date and recruitment is ongoing for the remaining posts. Working with Enterprise Ireland's existing staff in Ireland and internationally, the additional resources will assist Enterprise Ireland's drive to sustain clients' existing exports to the UK and open up new opportunities to them in both the UK and other international markets.

Where companies have a significant exposure to the UK, Enterprise Ireland is focusing on helping them to develop and address their Brexit plans, consolidate and grow exports in the UK and also to look at diversifying their exports to other geographies, in particular the Eurozone, Northern Europe and North America.

Action 1: Provide additional market expertise and initiatives, including measures to drive increased company innovation, and additional staffing in Dublin, the UK and third markets, to support companies dependent on the UK market, to sustain existing market share and drive growth.

Ongoing Measure: Work with those companies most exposed to Brexit to develop growth plans which will help them to consolidate and grow exports in the UK. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The UK is Ireland's largest Export market representing 35% (€7.55bn) of total exports in 2016. Our dependence on this market has been decreasing as exports to other markets have grown, however the UK will remain our primary export market. Enterprise Ireland throughout 2017, informed by Enterprise Ireland Corporate and Eurozone strategies 2017-2020, will continue to help companies and sectors to expand their scale, and their international reach (in the UK and other international markets).

Enterprise Ireland's key focus, for its clients exporting to the UK, is on providing support them to drive competitiveness, innovation, export diversification and scale. Where clients have a significant exposure to the UK Enterprise Ireland is focusing on helping them to develop and address their Brexit plans, consolidate and grow exports in the UK, and also to look at diversifying their exports to other geographies, especially in the Eurozone, Northern Europe and North America. Enterprise Ireland has and continues to have significant engagement with its Brexit exposed client companies. Enterprise Ireland has identified those client companies most exposed to the impact of Brexit, and continues to monitor theirs' and the exposure of other companies to Brexit. Being identified as a Brexit exposed client is followed by intense and proactive interaction by Enterprise

Ireland with these clients to understand, inter alia, their exposure to the UK market, critical issues facing the company, what supports Enterprise Ireland could offer, what other external supports were important to the client and an action plan to address the issues.

An Information booklet Information for Irish exporters following UK decision to leave the EU' was published, outlining some of its plans to support clients including:

- Information and Guidance
- Market Diversification Supports
- International Sector Clustering Strategy
- UK In-Market Supports
- Competitiveness and Market Development Supports

Enterprise Ireland's Brexit SME Scorecard – an online tool to help clients take the first step to self-assess their level of preparedness for Brexit is available at the link: www.prepareforbrexit.ie. The output of the scorecard is a comprehensive report, containing actions / next steps for the clients' consideration, as well as events the client may wish to attend, information and key resources. A significant number of companies have already completed the Scorecard since its launch and the feedback has been very positive.

'Be Prepared' Grant – Enterprise Ireland also launched a new initiative to encourage companies to develop specific plans to respond to Brexit. This new initiative will provide support of up to €5,000 towards the costs associated with preparing a Brexit Action Plan. Once a client's Brexit Action Plan is developed, Enterprise Ireland can work with clients to fast-track their engagement with Enterprise Ireland, to identify possible opportunities for further support as the client implements its Brexit Plans.

Enterprise Ireland's in-house Brexit Team may be contacted through the link: BrexitUnit@enterpriseireland.com

Prepare for Brexit Breakfast Roadshows: A number of Prepare for Brexit Breakfast Roadshows have taken place in have taken place in Cork; Waterford; Monaghan; Galway; Limerick, and Dublin. This focus of the events is on identifying exposure companies to Brexit, winning international sales and other strategies to address Brexit challenges and opportunities. A number of invited sectoral speakers, panellists and clients have participated in the Roadshow events.

Action 1: Provide additional market expertise and initiatives, including measures to drive increased company innovation, and additional staffing in Dublin, the UK and third markets, to support companies dependent on the UK market, to sustain existing market share and drive growth.

Ongoing Measure: Continue to collaborate closely with Bord Bia to identify potential sub-sector markets and new collaboration opportunities for food companies, both within and outside of the UK. (EI, Bord Bia, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland continues to work collaboratively on a pilot scheme with Bord Bia to support market diversification for a number of food companies. Further collaboration opportunities will be explored following the completion of the pilot.

Action 2: Intensify work with companies to grow export opportunities and diversify into markets outside the UK.

Ongoing Measure: Work with those companies most exposed to Brexit to develop growth plans to diversify their exports to other geographies, particularly in the Euro Area, Northern Europe and US and Canada. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The implications of the Brexit vote are great for Irish companies, and are more significant than that for foreign owned MNCs, for two reasons:

- The UK is the largest export market for Irish companies
- The UK is most commonly the first market of export for Irish companies
- Implications for first time exporters
- Start-ups are particularly affected

Of the 5,000 or so companies helped by Enterprise Ireland, over 1,500 export to the UK. This cohort of 1,500 companies collectively employ over 102,000 across the country. The impact of Brexit on this cohort varies across sectors, for example, the Construction Products, Construction Services, Engineering, Agriculture Machinery, Timber, Furniture and Food are all sectors that have a high level of sales to the UK. Supporting clients to diversify their exports while growing exports in the UK has been a central pillar of Enterprise Ireland strategy.

Enterprise Ireland has and continues to have significant engagement with its Brexit exposed client companies. Enterprise Ireland has identified those client companies most exposed to the impact of Brexit, and continues to monitor theirs' and the exposure of other companies to Brexit. Being identified as a Brexit exposed client is followed by intense and proactive interaction by Enterprise Ireland with these clients to understand, inter alia, their exposure to the UK market, critical issues facing the company, what supports Enterprise Ireland could offer, what other external supports were important to the client and an action plan to address the issues.

Action 2: Intensify work with companies to grow export opportunities and diversify into markets outside the UK.

Ongoing Measure: Work with clients and other relevant stakeholders to allow ongoing analysis of, and where appropriate devise responses to, the likely impacts and opportunities posed by Brexit on a sector-by-sector basis. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland has been liaising directly with both clients and other stakeholders to gather relevant company-by-company and sector-by-sector data which is being continuously updated and analysed. To date significant analysis carried out by Enterprise Ireland in Ireland and within its network of Overseas offices. The data collected as part of this research is being used by Enterprise Ireland's Brexit unit, who are working with Enterprise Ireland's Overseas Regional Directors to develop an operational plan, to consolidate and grow exports to the UK while also increasing our reach in other International markets.

Action 2: Intensify work with companies to grow export opportunities and diversify into markets outside the UK.

Ongoing Measure: Work with pre-HPSUs and HPSUs as early as possible as they develop their product-market fit to encourage a focus on non-UK markets. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland is working with pre-HPSUs and HPSUs as they develop their product-market fit to encourage a focus on non-UK markets. A key focus for Enterprise Ireland is expanding the reach in the Eurozone of “Eurozone Start” companies. Namely to build awareness of Eurozone opportunities; enhance capabilities and innovation supports to prepare for the Eurozone; increase Eurozone market research supports; increase funding for Eurozone growth and identify new market and sector opportunities.

Where Enterprise Ireland’s clients have a significant exposure to the UK Enterprise Ireland is focused on helping them to develop and address their Brexit plans, consolidate and grow their exports in the UK, which will remain Ireland’s primary export market while also encouraging them to look at diversifying their exports to other geographies, especially in the Eurozone, Northern Europe and North America.

Action 2: Intensify work with companies to grow export opportunities and diversify into markets outside the UK.

Ongoing Measure: Develop a structured approach to the ‘Go-to-Market’ programme planning that will be delivered across Enterprise Ireland’s overseas network in 2017. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Go-to-Market planner is a toolkit: that provides a structure for more productive interactions between Enterprise Ireland and its clients; bridges clients’ capability gaps, and ensures consistency in the service provided by Enterprise Ireland across its 32 overseas offices. The Go-to-Market planner is being used to support companies with their Market Validation; Sales & Marketing Resources; Value proposition; Sales Process; Market and Competitor intelligence and to Channel their export strategy.

Action 3: Roll out Enterprise Ireland’s Global Ambition Campaign to raise awareness and encourage Irish exporters to grow their business globally. This will include sectorally focused messaging targeted at international buyers.

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

Update: On schedule

In October 2016, Enterprise Ireland launched its #Global Ambition campaign which is currently running on national and regional media. Phase 2 of the campaign, focused on the Eurozone was launched in March 2017.

The campaign has focused on companies who have achieved export success in the Eurozone in key sectors and includes a range of content featuring tips and advice from these companies on entering

and scaling in the Eurozone. In addition Enterprise Ireland has released a number of company case studies, video and articles with targeted messages e.g. EU market can provide healthy returns; How a born Global mind set can drive export success; maximising opportunities in specific Eurozone markets, and opening doors to new markets.

There are now 12 #Global Ambition Enterprise Ireland client case studies from a range of sectors and markets and Enterprise Ireland will continue to build on these throughout 2017 focusing on other markets and sectors informed by Enterprise Ireland Corporate and Eurozone strategies 2017-2020. Enterprise Ireland has implemented the second phase of its 'Global Ambition' communications campaign, which has a specific emphasis on encouraging more Irish exporters to expand and diversify into the Eurozone. The campaign coincided with the launch of the Enterprise Ireland Eurozone Strategy 2017-2020 launched by An Taoiseach, which is targeting a 50% increase in exports to the Eurozone by 2020. The 'Global Ambition' campaign featured companies from key potential Brexit impacted sectors including manufacturing, engineering, construction and medtech and showcased star Irish companies succeeding in the Eurozone in these sectors with a specific emphasis on innovation, competitiveness and market diversification.

Enterprise Ireland is also running a series of sectorally driven messaging and communications campaigns in international markets around key international trade missions and sectoral trade events.

Enterprise Ireland will also launch its new 'Irish Advantage' digital communications campaign in Q3 2017 which will target key buyers in key sectors internationally to showcase Irish innovation and capabilities, as part of the Enterprise Irelands strategic ambition to increase exports to €26bn by 2020.

In tandem with the #Global ambition campaign Enterprise Ireland's #PrepareforBrexit communications campaign featuring the 'Brexit SME Scorecard' on www.prepareforbrexit.ie was launched to further encourage Enterprise Ireland and LEO clients to start planning for the impact of Brexit. The website also provides useful content and advisory pieces both from Enterprise Ireland experts and external experts ranging from topics such as Currency, Tax and Regulatory/ Legal Affairs and is linked to the #Global Ambition campaign case studies of client companies diversifying globally and exporting into the Eurozone. The #PrepareforBrexit campaign will feature a larger communications campaign, a series of regional events and other initiatives over the coming months, and will evolve as more information becomes available in relation to the Brexit negotiations. An #IrishAdvantage buyer focused campaign targeted at key sectors and markets will be rolled out in H2, 2017.

Action 4: Run an enhanced programme of trade promotion events and study visits in 2017.

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

Update: On schedule

In March, Enterprise Ireland published its international events programme for 2017 to support Irish exporters which lists 145 events scheduled in Ireland and overseas to include 46 international trade visits.

In conjunction with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Enterprise Ireland programme of events serves to develop in-market expertise and networks, influence decision makers, re-enforce Ireland's strong reputation and stimulate

demand for Irish products and services.

The full programme includes ministerial-led trade missions, inward buyer visits, market study visits, international trade fairs, Embassy events and knowledge seminars and gives Irish companies the opportunity to network with potential buyers in markets in Europe, North America, Africa, India, the Middle East and the Asia Pacific region.

Highlights of the 2017 Enterprise Ireland trade event schedule include:

- 20 trade events to North America to include a multi-sector trade mission to the USA and Canada and digital technologies trade visit to the USA
- 22 trade events to Northern Europe to include the 'Nor Shipping' trade event to Norway; 'Medica' lifesciences trade event in Germany and the Paris Air Show aviation trade event
- 14 trade events to the UK to include 'Digital Construction' and 'UK Financial Services' trade events
- 20 trade events to the Asia Pacific region to include a financial services & Fintech trade mission

In line with the 'Ireland Connected' whole of government trade strategy launched recently, a key element of Enterprise Ireland's 2017-2020 strategy is to help Irish exporters build scale and expand reach globally. As Brexit progresses it is imperative that Irish companies build new and stronger trade links in international markets. The 2017 trade mission schedule targets key sectors in high potential growth markets and aims to open doors for Irish companies to create opportunities to start negotiations and win significant business contracts in overseas markets.

The Action Plan for Jobs 2017 gives a clear mandate to Enterprise Ireland to drive the global ambition of Irish companies, particularly in the context of Brexit, and to set their sights further afield and power the economy through strong positions in diverse export markets. As part of the Trade Mission and Events programme 2017, Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will promote Ireland's capabilities and competitive advantage as an innovation hub with a particular focus on a number of sectors to include Lifesciences, Fintech and Construction.

Minister-led trade missions are impactful in terms of securing high level access for Irish companies seeking to grow their businesses overseas and increase jobs at home. Ireland's 80-strong network of embassies and consulates fulfil a vital role in cooperation with Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in supporting such missions. The complex challenges presented by Brexit had given renewed impetus to Ireland's trade diversification drive and these trade missions are an important element of our response to Brexit.

Action 5: Deliver an international 'in-market' clustering strategy promoting Irish sectoral cluster capabilities to international buyers in priority markets and sectors.

Ongoing Measure: Scope out new sectoral and geographic opportunities across markets to support clients' scaling agenda through a clustering approach. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland is undertaking a preparatory project to inform the development and delivery of an international 'in-market' clustering strategy. This strategy will aim to promote Irish sectoral cluster capabilities to international buyers in priority markets and sectors. The aim of the preparatory project to scope out new sectoral and geographic opportunities across markets to support clients' scaling agenda through the area of connectivity. The project has been broken down into 3 stages:

Stage 1: CEO initiative – Outsourced Network. This network brings together CEOs to investigate potential shared opportunities

Stage 2: Online Portal. Through this online portal companies can share their experiences and develop opportunities for new international growth opportunities.

Stage 3: LinkedIn Network: Similarly this network is being used to connect companies, with the ultimate aim of developing shared growth opportunities.

The project is progressing and the terms of reference have been developed for stages 2 and 3.

Action 5: Deliver an international ‘in-market’ clustering strategy promoting Irish sectoral cluster capabilities to international buyers in priority markets and sectors.

Ongoing Measure: Develop and implement a programme of sectoral clustering initiatives to be rolled out in overseas markets. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland is undertaking a preparatory project to inform the development and delivery of an international ‘in-market’ clustering strategy. This strategy will aim to promote Irish sectoral cluster capabilities to international buyers in priority markets and sectors. The aim of the preparatory project to scope out new sectoral and geographic opportunities across markets to support clients’ scaling agenda through the area of connectivity. The project has been broken down into 3 stages:

Stage 1: CEO initiative – Outsourced Network. This network brings together CEOs to investigate potential shared opportunities

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Stage 3: LinkedIn Network: Similarly this network is being used to connect companies, with the ultimate aim of developing shared growth opportunities.

The project is progressing and the terms of reference have been developed for stages 2 and 3.

Action 6: Enhance the Sales and Marketing Unit within Enterprise Ireland which will act as a centre of excellence for sales and marketing capability working with its clients at each stage of development.

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

Update: On schedule

The Sales and Marketing Unit of Enterprise Ireland assists client companies to identify and address marketing and sales capability gaps inhibiting their international sales growth. The unit has carried out over 60 significant client engagements since its establishment in Q3 2016. A key part of the Unit's remit is assisting clients to gain a deeper understanding of their target market and in turn, to clearly define future role requirements in sales and marketing, leading to the creation of high value jobs.

Action 7: Engage with State agencies supporting exporting SMEs in their development and tailoring of supports and information in relation to Brexit.

Ongoing Measure: Engage with State agencies supporting exporting SMEs in their development and tailoring of supports and information in relation to Brexit. (DoF, DJEI, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: On schedule

The Department of Finance is part of a working group, membership of which includes Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) and Enterprise Ireland (EI). The working group prepared a paper for mid-June on possible Brexit mitigation measures for consideration by the Cabinet Committee on the Economy, Trade and Jobs. In addition, the Department of Finance also prepared an issues paper on a Business Advisory Hub for the consideration of the wider SME State Bodies Group.

Action 8: Actively promote opportunities arising from Free Trade Agreements with the agencies and business organisations, including improved market access, broader supply channels, greater predictability in the trading environment and less red tape.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, agencies)

Update: On schedule

The EU's suite of Free Trade Agreements with third Countries help to open new markets, break down barriers and provide new opportunities for Irish firms. These existing EU Agreements and new trade deals will continue to be important for Ireland. With a small domestic market, further expansion in other markets is essential to our continued economic growth.

Ireland will continue to support the EU's ambitious programme of negotiating new Free Trade Agreements giving Irish Firms expanded market access and a predictable trading environment in third countries.

The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) is an example of a recently concluded trade agreement. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is already working with our agencies and business representative groups to ensure that Irish firms take early advantage of the terms of the Agreement. A Ministerial led trade mission to Canada took place from 30 May to 2 June to promote the opportunities provided by the Agreement.

The European Commission continues to negotiate Free Trade Agreements with Japan, Mexico and Mercosur. In addition mandates to open negotiations with Australia, New Zealand and Chile are expected to be prepared in the Summer. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will work with the European Commission and colleagues across the EU to ensure the best possible outcome for Ireland in any future negotiations

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation implements a strategy in promoting opportunities arising from Free Trade Agreements through an extensive programme of trade missions with partner countries, via outreach and awareness activities working closely with our exporter organisations, and finally in actively promoting information on the EU's FTAs and opportunities directly to business and through our information platforms and through social media.

Action 9: Provide information to businesses on the importance of certification to international product and management standards.

Ongoing Measure: Roll out an information campaign to SMEs promoting use of updated international business management standards to support competitiveness and create market access. (NSAI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

NSAI held eight information Roadshows in Dublin (x2), Galway, Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Sligo and Belfast during February and March 2017 on the new versions of ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015 with the aim of encouraging and assisting businesses to update their management systems to the new standards. During the sessions a number of NSAI clients presented their experiences with the standards to the wider business community. A second workshop on ISO 13485 for Medical Devices featured in two of the events held in Dublin and Galway. All events were well attended with close to 100 attending both Dublin events and the Cork and Galway sessions.

Action 10: Deliver Brexit specific workshops to clients as part of the Finance 4 Growth Series.

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

Update: On schedule

Brexit is a theme that has been running through two of the Finance for Growth workshops (specifically those focused on Planning and implementation). Brexit is highlighted within these workshops as something that is creating an external environment factor that companies need to be aware of and plan for accordingly.

In addition to the Finance 4 Growth workshops focused on Brexit, Enterprise Ireland in May and June hosted a number of regional discussions to assist companies in preparing and planning for Brexit. These events took place in Waterford; Monaghan; Galway; Limerick, and Dublin.

The events provided a platform for robust discussion, information and practical advice for those preparing for Brexit. Participants heard first-hand how other companies are putting plans in place for Brexit. Members of the Enterprise Ireland Brexit and Global team gave insights into the challenges and opportunities Brexit presents and the practical supports available. The events were also an opportunity for companies to network with their peers. These events targeted at companies with potential exposure to Brexit, on the supply or export side and those concerned about competition the market place. The Brexit roadshows were the first in a series of events and will be followed a later in the year with further workshops to support capability building to help companies strengthen their resilience in the face of Brexit.

Action 11: Increase the competitiveness of clients in those sectors and regions most impacted by Brexit through the proactive engagement of our competitiveness, management development and innovation supports.

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

Update: On schedule

Brexit continues to feature as a high priority in the design and delivery of all leadership and

management development programmes including Leadership4Growth (L4G); International Selling programme (ISP); Innovation4Growth (I4G); and Platform4Growth(P4G). An offer aimed at middle management is under development within Enterprise Ireland. Enterprise has been and will continue to be proactive in ensuring Brexit relevant content in all of its Management development offers. In addition Enterprise Ireland's Lean awareness programme is running regionally with respective departments within Enterprise Ireland are adapting competitiveness and innovation supports to help increase uptake.

Action 12: Deliver a range of initiatives to assist LEO client companies in meeting the challenges posed by Brexit, including awareness-raising, mentoring, training, developing internationalisation opportunities and Lean.

Ongoing Measure: Implement a range of awareness-raising and information sharing measures, including through mentoring and training on topics such as market diversification and financial management issues. (LEOs/EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Each LEO continues to Implement a range of awareness-raising and information sharing measures, including mentoring and training on topics such as market diversification and financial management issues. These are supported and underpinned with individual tailored mentoring and products such as technical marketing assistance for market diversification. Financial management remains a core business development pillar and each LEO conducts a range of specific Financial management programmes such as cash flow management, cost and credit control.

Action 13: Recognising the importance of cross-border economic links on the island of Ireland and the role of InterTradeIreland and other North South bodies in the area of cross-border business development and job creation, particularly in the light of the UK referendum decision, maintain a focus on economic growth and job delivery through the North South Ministerial Council and continue outreach activities, including at Ministerial level, to the Northern Ireland business community.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT, DJEI, ITI with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: On schedule

Economic outreach activity has been maintained by DFAT, building North South networks and enabling discussions around the all-island economy and Brexit. Various meetings have been facilitated between business representative bodies North and South (Manufacturing NI & Ibec and FSB & ISME).

Visits to Belfast by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade have involved engagement with the Northern Ireland business community addressing issues around NI political progress, Brexit and the all-island economy. DFAT organised an All-island Sectoral Dialogue on Brexit in Letterkenny on 22 May, focussing on the North West and wider border region, hosted by the Minister of State for the Diaspora and Overseas Development Aid. The North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) is not meeting in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive but North South Bodies are operating effectively, including the recent launch by InterTradeIreland of its Brexit Advisory Service for SMEs.

Action 14: Fund the development of a programme of initiatives to increase the awareness and capacity of SMEs to deal with the practical consequences of Brexit for cross border trade.

Ongoing Measure: Operate a programme of initiatives to increase the awareness and capacity of SMEs to deal with the practical consequences of Brexit. (ITI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The additional funding which DJEI is providing to InterTrade Ireland (ITI) for this initiative is now in place and the recruitment of a new executive by ITI to lead this programme has successfully concluded. Businesses trading into Northern Ireland will now be able to access new supports from ITI, including 'Brexit Readiness Vouchers', which companies can use to fund bespoke advice provision, and they will also be able to draw on other specialist expertise which is being provided. In addition, ITI's general information campaign for SMEs on Brexit will continue.

Action 16: Maximise the opportunities presented by ongoing global developments in front, middle and back office activities in banking, payments, insurance, reinsurance, funds and asset management plus financial market infrastructure arising from Brexit in the context of the Government's IFS2020 strategic measures.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (IDA/DJEI, DoF, DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

IDA continues to promote Ireland as a location for a diverse range of financial services activities. In a post-Brexit context, there has been a particular focus on regulated front and middle office functions. A number of investments have been won including a substantial 500 person project from JP Morgan and others from the Funds (Northern Trust - 400 new roles in Limerick) and Insurance areas (Legal & General). Further announcements are expected in the second half of the year.

Driving Enterprise Growth

Growing and scaling enterprise

Action 22: Implement the new Enterprise Ireland strategy to target the creation of 15,000 new jobs and to support clients to achieve €23 billion in exports in 2017.

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

Update: On schedule

A key part of the government's Action Plans for Jobs has been supporting the growth of exporting Irish companies and as a result create jobs. Enterprise Ireland continues to support to companies to Build Scale and expand their reach which in turn will support the creation of jobs and increase in exports. Enterprise Ireland has launched both its overarching Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2017 – 2020 and more recently its Eurozone 2017 – 2020 strategy, through the implementation of these strategies Enterprise Ireland is working towards the achievement of 15,000 new jobs and to support clients to achieve €23 billion in exports in 2017.

Enterprise Ireland will achieve these ambitious objectives by: driving innovation in Irish enterprises to record levels through new supports to reach the target of €1.25bn in R&D expenditure per annum by 2020; Improving the competitiveness of its client companies through Enterprise Ireland's Lean programmes; Increasing the level of diversification of Enterprise Ireland client companies into new export markets with two thirds going beyond the UK market, and Inspiring more companies to have global ambition. The final outturn will not be available until early 2018.

Action 23: Drive scale in Irish based enterprises through a package of targeted interventions to meet their specific needs.

Ongoing Measure: Support 250 new large scale investments including across sectors and regions. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland provides both Equity and grant support to companies to support them to Build Scale and expand their reach which in turn will support the creation of jobs and increase in exports. Enterprise Ireland has set ambitious targets to increase clients' exports by €5bn to €26bn on 2020 and to support its client companies in the creation of 60,000 new jobs while also sustaining the existing 200,000 jobs.

Enterprise Ireland will achieve these ambitious objectives by: driving innovation in Irish enterprises to record levels through new supports to reach the target of €1.25bn in R&D expenditure per annum by 2020; improving the competitiveness of its client companies through Enterprise Ireland's Lean programmes; increasing the level of diversification of Enterprise Ireland client companies into new export markets with two thirds going beyond the UK market; and inspiring more companies to have global ambition.

To this end Enterprise Ireland offers its clients a range of supports through targeted interventions designed to meet their specific needs, included in these are interventions to support client address challenges arising from Brexit. The final outturn against the number of new large scale investments will not be available until early 2018.

Action 23: Drive scale in Irish based enterprises through a package of targeted interventions to meet their specific needs.

Ongoing Measure: Support Irish companies to expand their reach in international markets, by assisting EI clients to secure over 1,000 new overseas contracts. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland through its network of 32 overseas offices continues to support Irish companies to expand their reach in international markets. A particular focus in 2017 is on assisting Enterprise Ireland's client companies to secure over 1,000 new overseas contracts. Enterprise Ireland is working with companies on a 1-to-1 basis focusing on sectoral opportunities to increase their contact with potential buyers, leading to securing new overseas contracts. These new contracts will help companies to consolidate and grow their positions in existing markets and diversify their exports to other geographies, in particular the Eurozone, Northern Europe and North America. The final outturn will not be available until early 2018.

Action 24: Strengthen the potential of Local Enterprise Offices to support jobs and start-ups at local level.

Ongoing Measure: Roll out a new Portfolio Management Model in the LEOs nationwide, to drive effective client engagement, enhanced portfolio performance and increased levels of client progression towards scale and exporting. (LEOs/EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

As part of a strategic review of LEO portfolio clients (funded), each LEO has undertaken a comprehensive exercise of reviewing its client base and categorising each client into an appropriate strategic segment i.e. performing and non-performing. Each LEO is being tasked with creating appropriate targeting mechanisms and deploying appropriate suite of products/offers to maximise client or to address client issues e.g. export development for growing clients through utilisation of Technical Assistance for Micro Enterprise grants or utilization of Lean competitiveness training for productivity issues. This exercise is complete and will form the basis of ongoing operational review to ensure full ongoing implementation.

Action 25: Enhance leadership capability and address skills gaps by delivering significant Leadership and Management Development programmes to 650 managers and to support the scaling of Irish companies.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver leadership and management development programmes to 650 managers. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

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

To end-May 2017, there have been 74 participants on Enterprise Ireland short programmes and 417 participants on long programmes.

Action 26: Implement tailored mentoring programmes for the benefit of over 300 Enterprise Ireland supported companies.

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

Update: On schedule

As at end-May, Enterprise Ireland has appointed 158 mentors to Enterprise Ireland clients as part of its tailored mentoring programmes.

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

The Mentor Network programme has over 400 business mentors, who give client companies, through their various stages of development, strategic advice and guidance on business development opportunities in Irish and overseas markets. Through their engagement with these experienced business mentors, Enterprise Ireland's clients can accelerate their international growth and success through increased sales, expansion into new markets, successful development and execution of business strategy, and in some cases, introductions to key contacts, opening up business opportunities, channels to market and improved management capability.

Action 28: Target a significant increase in graduate talent into the Enterprise Ireland client base through Graduates 4 International Growth and Grad-Hub.

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

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland's fourth Graduates 4 International Growth (G4IG) programme, is currently being run in partnership with the Irish Management Institute (IMI), and will see this cohort of graduates embedded in international markets in the second half of this year. The objective of Graduates 4 International Growth is to assist companies with ambitious growth plans in key markets to acquire a graduate market research resource and possible future business development capability. As part of Enterprise Ireland's Eurozone Strategy 2017 – 2020, G4IG (which also makes language skills available to clients) is one of the tools being used to help Enterprise Ireland clients to increase the level of market research, and validation of Eurozone market opportunities while also aiming to increase client capability to enter the Eurozone markets.

G4IG participant companies create one or more entry level graduate market researcher position(s). Graduate market researchers work overseas for a minimum of 6 months to a maximum of 12 months to complete a project related to companies' growth plans in the overseas market. Graduates work within an infrastructure that supports them, both in their development and in the completion of this project, for the duration of the programme. Prior to the overseas element of the programme, Graduates spend 6 months in Ireland. During this initial induction period, Graduates attend 12 days of skills modules delivered by the IMI while working with companies. On completion of the G4IG programme, Graduates attain a prestigious academic award (a Postgraduate Diploma in International Business Development) equivalent to 60 credits on the National Qualifications Framework awarded by University College Cork.

Companies benefit through the Programme, by have the opportunity to expand their business and to gain market research for a potential market. Enabling them to compete with other well-known branded companies in attracting capable young graduates through a national Enterprise Ireland campaign. It also assists companies address new market opportunities; expand existing market opportunities or introduce new products in to existing markets with the assistance of a competent/developed and supported graduate.

Enterprise Ireland is also using its Grad-Hub website to attract graduate talent into Enterprise Ireland's client base. The website facilitates easy access for graduates for recruitment onto Enterprise Ireland's Graduates 4 International Growth (G4IG) and Graduate Business Growth Initiative (GBIG) programmes. The site, in Q2, launched its new recruitment facility allowing jobs in Enterprise Ireland client companies to be advertised on the site.

Action 29: Generate closer links and business opportunities between Irish-owned and foreign-owned enterprises to achieve increased global sourcing sales.

Ongoing Measure: Increase business links between MNCs and SMEs in key growth sectors and increase the supply opportunities to large companies by leveraging mixed MNC and SME client company membership of Enterprise Ireland Technology Centres and through other cross-agency global sourcing activities. (EI/IDA, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

A key element of Enterprise Ireland's 2017-2020 strategy is to help Irish companies scale and expand reach globally. Enterprise Ireland's dedicated Global Sourcing team works closely with client companies seeking opportunities with MNCs based in Ireland. Creating these connections locally puts companies in a better position to avail of opportunities with MNCs globally and reinforces Ireland's innovative and competitive supplier base. Our Brexit Unit is also on hand at the three locations during the Trade Mission to provide advice and guidance, as well as information on our range of initiatives to help companies prepare for Brexit. Enterprise Ireland works closely with IDA Ireland to progress the national agenda in this area.

On 17 May the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, launched the two-day Trade and Investment Mission to Dublin, Cork and Galway. A joint Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland 'Global Sourcing' initiative, the aim of the mission was to create business opportunities for Irish-owned companies with Multinationals (MNCs) based in Ireland. The May event was the fourth national Trade and Investment Mission in Ireland.

As part of this mission over 470 one-to-one meetings were scheduled between 167 Enterprise Ireland clients and 115 IDA Ireland companies over the course of the two days. This was the biggest, most ambitious mission to date and provided MNCs with direct access to potential suppliers, as well as raising awareness of the innovative capabilities of Irish SMEs across a range of sectors. These meetings were also invaluable to Irish companies seeking credible access to procurement teams in global MNCs.

Based on the Global Sourcing initiative, approximately 60 new contracts have been secured by Irish companies since 2013 totaling at least €20 million.

Enterprise Ireland aims to increase business links between MNCs and SMEs in key growth sectors and increase the supply opportunities to large companies by, inter alia, leveraging mixed MNC and SME client company membership of Enterprise Ireland Technology Centres. There are 14 industry-led research centres in the Technology Centres Programme. This joint initiative between Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland allows Irish companies and multinationals to work together within these centres. The state funded Technology Centres are collaborative entities established and led by industry. They are resourced by highly qualified researchers associated with research institutions who are empowered to undertake market focused strategic R&D for the benefit of industry and economic value from publicly-funded research.

Action 31: Actively engage with enterprise to facilitate SME participation in public procurement, including training and information events and the development of guidance and information notes.

Ongoing Measure: Develop guidance and information notes on Public Procurement to bring about a more consistent approach to procurement throughout the State making it easier for SMEs to deal with procurers. (DPER /OGP)

Update: Complete

The Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services were published on 5 July 2017.

Action 31: Actively engage with enterprise to facilitate SME participation in public procurement, including training and information events and the development of guidance and information notes.

Ongoing Measure: Hold quarterly meetings with SME representative bodies, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland and InterTradeIreland through the SME working group to identify further measures to assist public sector procurement. (OGP, DJEI, EI, ITI, LEOs, DPER)

Update: On schedule

Quarterly meetings of the SME Advisory Group were held in February and May, with two more scheduled before the end of the year. Significant work has been carried out, by members of this group, on developing an integrated communication strategy to better target SMEs to help increase their awareness of Public Procurement opportunities and enable them compete in future competitions.

Action 31: Actively engage with enterprise to facilitate SME participation in public procurement, including training and information events and the development of guidance and information notes.

Ongoing Measure: Publish a schedule of contracts and frameworks on a quarterly basis on <http://www.procurement.ie> to inform SMEs of opportunities that will arise during the year. (DPER/OGP)

Update: On schedule

The OGP pipeline of procurement activities (Schedule of Frameworks and Contracts) is published on www.ogp.gov.ie on a quarterly basis so that a rolling nine month forward view is always visible. The OGP also releases a mid-quarter update of the Schedule, with a view of project progress. This advanced notice of forthcoming tendering processes can assist SMEs in planning and preparing to compete in public procurement contracts.

Action 31: Actively engage with enterprise to facilitate SME participation in public procurement, including training and information events and the development of guidance and information notes.

Ongoing Measure: Continue the operation of the Tender Advisory Service and review it during 2017. (DPER/OGP,)

Update: On schedule

The Tender Advisory Service is currently operational. Terms of Reference for an external review of the service have been agreed with SME Advisory Group members and the external review is underway.

Action 33: Implement an ambitious International Education Strategy to strengthen the quality and relevance of our education system in global terms, and to support the development of Ireland's global relationships.

Ongoing Measure: Introduce the International Education Mark (IEM) to ensure quality standard and best international practice for international learners in Ireland. (DES)

Update: On schedule

Legislative amendments to facilitate the introduction of the IEM are contained in the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Amendment) Bill. The General Scheme of this Bill was published, following Government approval, on 15 May 2017. The General Scheme has now been referred to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Skills for pre-legislative scrutiny. It is anticipated that the IEM will be introduced in 2018.

Action 34: Work with the Irish Film Board and other agencies including Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's Sound and Vision Fund and public service broadcasters to explore the capacity to expand the audio-visual screen content production sector and implement the joint Irish Film Board/Broadcasting Authority of Ireland national strategy on skills shortages and talent development.

Ongoing Measure: Implement increased Irish Film Board funding along with other industry supports including Section 481, to deliver increased employment in the sector of up to 1,000 full time equivalents per annum over the period 2016 to 2020. (DAHRRGA, IFB, BAI)

Update: On schedule

A training report by IFB and BAI is to be published in the near future. The Audio Visual study is nearing completion and a new policy for the sector is being prepared.

Promoting Trade

Action 39: Develop and implement a programme of Ministerial-led trade missions and other trade, tourism, investment and education events focused on key target markets, and growing existing and new markets.

Ongoing Measure: Develop and implement a programme of Ministerial-led trade missions and other trade, tourism, investment and education events. (DJEI, EI, DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: On schedule

The Government's new Trade Strategy, 'Ireland Connected: Trading and Investing in a Dynamic World' supports an extensive programme of Ministerial-led trade missions, as part of a major drive towards market diversification. Promoting diversified export markets in light of the potential impacts of Brexit is a key priority for the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. This includes markets that are growing and have scale as well as markets where we are already well established but with potential for further growth.

The programme of trade missions and trade events for 2017 includes a substantive focus on the EU

and third country markets.

In 2017, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation have scheduled 42 Minister-led trade missions to existing and emerging markets. These have been orientated to reflect an increased focus on EU markets.

Enterprise Ireland is consistently working with client companies focussing on enhancing their competitiveness, capability and levels of innovation to assist them to diversify into new markets.

Action 40: Advance and promote participation in EU and multi-lateral Free Trade Agreements to encourage market-deepening and expansion to new markets for Irish firms.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI with relevant agencies)

Update: On schedule

The EU's suite of Free Trade Agreements with third Countries help to open new markets, break down barriers and provide new opportunities for Irish firms. These existing EU Agreements and new trade deals will continue to be important for Ireland. With a small domestic market, further expansion in other markets is essential to our continued economic growth.

Ireland will continue to support the EU's ambitious programme of negotiating new Free Trade Agreements giving Irish Firms expanded market access and a predictable trading environment in third countries.

The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) is an example of a recently concluded trade agreement. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is already working with our agencies and business representative groups to ensure that Irish firms take early advantage of the terms of the Agreement. A Ministerial led trade mission to Canada took place from 30 May to 2 June to promote the opportunities provided by the Agreement.

The European Commission continues to negotiate Free Trade Agreements with Japan, Mexico and Mercosur. In addition mandates to open negotiations with Australia, New Zealand and Chile are expected to be prepared in the Summer. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will work with the European Commission and colleagues across the EU to ensure the best possible outcome for Ireland in any future negotiations

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation implements a strategy in promoting opportunities arising from Free Trade Agreements through an extensive programme of trade missions with partner countries, via outreach and awareness activities working closely with our exporter organisations, and finally in actively promoting information on the EUs FTAs and opportunities directly to business and through our information platforms and through social media.

Action 41: Actively manage the Global Irish Network, in cooperation with Government Departments and State agencies to implement the recommendations stemming from Global Irish Economic Fora and to ensure that the Global Irish Network remains a key partner in identifying and delivering actions across the economy that support jobs.

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

Update: On schedule

DFAT continues work actively to build on the Government's Diaspora Policy, the work of the Global Irish Network and the recommendations stemming from Global Irish Economic Fora, to actively engage with the global Irish and Irish business networks abroad to identify and deliver actions that support market access and contacts, investment and innovation. In addition, the current emphasis is building effective engagement with more recent Irish emigrants, the new generations of our diaspora and the affinity diaspora, including by improving connections between these groups and existing Irish organisations and networks abroad, including by exploring ways in which enhanced data on recent emigration trends and Irish university alumni can be developed and connections improved.

Action 42: Deliver focused events and supporting actions to support a deepened economic engagement with Africa, under the banner of the Africa Ireland Economic Forum.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: On schedule

DFAT continues to work with Irish Embassies in Africa, through targeted support from the Africa Strategy Implementation Fund, to assist Irish companies seeking to operate in African markets. DFAT will also work with state agencies and other business groups to support and promote activities in Ireland to increase awareness of economic and trade opportunities available in Africa

Action 43: Develop and implement whole-of-Government cross sectoral strategies for Asia-Pacific and the Americas.

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

Update: On schedule

Further to the publication of the Ireland Connected strategy, drafting of both the Asia Pacific and Americas Strategies are well advanced. Views were sought from Government Departments, agencies, and key stakeholders in Asia and the Americas on the proposed Asia Pacific and Americas Strategies in early 2017 as part of the consultation process undertaken for Ireland Connected.

Action 44: Enhance the coordinated approach to international messaging across Government, including through the regular updating of key messages and their communication by Ireland's Embassy network and update, on a regular basis, key messages for international audiences on Ireland's economic progress and our trade, tourism and investment strengths.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: On schedule

DFAT coordinated and issued a first set of international key messages to the Embassy network and overseas State agency offices in advance of the St. Patrick's Day period. An updated set of international key messages are due for issue shortly.

Supporting Entrepreneurship

Action 46: Provide business developmental and financial supports to 180 High Potential Start-Ups and early stage start-ups and develop new and different sources of future High Potential Start- Up companies.

Ongoing Measure: Provide business developmental and financial supports to 180 high potential and early stage start-ups. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland's engagement with both post-Competitive Start Fund (CSF) funded and post-HPSU funded start-ups involves working with them to develop their business, build their team and build their capabilities to scale their businesses internationally. This work involves both one- to- one engagement as well as master classes, networking and peer to peer learning.

To the end of May 2017, Enterprise Ireland has provided development and financial support to 55 high potential and early start-ups. While there is a strong pipeline of HPSU projects one of the challenges in supporting these early stage companies is their ability to raise matching funding.

A High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) is defined as a start-up venture that is: introducing a new or innovative product or service to international markets; involved in manufacturing or internationally traded services; capable of creating 10 jobs in Ireland and realising €1m in sales within three years of starting up; led by an experienced management team; headquartered and controlled in Ireland; and less than five years old from the date of company's registration.

Action 46: Provide business developmental and financial supports to 180 High Potential Start-Ups and early stage start-ups and develop new and different sources of future High Potential Start- Up companies.

Ongoing Measure: Increase the number of scalable start-ups by targeting new and different sources of HPSU companies e.g. HPSU spin outs from research and HPSUs led by experienced professionals, and disruptive HPSUs. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland aims to increase the number of scalable start-ups by targeting new and different sources of HPSU companies e.g. HPSU spin outs from research and HPSUs led by experienced professionals, and disruptive HPSUs. Within Enterprise Ireland, the HPSU start department are closely engaged with the R&I team to identify and progress potential HPSU projects from research, led by experienced professionals, and disruptive HPSUs projects.

Furthermore, an experienced professional Competitive Start Fund (CSF) is planned for Q4 of this year. To end-May, Enterprise Ireland has supported 55 high potential and early start-ups.

Action 46: Provide business developmental and financial supports to 180 High Potential Start-Ups and early stage start-ups and develop new and different sources of future High Potential Start-Up companies.

Ongoing Measure: Launch targeted Competitive Start Funds aimed at experienced professionals, graduates and overseas entrepreneurs. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland's Competitive Start Fund aims to accelerate the growth of start-up companies that have the capability to succeed in global markets. The fund is designed to enable those companies reach key commercial and technical milestones, 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. All applications to the Competitive Start Fund must be made via the Enterprise Ireland's online application system during call open dates.

To date, three Competitive Start Fund (CSF) calls have been completed. These included a call open to all sectors with a particular focus on ICT (15 companies selected from a pool of 202); one specifically targeting female entrepreneurs (10 companies selected from a pool of 111 applications) and a Graduate Entrepreneurship fund where 8 companies were selected from 70 applications. The most recent calls, launched on 21 June, were the Competitive Start Fund - Regional Entrepreneurship targeting startups from outside of Co. Dublin and the FinTech CSF. The call close for both funds was 5 July. There are further Competitive Start Fund calls scheduled for 2017.

Action 46: Provide business developmental and financial supports to 180 High Potential Start-Ups and early stage start-ups and develop new and different sources of future High Potential Start-Up companies.

Ongoing Measure: Partner with key providers to provide training and capability development for early stage and established business innovators. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland's tailored mentoring and management development programmes use internal and external sources of expertise to ensure clients have access to high level strategic and sectoral expertise to grow their businesses internationally. Supporting its Eurozone Strategy (2017 – 2020), Enterprise Ireland offers clients, both early stage and established) the opportunity to avail of training and capability supports such as: Graduates 4 international growth Programme (incl. language skills); mentors (as per above) to support the client's Eurozone business plan implementation; Management Development training for senior management to grow their business into new markets, and peer-to-peer introductions and networks for intelligence and buying opportunities.

In addition to the above supports early stage companies can avail of the Sprint programme run in conjunction with DBIC. Enterprise Ireland has developed a capability development programme for early stage companies around becoming investor ready. After the initial pilots in November 2016 and May 2017 it has been decided to go to national tender and run this workshop at least 3 times during the year. Enterprise Ireland also has a Market intelligence workshop currently in pilot phase.

Action 47: Deliver a new approach to the promotion of entrepreneurship at local level.

Ongoing Measure: Build an increasingly higher quality pipeline of LEO funded start-ups by developing deeper relationships with the New Frontiers programme across the country. (LEOs/EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

New Frontiers is Enterprise Ireland's national entrepreneur development programme for innovative, early-stage startups. It is a three-phased programme, based in 14 campus incubation centres across the country and is designed to support entrepreneurs capable of building a sustainable new business, trading internationally, creating employment and generating revenue in their own locality. There is ongoing integration between the New Frontiers Programme and Enterprise Ireland's regional offices with a particular focus on recruitment, interviewing and client progression.

Enterprise Ireland is currently engaged in recruiting a New Frontiers Programme Manager and part of the role will be to continue to strengthen and deepen relationships between Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), New Frontiers, Enterprise Ireland and the early stage start up community to lift the quality of starts emerging from New Frontiers.

Action 47: Deliver a new approach to the promotion of entrepreneurship at local level.

Ongoing Measure: Undertake a comprehensive review of the Start Your Own Business programme offered by the LEOs to promote best practice higher quality start-ups in each area. (LEOs/EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Following the completion of a comprehensive review of the Start Your Own Business programme, offered by the LEOs to promote best practice higher quality start-ups in each area, recommendations will be piloted in H2 2017 to focus on pre-screening, standardisation and an new longitudinal evaluation methodology to provide more analytical evidence based conversion rate analysis.

Action 48: Promote and facilitate increased provision of education and training opportunities related to entrepreneurship and identify best practice education and training on entrepreneurship within further education and training provision.

Ongoing Measure: Work with Education and Training Boards to promote and facilitate increased provision of education and training opportunities related to entrepreneurship. (SOLAS, ETBs, DES)

Update: Complete

Research into 'Best practice in Entrepreneurship Education and Training in the Further Education and Training sector' commissioned by SOLAS and conducted by Tom Martin and Associates has been published on SOLAS website. The 2017/2018 Annual SOLAS Service Planning process will incorporate recommendations of the report as appropriate including increasing the provision of further education and training opportunities related to entrepreneurship.

Action 52: Further develop female centred entrepreneurial and start up initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: Support and publicise female specific entrepreneur awards and events. (EI, LEOs, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

In 2011, female-led HPSU investment accounted for 7% of total HPSU Investment, and this figure has increased to a current participation rate of 20%. This upward trend is very encouraging. However, in order to continue on this positive trajectory, more women need to start businesses and more women to successfully scale their existing businesses, support and publicise female specific entrepreneur awards and events. Enterprise Ireland is helping to build the visibility of successful female entrepreneurs and to encourage other women to consider entrepreneurial careers.

Enterprise Ireland is working with Network Ireland, the Local Enterprise Offices and the Entrepreneurs Academy to connect with and encourage as many existing and potential female entrepreneurs as possible. Enterprise Ireland has supported and publicised a number of female specific entrepreneur awards and events to date in 2017. These include the €750,000 Competitive Start Fund (CSF) for Female Entrepreneurs.

Enterprise Ireland has run workshops and initiatives with Google and Intel on Supplier Diversity Procurement initiatives. There were 500 delegates at the Google event, which was open to both Enterprise Ireland client companies and non-Enterprise Ireland companies. The Intel workshop on 29 May Supplier Diversity targeting Enterprise Ireland clients specifically. Other female specific Enterprise Ireland events in 2017 have included:

- Fuelling Ambition 'Steps to Success' Roadshow for female entrepreneurs; and
- Enterprise Ireland's Female Leadership and Ambition Conference

During 2016 the Local Enterprise Offices in the Local Authorities network provided supports to 5,678 female-run businesses and 14,321 female entrepreneurs/female participants benefited from training, networking and mentoring. The participation rate has been increasing year on year, supported by the activities at local level whereby LEOs operate Women in Business Networks and also at National level through National Women's Enterprise Day. The 10th annual National Women's Enterprise Day took place in October 2016 and over 800 female entrepreneurs attended LEO run events all over the country, which were headed up by highly successful female entrepreneurs.

By highlighting the range of Government supports that are available, showcasing female role models and providing direct opportunities for women to network and benefit from peer learning and support, the LEOs aim to increase the numbers of female entrepreneurs starting businesses and creating jobs in Ireland.

Irish Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) also contributes to the development of female entrepreneurship with 38% of applications made from female entrepreneurs (out of a total of 1800) in 2016. For the first time in 2016, IBYE was won by a female, Ciara Clancy of Beats Medical.

Action 52: Further develop female centred entrepreneurial and start up initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: Support women in business networks to establish female specific peer learning. (LEOs, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The LEOs continue to collaborate closely with EI in providing a constant pipeline of quality female entrepreneurs in the various start up programmes. The LEOs, also, run on a regional basis a number of specific female networks (Women in Business) - up to 10 such networks operate in the Country. Their predominate function is to provide a supportive and advisory infrastructure to women by women. The 10th Annual Women's Enterprise Day took place in October 2016 and over 800 female entrepreneurs attended LEO run events all over the country, which were headed up by highly successful female entrepreneurs and the aim of 2017 will be to increase on this figure.

Action 52: Further develop female centred entrepreneurial and start up initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: Publicise and encourage participation by females in start-ups including a targeted Competitive Start Fund. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland continues to encourage female participation in start-ups and in May 2017 held a call Competitive Start Funds specifically targeting Female Entrepreneurs or female-led start-ups, active in the Manufacturing & Internationally Traded Services sectors including the following subsectors: Internet, Games, Apps, Mobile, SaaS, Cloud Computing, Enterprise Software, Lifesciences, Food, Cleantech and Industrial Products.

Enterprise Ireland's Competitive Start Funds (CSF) aims to accelerate the growth of start-up companies that have the capability to become High Potential Start-Up (HPSU*) Companies. In 2016, one in three companies that received CSF investment from Enterprise Ireland were female-led. Under the May call, 10 female-led companies were selected (from a pool of 111 applications), these successful companies will receive investment of up to €50k in funding, and will also have the opportunity to participate in Dublin BIC's INNOVATE accelerator programme. Delivered over a 12-week period in the Guinness Enterprise Centre, the interactive INNOVATE programme will increase the capabilities of the participants and move them to investor-ready within a short period.

*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.

Ensuring Finance for Growth

Action 56: Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders, while driving competition and innovation.

Ongoing Measure: Maintain close co-operation and collaboration with other National Promotional Financial Institutions. (SBCI, DoF)

Update: On schedule

The SBCI is a member of the Network of European Financial Institutions for SMEs (NEFI), the European Association of Long-Term Investors (ELTIA) Networks and most recently became a member of European Association of Guarantee Institutions (AECM). Through these Networks the SBCI maintains close co-operation with National Promotional Financial Institutions (NPBIs) across Europe with on-going engagement in discussion forums and attendance at meetings (by SBCI representative(s) where relevant).

In May, the SBCI hosted the quarterly NEFI meeting in Dublin. This meeting focused on the topic of Internationalisation and seventeen National Promotional Institutions from across Europe were represented. There was good engagement on this topic and on wider European financing issues over the two days from all present and the event was a positive showcase for the SBCI and Ireland.

As mentioned above, the SBCI was accepted as a member of AECM on 1 June 2017. AECM is comprised of both public and private sector guarantee entities (41 members). It is a strong lobby group on guarantee issues and a valuable knowledge source particularly as the opportunity to join provides the SBCI with access to a much larger network of guarantee providers across Europe.

Action 56: Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders, while driving competition and innovation.

Ongoing Measure: Work on the potential for use of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland. (DoF, SBCI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The SBCI had submitted an application with the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group for an extension to the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) facility and this was accepted on 14 June. A first application under the Innovfin Counter Guarantee Facility has been submitted and the initial due diligence process has been completed. The SBCI is looking at ways of utilising European Financial Instruments to optimise the funding available to Irish SMEs and provide supports to the SME finance market, as required.

Action 56: Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders, while driving competition and innovation.

Ongoing Measure: Maintain strong relationships with the EIB Group and the Council of Europe Development Bank. (DoF, SBCI, ISIF, EI)

Update: On schedule

The SBCI is engaging closely with both the EIB Group and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). In Q4 2016, the SBCI put in place a €200 million funding arrangement with the CEB. As stated above, the SBCI has been granted an extension to the COSME facility and a first application under the Innovfin facility is underway.

Action 56: Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders, while driving competition and innovation.

Ongoing Measure: Develop and roll out a COSME Counter Guarantee facility to support a €150 million Cash Flow Support Loan Fund for Farmers with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. (SBCI, DoF, DAFM)

Update: On schedule

As announced in Budget 2017, the SBCI in conjunction with Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), rolled out a €150 million Agriculture Cashflow Support Loan scheme to provide support to farmers experiencing short-term financial pressure due to price and income volatility. This financing is made possible by the Guarantee that has been provided by COSME and the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) set up under the Investment Plan for Europe.

In addition, the Scheme was supported by €25 million being provided by DAFM, including €11 million in 'EU exceptional adjustment aid' and was supported by SBCI capital and a €100 million COSME counter guarantee facility. The Scheme was launched on 31 January 2017 and has now been fully utilised. The Scheme has provided the SBCI with the proof of concept for risk sharing products it had identified when proposing such activity in early 2016. In delivering this scheme in such a tight timeframe with various market and operational challenges, the SBCI's internal capability has been proven and now provides the opportunity to bring additional guarantee-backed products with the support of counter-guarantees sourced from the European Investment Fund (EIF) under EFSI or through the development of Investment Platform structures with the EIB.

Action 56: Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders, while driving competition and innovation.

Ongoing Measure: Pursue an application to the European Investment Fund for the Innovfin Counter Guarantee Scheme. (SBCI, DoF, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The SBCI currently has an application for an Innovfin facility with the EIF. It is intended that this facility will be used to support a policy measure that provides support for Brexit effected companies or companies effected by some other market failure. The SBCI will need to engage third party risk sharing partners in order to implement such a measure.

Action 56: Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders, while driving competition and innovation.

Ongoing Measure: Maximise engagement with the relevant elements of the Multiannual Financial Framework. (DoF, SBCI, EI)

Update: On schedule

The SBCI has secured and utilised a €100 million COSME counter guarantee facility from the EIF and has been granted an extension to the COSME facility. The SBCI currently has an application to the EIF for an Innovfin facility. The SBCI is in regular contact with EIB/EIF on potential adoption and adaptation of product offerings such as investment platform structures for use by the SBCI under its mandate or in the wider Irish economic context - seeking to address the best approach to put the necessary conduit framework in place to optimise funding and risk capital available under the EFSI Juncker plan.

Action 56: Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders, while driving competition and innovation.

Ongoing Measure: Participate in the development of the European Investment Advisory Hub. (SBCI, DoF, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: On schedule

The SBCI and the Department of Finance met with the European Investment Advisory Hub (EIAH) in late 2016 on the potential for enhancing the Supporting SME's Online Tool. The SBCI and DoF are collaborating on potential use of EIAH support to enhance the SME Online tool to assist a broader base of Irish business users and are considering the application of the Online tool as an advisory source for SMEs.

Action 57: Examine ways to support non-bank alternative providers of finance to SMEs in the Irish market both directly as part of the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund's SME strategy, and also indirectly via other strategies including food and agri, real estate and venture capital.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (ISIF, DoF)

Update: On schedule

The Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) continues to deploy capital to support new and existing non-bank alternatives and other providers of finance as part of its strategy. Approximately €267m was committed in 2016, including €30m to two SME Funds (Causeway Capital Partners & BMS Finance), €30m to Finance Ireland, €121m approximately in six VC funds, a €43m investment in Draper Esprit, the publicly listed venture capital vehicle, and a €43m commitment to the MilkFlex farmer loan fund.

On 1 June 2017, the ISIF completed a £10m investment in Draper Esprit plc as part of a £100m placement and subscription. This is a follow-on to ISIF's cornerstone investment in the IPO in June 2016. As a result of ISIF's new investment, Draper has committed to investment at least an additional £20m into Irish companies over the next five years on a reasonable endeavours basis. This brings Draper's total planned investment in Irish companies to £50m by 2022.

Action 58: Enhance and target direct company equity and grant supports to support Enterprise Ireland's client companies to enhance their competitiveness.

Ongoing Measure: Support and monitor investment activity with Irish SMEs by Enterprise Ireland supported angel, seed, venture and development capital funds. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

A key part of the government's Action Plans for Jobs has been increasing the level of funding available to growing and exporting Irish companies, supporting more of them to create the jobs Ireland needs. To support this, Enterprise Ireland progressed the establishment of a number of funds which received commitments under the Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2013-2018). Under the first call for Expressions of Interest, in which €109.5m was committed to funds targeting Series A funding in the general technology and Lifesciences sectors, five funds were launched. Atlantic Bridge III, Fountain Healthcare Partners II, ACT V Venture Fund, Seroba Life Sciences Fund III and the Kernel Capital Growth Fund (ROI) II are now actively investing.

Under the second call for Expressions of Interest, €65m was committed to funds targeting the early stage of company development. In 2016, Enterprise Ireland completed the launch of several new funds under the current Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2013-2018), bringing to eight, the number of new funds successfully launched under this Scheme, which will make a further €662m of venture funding available in the market. Funds launched in 2016 under the second call for Expressions of Interest include AIB Start Up Accelerator II Fund, Frontline Venture Fund II and the University Bridge Fund, all of which are active and currently seeking investment opportunities.

Also, in February 2017 the Suir Valley Ventures Fund was launched the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. In addition, the first seven Business Angels have been approved under the €20m European Angel Fund and each is actively sourcing deals. A further four angels are at an advanced stage of the approval process. This will increase the availability of capital for this market and further develop the angel ecosystem.

In 2016, venture capital funds supported under the Enterprise Ireland Seed and Venture Capital Scheme made 137 investments in Irish based companies, with a total investment value of €67 million.

A third call for Expressions of Interest under this Scheme is currently underway and is expected to conclude later in 2017. The call is seeking to further build on the success of the previous seed funds and is targeting funds who were seeking to invest in the very earliest stages of company development.

Enterprise Ireland continues to work with key players in the wider the business ecosystem to ensure there is an array of funding options available to SMEs. For example, Enterprise Ireland's €75m commitment to the Development Capital scheme has resulted in the creation of three funds which have a combined total fund size of €492m. In 2016 these funds were very active and invested a total of €65m into companies in the Financial Services, Telecoms Software and Life Sciences sectors in Ireland. A procurement exercise to review Enterprise Ireland's Seed and Venture Capital Scheme is ongoing.

Business Angels are also an important element of the business ecosystem, contributing both expertise and investment capital to companies. Enterprise Ireland, in partnership with InterTradeIreland continues to support the Halo Business Angel Network, which resulted in over

€13.5m of business angel investment in 50 companies in 2016.

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

Action 61: Enhance awareness amongst SMEs and entrepreneurs of State business supports to raise their financial capacity in either starting a business, or in growing and expanding an established business.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver a revised integrated communications strategy to improve SME knowledge of the range of State supports for their businesses. (SME State Bodies Group, DoF)

Update: On schedule

The SME Communications Group met on 24 April 2017 to discuss the revised integrated communications strategy. A draft of the updated Communications Strategy will be circulated before the next meeting of the Group.

Action 65: Promote and monitor improved prompt payment practices in Ireland.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver and monitor enhanced reporting requirements on prompt payments for public sector bodies. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Government Decision (S29296) regarding the enhanced reporting requirements for public sector bodies came into effect on 28 March 2017. DJEI will continue to monitor, on an ongoing basis, compliance with the requirements set out in the Government Decision.

Action 66: Engage and collaborate with other bodies and policy analysts to leverage their expertise and draw on international best practice for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policy initiatives that will provide SMEs access to appropriate finance to meet their enterprise needs.

Ongoing Measure: Engage with the OECD through the Working Party for SMEs and Entrepreneurs. (DoF, DJEI, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: On schedule

DoF is working with the OECD on the 2018 edition of the OECD Scoreboard on SME and Entrepreneurship Financing. Officials attended the 51st Session of the OECD WPSMEE in April and will be attending WPSMEE Informal Steering Group on SME and Entrepreneurship Financing and Country Experts in September.

Delivering Skills for a Growing Economy

Action 68: Support and strengthen the apprenticeship and traineeship systems through enhancing the range of courses and providing 4,947 apprenticeship places and 2,600 traineeships.

Ongoing Measure: Implement the Government's Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship. (SOLAS, Apprenticeship Council, DES, HEA, HEIs)

Update: On schedule

Implementation of the measures set out in the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeships and Traineeships are being carried out on an ongoing basis. A key action from the plan was the announcement of a second call for proposals which was opened on the 4 May and will close on 1 September. The Apprenticeship Council will evaluate proposals in October and November 2017. In addition, SOLAS have established a Traineeship Steering Group to oversee the expansion of the National Traineeship Programme. This group will examine ways to reactivate dormant traineeships in addition to expanding the career traineeship model to other sectors of the economy.

Action 70: Deliver the skills for a growing economy and increase labour market participation through the Skillnets programmes for ICT, bio-pharma, life sciences and med tech.

Ongoing Measure: Enhance industry input into programme content, through provision of work placements and promotion of ICT programmes as part of the implementation of Skillnets ICT conversion programmes. (Skillnets, DES)

Update: On schedule

Skillnets ICT Conversion Programmes are progressing very well with some of the programmes having already commenced the agreed conversion programmes in Q1 and Q2 2017. Four dedicated Skillnet networks have been engaged in the design and delivery of ICT Conversion Programmes with enterprise. The four networks are Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet, Technology Ireland Software Skillnet, ITAG Skillnet and Animation Skillnet.

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

5 ICT conversion programme have been delivered, in the year to date, to over 196 unemployed individuals, providing 11,850 training days. Work placements will be provided post-training in a variety of companies as outlined above. Previous conversion programmes have resulted in high levels of employment progression. The programmes being run in Q1 & Q2 include the following:

- Back2IT
- Higher Certificate in Networking Technologies
- Applied Cyber Security JSSP Code designed,
- Applied Software Technology designed
- Women ReBoot Programme

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

Women ReBOOT: Addressing the gender balance in technology companies and ensuring that women returners are retained and re-engaged is an important priority for the Irish tech sector. An innovative new programme - Women ReBOOT - designed and developed by the Software Skillnet in Q4 2016 is connecting highly-skilled women returners to the tech industry after a career break, with several of Ireland's top technology companies. Delivery of this programme commenced in Q1 and completed in Q2. Tech companies such as Accenture, SAP, S3 Group, Openet. Version 1 and MongoDB, are among those supporting the initiative and providing placements for the participants.

Kickstart: The includes technical training in Linux, Windows Server, VMware vSphere ICM, CompTIA Network+ and Information Storage. Delivery of the programme will commence in Q2 and is due to finish in Q3. This programme will be delivered in Cork.

Development of new networks: In Q1 2017 Skillnets launched a new Internet of Medical Things (IoMT) Skillnet. IoMT Skillnet addresses skills needs arising from developments in smart specialisations i.e. the convergence of medical technologies and ICT.

Action 70: Deliver the skills for a growing economy and increase labour market participation through the Skillnets programmes for ICT, bio-pharma, life sciences and med tech.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver training courses in bio-pharma, life sciences and med tech to industry through Skillnets bio-pharma sectoral networks, with enhanced industry input into programme content and provision of work placements as part of the implementation of Skillnets bio-pharma conversion programmes. (Skillnets, DES)

Update: On schedule

Skillnets networks operating in Bio-Pharma, Life Sciences and Medtech include Pharmachem Skillnet and Irish Medtech Association Skillnet, these networks deliver programmes for industry with input from member companies into programme content covering areas such as Validation, Supply Chain, Quality / GMP, Manufacturing & Operations and New Technologies. Recent programmes designed under Future Skills Needs Funding include MSc in Regulatory Affairs, Benchmarking Models in Operational Excellence & Product Development (MÓR Model and Product Development Best Practice Assessment Model), Driving Operational Excellence Through Lean Leadership L9, Fundamentals in Validation and Design for Medical Technologies L8, Certificate in Science in Bioanalysis and Laboratory Practices L8 and Certificate in Science in Bio Manufacturing and Laboratory Practices L8. To help convert engineers from a manufacturing background to Medtech industry a conversion programme in Quality Engineering was delivered in Q2.

Action 70: Deliver the skills for a growing economy and increase labour market participation through the Skillnets programmes for ICT, bio-pharma, life sciences and med tech.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver Skillnets ICT programmes to industry through its ICT sectoral training networks, including regionally-based ICT networks to stimulate regional growth. (Skillnets, DES)

Update: On schedule

Five dedicated Skillnets networks are engaged in the design and delivery of ICT training programmes for the sector, supported by member companies across the ICT and Software sectors nationally. Network activities are congruent with the 3 goals outlined in Skillnet's Statement of Strategy which include delivering training excellence, providing new and relevant skills for new sectors, and increasing the levels of engagement with member companies.

These networks include:

- Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet,
- Technology Ireland Software Skillnet,
- ITAG Skillnet,
- it@cork Skillnet, and
- Animation Skillnet.

Regional clusters include the following networks:

- ITAG Skillnet
- it@cork Skillnet

While the 2 networks listed above have a specific regional focus, the other ICT networks operate on a national basis and contribute to workforce development in the regions. Their key areas of focus are Innovation & Management, Software Engineering, Cyber Security, Big Data, Cloud and Advanced Skills. Examples of programmes delivered for industry are provided below:

- Innovation and Management
 - MSc in Technology Management & Innovation
 - MSc in Product Management
 - Postgrad Diploma Product Management
- Software Engineering
 - MSc in Applied Software Technology
 - Postgrad Diploma in UX/UI
 - Higher Cert in Software Engineering
- Cyber Security
 - MSc in Applied Cyber Security
- Big Data
 - MSc Data Analytics
 - Foundation in Data Analysis
- Cloud
 - Cloud Primer
 - Cloud Service Manager
- Advanced Skills
 - MSc IT Architecture
 - MSc DevOps
 - IoT Cross Skills

New Programme Development

The networks place great emphasis on the development of new training programmes that are relevant, required by industry to address skills gaps and support the competitiveness of companies. All new programmes are developed in consultation with enterprise and the relevant academic institutions through enterprise working groups to determine the programme objectives and design. Companies participating in the various working groups include Ericsson, IBM, Fidelity Investments, Cisco, Email Laundry, Smart Tech, Ward Solutions, Force Point & Trilogy Technologies amongst many more. Examples of some programme designed during Q1 & Q2 2017 include:

- MSc In Applied Data Science and Analytics

This programme was designed and developed by Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet and focuses on Big Data. The programme developed in Q1 & Q2 2017 will commence delivery in the Autumn. Delivery of the programme will be entirely online.

- Postgraduate Diploma in DevOps

DevOps is an emerging discipline in modern Information and Communications Technology field which seeks to integrate the flow of activities between Systems & Software Development and IT Operations to achieve a smoother and more successful deployment and applications for the end-user. The Postgrad designed and developed by Technology Ireland ICT Skillnet will address the knowledge base and skillset applicable to the emerging DevOps discipline.

Action 81: Develop and publish the 2017 Further Education and Training Services Plan which will provide detail of all SOLAS funded FET provision and funding provided to agencies and bodies to support the FET sector. The skills needs at national level will be informed by the recommendations of the National Skills Strategy and the regional skills needs identified by the Regional Skills Fora.

Ongoing Measure: Implement the 2017 FET Services Plan. (SOLAS, ETBs, DES)

Update: On schedule

The 2017 Further Education and Training (FET) Services Plan will be implemented during in Q3.

Promoting Innovation

Action 82: Enhance and support business RDI investment and capacity of both Irish and foreign owned enterprise to achieve the Innovation 2020 targets; this will include optimising, simplifying and rebranding Enterprise Ireland's in-company support, rolling out a new Business Innovation Initiative and by enterprise agencies working with companies to ensure they are equipped to exploit disruptive and emerging technologies.

Ongoing Measure: Target Enterprise Ireland client SMEs working with "disruptive technologies" in order to help them leverage early stage financing opportunities available in Horizon 2020's SME instrument. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The EU's Horizon 2020 SME instrument offers Irish companies valuable opportunities to participate

in high quality collaborative research projects with other companies and research institutions across Europe. Enterprise Ireland targets disruptive technologies client to support them benefit from early stage financing opportunities available in Horizon 2020's SME instrument and in turn to help develop competitive industries.

Creating competitive industries is an objective of H2020, making Europe a more attractive location to invest in research and innovation, by promoting activities where businesses set the agenda, which will provide major investment in key industrial technologies, maximise the growth potential of European companies by providing them with adequate levels of finance and help innovative SMEs to grow into world-leading companies.

Researchers and companies in Ireland have won a total of €386 million in EU funding from the Horizon 2020 programme to February 2017. Higher Education Institutions accounted for €221 million, or 57% of the total and companies won €126 million, or 33%. SMEs received €78 million of the funding to companies. To date 82 individual participants (companies and researchers) have secured funding of more than €1 million.

Ireland's best performance was in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions sub-programme which supports the training and mobility of researchers. Ireland has secured €70 million from this programme, equivalent to 3.1% of the committed EU budget. Ireland's next best programmes were the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and European Research Council programmes, which yielded €62 million and €49 million, respectively.

This means that Ireland is on track to achieve its national target of securing €1.25 billion in EU funding over the course of Horizon 2020.

Action 84: Drive innovation procurement activities through the implementation of a new Small Business Innovation Research initiative and by identifying and developing a systematic approach to innovative public procurement.

Ongoing Measure: Drive the implementation of the new Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) initiative for Ireland working in partnership with willing Public Bodies and deliver five SBIR collaborative projects in 2017. (EI, public bodies, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) is an initiative designed to drive innovation into the public sector by facilitating robust engagement between contracting authorities and innovative companies. It is competitive in nature with a two phased approach, channeled through an open challenge call to industry, prepared and published by public sector organisations. SBIR commences with initial feasibility and is followed by a final, detailed, product development stage. To date in 2017, Enterprise Ireland has successfully launched 6 SBIR projects (four in Dublin and two in Cork).

SBIR Ireland is the national innovative pre-commercial procurement initiative, administered by Enterprise Ireland. Recognised internationally as a proven approach that works for both public bodies and companies, it facilitates SMEs with early stage ideas to access public sector procurement opportunities.

Three Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) competitions were announced in April, with up to €600k in funding, have been launched by Smart Dublin and Enterprise Ireland. The challenges aim to source smart and low cost innovative solutions to tackle illegal dumping, to monitor and predict

blocked gullies in high risk flooding areas and to design wayfinding solutions in the Dublin region. The wayfinding challenge was launched in partnership with the Grangegorman Development Agency. The three challenges were open for applications from 27 April until 12 June at www.etenders.gov.ie

Successful applicants will be selected by an open competition process run in two phases (feasibility and prototyping). It was open to anyone with an idea or solution, including organisations of all sizes, tech developers, solution and service providers, universities and entrepreneurs. This competition follows on from the success of the SBIR cycle challenge last year which funded €150k of innovation contracts.

The SBIR process allows local authorities to embrace an entrepreneurial approach to solving challenges. This is just the start of a longer term programme for Dublin's local authorities to embrace Smart technologies as set out in the Dublin Action Plan for Jobs. This new fund has the potential to create in-demand technologies and innovations which can be adopted quickly to make positive and significant societal impacts.

In addition to the three SBIR's launched in Dublin, Cork County Council together with the Cork Smart Gateway initiative and the Age Friendly Alliance launched a €80k Small Business Research and Innovation (SBIR) Challenge with Enterprise Ireland on 13 April. Through this challenge call, Cork County Council wishes to explore low cost, innovative and accessible solutions that will help all of its older citizens to maintain a good quality of life and enable them to remain and feel secure in their home. Solutions sought to address one or more of the effects of being/feeling isolated and insecure and in particular increase the resilience of older people to respond to the impacts of critical events. The SBIR challenge is a joint initiative between Cork County Council and Enterprise Ireland and was open for applications from 13 April until 2 June 2017. Successful applicants will be selected by an open competition process run in two phases. The competition was open to any organisation, university and service providers. SBIR projects were also launched with Cork Airport (in May 2017) and Dublin Airport (June 2017).

Action 84: Drive innovation procurement activities through the implementation of a new Small Business Innovation Research initiative and by identifying and developing a systematic approach to innovative public procurement.

Ongoing Measure: Identify and develop a systematic approach to Innovative Public Procurement in Ireland. (EI, OGP, public bodies, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

In 2017, Enterprise Ireland has launched six SBIR projects and is embedding a systematic approach to Innovative Public Procurement in Ireland through the SBIR process that can be used by participating Public bodies in the future. Enterprise Ireland has procured an external resource to provide advise public bodies participating in innovative procurement through the framework of SBIR.

Public procurement continues to provide an important opportunity in the domestic market for Irish companies. Supporting the participation of Irish firms in procurement overseas provides an opportunity for innovative firms to win contracts which can serve as reference sites which can facilitate and accelerate the generation of sales in overseas markets.

Enterprise Ireland's Public Procurement Unit is continuously mapping the progress of the UK models of Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales) across

all sectors and noting emerging trends as well as success stories. The definitive US SBIR programme with its 30 year plus history is a great source of learning in terms of enhancing SBIR Ireland.*

*SBIR Ireland is the dedicated national programme which enables public sector bodies to connect with innovative ideas and technology businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific Public Sector challenges and needs.

Action 85: Provide advice through the newly established Innovation Office on regulatory requirements and general guidance on technical or scientific issues to any individual or organisation that may be developing innovative health products or technologies, with a particular focus on academic researchers and early stage developers in start-up companies and SMEs.

Ongoing Measure: Publish general updates and information about regulatory and scientific issues related to innovation. (HPRA, D/Health)

Update: On schedule

The Innovation office was established in November 2016. General updates and information about regulatory and scientific issues received by the Innovation Office since it was established will be published relating to innovation as applicable. Two-thirds of queries relate to the research stage of development of a health product and half of the queries are from academic institutes or SMEs.

Action 88: Drive increased collaboration between enterprise and the public research system by increasing the pool of researchers strongly positioned to take up employment in industry in Ireland, supporting over 850 industry-led collaborative research projects, developing a cadre of “industry ready researchers” to increase SME capability, and enhancing the skills of PhD students to meet the demands of industry and academia.

Ongoing Measure: Support over 850 industry-led collaborative research projects to drive innovation across all stages of company development in order to help companies scale and grow. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

As of end-May, 2017 Enterprise Ireland had supported 508 collaborative research projects. Enterprise Ireland’s Industry led collaboration supports helps companies to find other companies with similar research agendas and help them to collaborate to share resources and knowledge. The programmes Enterprise Ireland offers to support collaborative research with other companies include: Technology Centres; Enterprise Ireland’s Research & Development (R&D) Fund; and Knowledge Transfer Ireland.

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

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

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

Action 88: Drive increased collaboration between enterprise and the public research system by increasing the pool of researchers strongly positioned to take up employment in industry in Ireland, supporting over 850 industry-led collaborative research projects, developing a cadre of "industry ready researchers" to increase SME capability, and enhancing the skills of PhD students to meet the demands of industry and academia.

Ongoing Measure: Develop a cadre of "industry ready researchers" to increase SME capability to innovate through the EU Marie Curie Programme and other Enterprise Ireland funded assets (Technology Centres and Technology Gateways). (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland introduces companies to many international programmes that stimulate and improve collaboration between companies in different EU member states. These include programmes such as Horizon2020 (H2020) and the Electronic Components and Systems for European Leadership (ECSEL) Joint Undertaking. The latter has the objective of contributing to the implementation of the Horizon 2020 programme, and in particular to Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies.

Ireland has performed well in securing funding under both H2020 and FP7 (forerunner to H2020). Ireland's success in this regard has as a result delivered a series of benefits to participant organisations that range from enhanced access to international scientific networks; to improvements in technological capacity and investments; to improvements in an organisation's ability to attract researchers; and tangible results in terms of commercialisation of research outcomes and improved national and international competitiveness.

Marie Curie fellows benefited from working with leading overseas research groups and the extension of their international scientific networks, but also from access to major international research facilities. Ireland also had particular relative success in areas such as Marie Curie co-fund, participation by SMEs, leading of consortia and in certain areas of the framework programme such as ICT, Health and Research for the benefit of SMEs. The National Support Structure has played a highly important role in Ireland's overall success. Although causal impacts are difficult to isolate, there are a number of strong indicators of impact, combined with survey and interview evidence, which suggests FP7 has been of benefit for Ireland and had significant impacts on developing the innovation base.

Companies who participated in an evaluation of Ireland's Participation in FP7 and Horizon 2020 – (carried out on behalf of DJEI July 2016) maintain that participation in FP7 has had an impact on their levels of turnover, employment, and productivity. It implies that the positive benefits outlined above (access to international networks and knowledge, increased research and technological capacity, ability to attract and retain research staff, etc.) have materialised in commercial gains.

Action 88: Drive increased collaboration between enterprise and the public research system by increasing the pool of researchers strongly positioned to take up employment in industry in Ireland, supporting over 850 industry-led collaborative research projects, developing a cadre of “industry ready researchers” to increase SME capability, and enhancing the skills of PhD students to meet the demands of industry and academia.

Ongoing Measure: Provide advice and support for research and innovation to Enterprise Ireland client companies and research institutions in the defence sector through the Defence Enterprise Initiative. (DoD)

Update: On schedule

Three projects are underway in the Defence Organisation to further develop the Defence Enterprise Initiative. These projects include developing a strategy for the Initiative and an Intellectual Property Policy, as well as setting up a Security and Defence Enterprise Group with Enterprise Ireland.

Meetings will continue to take place between the Defence Organisation and Enterprise Ireland in the form of the Defence Enterprise Committee; the Defence Organisation will continue to provide assistance to Enterprise Ireland and Enterprise Ireland Companies throughout 2017. The Defence Forces were involved in a number of Horizon 2020 proposals that were submitted to the Commission in August 2016. One of the projects called CAMELOT was successful and commenced in Q2 2017. The consortium includes a number of international members as well as the National Maritime College of Ireland. The Department of Defence will continue to ensure that all interested parties are kept abreast of EDA, EU Commission and Horizon 2020 developments, in order to ensure that the Defence Organisation’s involvement in collaborative projects are fully supported, thus ensuring their best possible chance of success.

Action 90: Implement specific actions in Innovation 2020 which will support the development of excellent researchers, world-leading research teams, equipment and facilities across the public research system.

Ongoing Measure: Roll out regional SME innovation networks ensuring that innovative SMEs’ skills and innovation needs are met by the HEIs in their region. (EI, HEIs, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

This deliverable is being met by the roll out of the National Skills Analysis Workshops which will commence in H2 2017. The National Skills Analysis Workshops will identify the skills and innovation requirements of SMEs and will inform, through the Regional Skills Fora, Enterprise Ireland’s engagement with the HEIs (Higher Education Institutions, Universities & private training providers).

Action 93: Drive research and innovation in advanced manufacturing by developing the necessary research skills and capacity and by progressing the identified need for Research Technology Organisation support.

Ongoing Measure: Develop proposals in the area of advanced manufacturing delivered through a Research Technology Organisation model for the benefit of both indigenous and multinational companies. (IDA, EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Work is ongoing on the development of proposals in this area.

Action 94: Drive EU and international research collaboration to maximise the impact of investment in research and innovation including through new international research partnerships, securing €12 million in product development contracts for Irish based companies from the European Space Agency, and by Enterprise Ireland continuing to lead the national drive to secure €1.25 billion in funding for Irish companies and academics by 2020.

Ongoing Measure: Continue to lead the national drive to secure €1.25 billion (€150 million in 2017) in research funding from Horizon 2020 for Irish companies and academics by 2020. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

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

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

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

The latest European Commission data published in November 2016 shows Horizon 2020 funding to Ireland at €50.3m against the target of €150m. This brings Ireland's total funding in Horizon 2020 to €386m. Ireland has the highest success rate in Europe for the Horizon 2020 SME Instrument. The Higher Education institutions remain the primary beneficiaries, accounting for 57.2% of all funding. Funding to Private Industry accounts for 32.5% with public bodies, research organisations and others making up the rest (10.3%). Demand for the programme from companies has been high (with 2,273 participations, 332 successes and funding of €125.6m approved).

Action 94: Drive EU and international research collaboration to maximise the impact of investment in research and innovation including through new international research partnerships, securing €12 million in product development contracts for Irish based companies from the European Space Agency, and by Enterprise Ireland continuing to lead the national drive to secure €1.25 billion in funding for Irish companies and academics by 2020.

Ongoing Measure: Secure €12 million in product development contracts for Irish based companies from the European Space Agency from which next generation commercial products can be generated. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Ireland has been a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) since its foundation in 1975. Irish industry is benefitting from Ireland's ESA membership through supporting in-company product development for the space market and commercial spin-out of space technologies into non-space markets. In 2016, €12.56m was secured in contracts from ESA, and it is anticipated that the 2017 target of €12m will be reached by year end.*

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

* 2017 figures will not be made available to Enterprise Ireland from ESA until Q2, 2018

Stimulating Regional Growth

Regional Enterprise Development

Action 97: Support all eight Regional Action Plans for Jobs and provide investment of up to €60 million over the period to 2020 to support collaborative approaches to boost enterprise and job creation across the regions. This competitive funding is aimed at accelerating economic recovery in every part of the country by delivering on the potential of local and regional strengths.

Ongoing Measure: Roll out the Regional Accelerator Scheme 2015-2017 following the first call for expressions of interest in 2016. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Ireland is recognised as a key hub for technology and innovation and Enterprise Ireland’s accelerator programme will make a real contribution to supporting more start-ups and ultimately more jobs.

The Accelerator programme is part of Enterprise Ireland’s overall strategy for increasing the number and quality of start-ups that have the potential to employ more than 10 persons and achieve €1 million in export sales within three years. The Scheme is funded under the €40m Fund established by Government to support regional economic development.

On 2 May 2017, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and Enterprise Ireland, launched the NDRC at PorterShed Accelerator in Galway to further enhance the High Potential Start-up (HPSU) eco-system and develop start-up capability, infrastructure and capital investment within the region. The accelerator is open to applications from potential teams or individuals both in Ireland or overseas, in all technology sectors.

By introducing this accelerator programme in co-ordination with NDRC, AIB and Galway City Innovation District, Enterprise Ireland is leveraging our strong international reputation as a technology hub and our world-class start-up ecosystem to allow ambitious entrepreneurs to start, scale and succeed - providing valuable and highly skilled jobs here into the future.

This new accelerator programme will provide intensive commercial support and expert mentoring to high potential startup businesses with a digital focus. There is a very strong culture of technology entrepreneurship and innovation within Galway and its environs which can be leveraged to build strong digital companies with global potential. The accelerator programme is an important addition to the vibrant start-up eco-system in Galway and the West of Ireland.

A second Accelerator, supported by Enterprise Ireland, DCU & ESA, launched in May aims to boost Irish SpaceTech. The European Space Agency (ESA) accelerator (M2M/IoT Maker-Space), will be based in Dublin City University (DCU) Alpha, where many of its accelerators and innovative technologies are developed. This accelerator aims to support the development of machine-to-machine and internet of things (IoT) technologies for satellite communications and to this end will support the rapid prototyping and validation of ideas that answer challenges posed by both the ESA and DCU.

The initiative, backed by Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is targeted at industry, spacetech entrepreneurs, academics and the wider maker movement. They have identified three areas of space communications that they hope will be explored by participants, including developing sensors to aid in search-and-rescue operations, and monitoring critical infrastructure. Additionally, developers will be tasked with adapting existing radio protocols and standards found in Earth-based communications with systems in space.

The contract was awarded to the new maker space through the ESA's Advanced Research in Telecommunications Systems (ARTES) programme, with accepted projects being funded over an 18-month period. The ESA said that the value of these projects will be between €5,000 and €20,000.

Action 99: Support the creation of 500 new jobs in 2017 and continue to help maintain existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post-research and pre-commercialisation units in the life sciences, food and business support services and creative enterprises sectors, as well as for community development initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: Invest in training and skills development interventions in support of building and improving the skills-base amongst local enterprises and those seeking employment. (DAHRRGA, ÚnaG)

Update: On schedule

Údarás recently approved €1.3m in support of the implementation of its training and skills development programme. The multi-faceted programme contains targeted measures focusing on local enterprise and economic development interventions. This investment will improve skills and qualifications and will assist in the maintenance of the employment base; the creation of new enterprises and additional employment. The target relating to the creation of 500 new jobs is on schedule.

Action 99: Support the creation of 500 new jobs in 2017 and continue to help maintain existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post-research and pre-commercialisation units in the life sciences, food and business support services and creative enterprises sectors, as well as for community development initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: Develop advanced property solutions for new and existing innovative companies. (DAHRRGA, ÚnaG)

Update: On schedule

Údarás na Gaeltachta has approved a capital budget which prioritises facilities that require refurbishment for client companies who are in a development phase. These projects are at various stages: pre-planning, planning application (where required), tendering and construction. This measure is on-going. The target relating to the creation of 500 new jobs is on schedule.

Supporting Jobs for Rural Communities

Action 100: Launch and implement the Action Plan for Rural Development, with over 200 actions across Government which will maximise the potential for jobs and economic and social progress in rural areas.

Ongoing Measure: Implement the Action Plan for Rural Development. (DAHRRGA, relevant public bodies)

Update: On schedule

Realising our Rural Potential, the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development was launched on 23 January 2017. The Action Plan contains 276 actions for the delivery across Government, State agencies and other bodies over the next three years to support the economic and social progress of rural Ireland.

Progress reports on the Action Plan will be published every 6 months, with the first report due to be published in July. The Department, however, published an Interim Progress Report in May which demonstrated that just over three months into the implementation of the Action Plan, the Plan has already established a great deal of momentum.

A meeting of the Action Plan Monitoring Committee will take place in July 2017, at which the first formal 6-month Progress Report will be reviewed prior to its submission to Government.

Action 101: Provide EU LEADER programme funding in support of the enterprise priorities identified in the Local Development Strategies produced by Local Action Groups in every county, including through focused investment in enterprise development and rural tourism.

Ongoing Measure: Put in place funding agreements with Local Action Groups in all rural areas in Ireland. (DAHRRGA)

Update: On schedule

Funding Agreements are now in place with 29 LEADER Local Action Groups covering all rural areas in Ireland. More than 5,000 expressions of interest from potential project applicants, with an estimated value of over €240 million, have been recorded by Local Action Groups.

Action 101: Provide EU LEADER programme funding in support of the enterprise priorities identified in the Local Development Strategies produced by Local Action Groups in every county, including through focused investment in enterprise development and rural tourism.

Ongoing Measure: Provide targeted capacity building sessions with Local Action Groups to identify strategic opportunities. (DAHRRGA)

Update: On schedule

Two targeted capacity building events have been held with LEADER Local Action Groups in 2017. The most recent event explored the opportunities for LEADER to support rural tourism as a key driver of growth in rural areas and the event included input from Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Enhancing Competitiveness

Action 104: The National Competitiveness Council's priority issues for sustainable competitiveness over the short to medium term will be brought to Government. Individual Government departments will respond and bring forward proposals as appropriate to enhance competitiveness. This work will be overseen by the relevant Cabinet Committees.

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

Update: On schedule

Priority issues and proposals identified by the NCC have been brought forward through the Cabinet Committee on Economy, Trade and Jobs. Competitiveness issues will be progressed as required through Cabinet Committee A under the new Cabinet Committee structure.

Action 105: Implement the Cost of Motor Insurance Action Plan.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DoF)

Update: On schedule

The relevant Government Departments and Agencies are continuing to implement the recommendations in the Report on the Cost of Motor Insurance (the "Report"). The recommendations in the Report's Action Plan have detailed timelines for implementation. There is a commitment within the Report that the Working Group will prepare quarterly updates on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations and the first such update was published in early May. The second quarterly report will focus on the seventeen action points which were due for completion during the second quarter of 2017 and will be published on the website of the Department of Finance. Substantial work has also been undertaken in respect of the remaining actions points with later deadlines and the eight action points which are classified as "ongoing" in the Action Plan.

Improving the ease of doing business

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

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

Update: On schedule

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

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

Action 106: Provide updates each quarter on progress achieved towards the Government's commitment to make all licensing, authorisation, certification, permit application, and payment-taking procedures for business fully available online on a progressive basis by November 2017.

Ongoing Measure: Support the rollout of licences.ie, the integrated one-stop-shop licensing application portal for public sector licensing bodies. (LGMA, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The rollout of licences.ie is on-going and it currently has 6,250 registered users, with 30 separate application forms across 10 different licence types for 7 licensing authorities (both national and local authorities). To date this year an excess of €2 million in fees has been processed. The Service is continually being expanded to include additional licence types and new licensing authorities.

Action 111: Work to increase recognition among businesses of the value of sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility in boosting employment, fostering social cohesion and protecting the environment, in particular through the Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum.

Ongoing Measure: Roll out a regional campaign to promote the Corporate Social Responsibility SME online Tool. (CSR Stakeholder Forum, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The CSR online tool for SMEs was launched by Minister Breen in December 2016. A number of actions have been taken to date to promote the on-line tool including via social media, and being featured in the March edition of the CSR ezine newsletter, which has an on-line subscription. Copies of the CSR ezine newsletter were circulated at a number of regional meetings. The roll-out at regional level will continue in the second half of 2017.

Action 111: Work to increase recognition among businesses of the value of sustainable business practices and corporate social responsibility in boosting employment, fostering social cohesion and protecting the environment, in particular through the Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum.

Ongoing Measure: Publish the quarterly e-zine on Corporate Social Responsibility starting in Q1 2017. (CSR Stakeholder Forum, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The third edition of the Ezine magazine was published in June. The next edition will be published in September 2017. The Ezine is part of a wider social media initiative operated by the DJEI and the CSR Stakeholder Forum, aimed at increasing the awareness of the value of CSR to business and society as a whole.

Realising the Digital Economy Opportunities

Action 114: Establish Ireland as a European leader in the digital economy by ensuring a coordinated whole of Government approach to pursuing the economic opportunities.

Ongoing Measure: Progress the specific enterprise opportunities arising from the digital economy. (DJEI)

Update: On schedule

DJEI has appointed a consultant to undertake research and analysis in a study on the 'digitalisation of the manufacturing sector and the policy implications in Ireland'. Key objectives of this study are:

- Determine the potential impacts, opportunities and challenges in the manufacturing sector and its supply chain arising from digitalisation of the manufacturing sector- highlighting any variations across manufacturing sub-sectors.
- Determine the policy response options for Ireland to address impacts, opportunities, and challenges, in the manufacturing sector in Ireland and its supply chain, that arise from digitalisation of the manufacturing sector (highlighting any variations across manufacturing sub-sectors) - with a view to growing the enterprise base in a sustainable manner and sustaining and growing high valued employment.

DJEI has also established a Steering Group to guide the study which is made up of firm representatives across a mix of sectors, indigenous and foreign-owned firms, academics and agencies of DJEI. The initial research findings will be presented to the Steering Group in September 2017, with completion of the final report and policy options by December 2017.

Action 115: Award the contract to the winning bidder(s) to deliver a high speed broadband network to over 750,000 premises in Ireland.

Ongoing Measure: Manage the procurement process to select a company or companies who will roll out a new high speed broadband network within the State Intervention Area. (DCCA/E)

Update: On schedule

There has been extensive progress since last period.

- In accordance with procedures set out in December 2015, in late 2016 DCCAE initiated a review of an eir proposal to rollout fibre to over 300,000 premises in rural areas on a commercial basis by end 2018. These premises were in areas that had formed part of the procurement process for the NBP State Intervention area. On 4 April, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment signed a commitment agreement with eir in relation to those plans. As a result over 77% of premises will have access to high speed broadband by end 2018.
- In April the Department published an updated High Speed Broadband Map which is available at www.broadband.gov.ie. This update changes the intervention area to:
 - exclude the premises being catered for within the eir commitment agreement and
 - include areas where commercial investment did not materialise.

As a result of the map change, in April the intervention area reduced from 750k premises to 540k premises. This map finalises the State Intervention Area for the procurement process and is an important milestone in the procurement process.

The procurement process is being intensively managed, to ensure an outcome that delivers a future-proofed network that serves homes and businesses across Ireland, for at least 25 years. With the finalisation of the map and following extensive dialogue with bidders, the procurement is progressing to the next stage. On 20 June 2017, the Department wrote to the three bidders in the NBP procurement process inviting them to submit their 'Detailed Solutions' by 26 September 2017. The 'Detailed Solutions' will then be reviewed before the final tender is issued. The NBP procurement process will then move to the next stage where a preferred bidder will be appointed.

Action 116: Develop proposals in consultation with other stakeholders on the establishment of unique business identifiers and an access and authentication portal which will follow a prototype Government Digital Service Access Gateway to facilitate the development of business in Ireland by ensuring Ireland is well placed to actively participate in the developing European Digital Single Market.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action (OGCIO with relevant Departments, DPER)

Update: On schedule

The Digital Service Access Gateway will be launched in the next few weeks. The group tasked by Civil Service Management Board to develop options for business identification continues to meet. The focus is on problem scoping and on identifying the benefits and potential nature of a business identifier. OGCIO is actively involved in the EU discussions in this area, including the Digital Single Market plan, the E-Government Action Plan, and the eIDAS and Single Digital Gateway initiatives.

Action 118: Roll out a further 1,000 Trading Online Vouchers through the LEOs and identify further initiatives to enable businesses to maximise the opportunities of the digital economy and trading online in international markets.

Ongoing Measure: Administer and drive the rollout of a further 1,000 Trading Online Vouchers to assist small businesses to trade online. (DCCAE, LEOs/EI)

Update: On schedule

By end-May, some 500 businesses had successfully applied for a trading online voucher in 2017.

Transitioning to a Low Carbon Economy

Action 129: Deliver policy supports to develop Ireland's indigenous renewable energy and further decrease our dependence on imported fossil fuels, including new support schemes for heat and electricity.

Ongoing Measure: Develop and implement two new support schemes, the Renewable Heat Incentive focusing on larger heat users and the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme which will address a wider range of technologies and community aspects. (DCCAIE, other relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: On schedule

The final public consultation on the design and implementation of the new Renewable Heat Incentive closed in March 2017. The findings from this public consultation, which are currently being reviewed, will inform the final design of the scheme. The economic analysis on the viability and cost effectiveness of supporting several renewable technologies at various scales under a new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) is complete. DCCAIE expects to publish a final public consultation on the design elements of the proposed new support scheme shortly.

Action 129: Deliver policy supports to develop Ireland's indigenous renewable energy and further decrease our dependence on imported fossil fuels, including new support schemes for heat and electricity.

Ongoing Measure: Continue the initial development of the Ocean Power Innovation Network in 2017 to build an international collaboration network for Ocean Energy with Scotland and Northern Ireland. (SEAI with EI and IDA, DCCAIE)

Update: On schedule

The Ocean Power Innovation Network (OPIN) continues to meet. The last session took place in Aberdeen on 14 June 2017 It brings the Offshore Renewable Sector together with the Oil and Gas industry.

Action 129: Deliver policy supports to develop Ireland's indigenous renewable energy and further decrease our dependence on imported fossil fuels, including new support schemes for heat and electricity.

Ongoing Measure: Continue the development of Ireland's smart grid value proposition. (DCCAIE, SEAI, ESBN, Eirgrid, CER, SFI, IDA, EI)

Update: On schedule

All of the parties are engaging under the national Smart Grid Implementation Group with a work plan for 2017 to review the Smart Grid Roadmap to 2050 which is currently underway.

Addressing New Labour Market Challenges

Action 131: Develop and reform the State's public employment services to help ensure that the number of people on the Live Register is reduced as the economy recovers and the labour market responds flexibly and efficiently to employment growth. Under Pathways to Work 2016-2020, this will include consolidation of previous reforms as well as continued prioritisation of long-term unemployed and young unemployed people; as well as expansion of services to currently inactive working age adults with a capacity and a desire to work, that will include lone parents, qualified adults and people with a disability.

Ongoing Measure: Consolidate previous reforms and continue prioritisation of long-term unemployed and young unemployed people; as well as expanding services to currently inactive working age adults with a capacity and a desire to work, that will include lone parents, qualified adults and people with a disability. (DSP)

Update: On schedule

On 26 April, the Government noted the Minister for Social Protection's intention to publish the Action Plan for Jobless Households (APJH) which will be published shortly. The Action Plan represents a key element of the Government's approach to delivering on its commitment for an APJH – it focuses on improving employment rates of households with children – both the traditional 'nuclear' family and the lone parent family. A number of key policy initiatives/actions to achieve that goal are identified; most notably:

- Extend active engagement with the Intreo employment service to additional groups of economically inactive working age adults. This will be facilitated by:
 - Extending the Jobseeker Transition model to adult dependents on jobseeker claims, with a capacity to work, where there is a child dependent aged between 7 and 14 years of age. This will mean that this group of adult dependants, while not required to comply with the availability and job-search conditions of unemployment payments, will be expected to engage with the activation process;
 - Requiring such dependant adults, where there are no child dependents under 14 years of age, to register as jobseekers in their own right and therefore become subject to the availability and job-search conditions of unemployment payments;
 - In line with the recently published Make Work Pay report, and in consultation with the disability sector, adopting a range of reforms to the main illness and disability payments, including the Disability Allowance payment, in order to support employment, and engagement with Intreo, among people with a disability who could, with appropriate supports, take up employment.
- Improve incentives and remove barriers for people transitioning from welfare to employment by:
 - Completing the roll-out of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), removing disincentives formerly associated with the Rent Supplement scheme;
 - Introducing a package of reforms to welfare schemes to support working families;
 - Further expanding access to free and subsidised child-care to reduce the cost to families associated with taking up employment; and
 - Pilot a family focused employment service/case management approach in five geographical areas. While led by the employment service, this intervention would also allow for the involvement of other public services (or referral to such services) where the engagement process identified wider social issues in the household that affected its members' employment prospects.

Action 134: Implement the Government's Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJE)

Update: On schedule

The Comprehensive Employment Strategy Implementation Group is responsible for overseeing and monitoring implementation of the Strategy and is independently chaired by Mr. Fergus Finlay. The first report of the chair for 2016 has been published.

The Implementation Group regularly meets, and has agreed a number of themes and areas of activity that will be the priority focus for the rest of the year. These include:

- Implementation of the Make Work Pay Report;
- Alternative paths to employment and special public service competitions;
- Supporting persons with disabilities in transitioning from school, higher education and training to employment;
- Monitoring the role of Departmental Disability Consultative Committees; and
- Increasing the number persons with disabilities employed in the public sector from 3% to 6%.

Action 135: Implement the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) which, as the primary social inclusion programme of Government, will have a strong focus on community activation, social inclusion and community development, while also focusing on those hardest to reach.

Ongoing Measure: Address any issues affecting programme implementation that emerge at the 2016 end of year and/or 2017 mid-year review stage to ensure the programme is reaching its target groups. (DHPCLG, Pobal, LCDCs)

Update: On schedule

SICAP is meeting, and regularly exceeding, all its targets and working effectively with its target groups.

Action 135: Implement the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) which, as the primary social inclusion programme of Government, will have a strong focus on community activation, social inclusion and community development, while also focusing on those hardest to reach.

Ongoing Measure: Consult with key Departments and agencies i.e. Department of Social Protection, Department of Education and Skills etc. to agree and manage referral protocols. (DHPCLG, Pobal, relevant Departments)

Update: On schedule

DHPCLG consults with key Departments on an on-going basis to agree and manage referral protocols.

Action 136: Through the Dormant Account Funds, support disadvantaged groups in rural and urban communities through measures that assist their access to employment.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DAHRRGA, other relevant Departments)

Update: On schedule

A new three-year Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursement Scheme for 2017-2019, which sets out the objectives to be achieved by making disbursement from the Dormant Accounts Fund, was approved by Government on the 26 April 2017.

Following the approval of the Disbursement Scheme, the 2017 Dormant Accounts Action Plan, which contains details of specific programmes and projects for delivery across Government Departments in line with the Disbursement Scheme, was approved at Ministerial level and has been laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Action Plan includes programmes to the value of €40.4 million which will support disadvantaged groups in rural communities, including measures to improve access to employment.

Strengthening Clusters

Agri-Food and Marine

Action 143: Generate and secure six investments from food FDI firms.

Ongoing Measure: Generate and secure six investments from food FDI firms. (EI, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland is the government agency responsible for attracting food and drink related Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects to Ireland. Enterprise Ireland competes internationally to secure these projects for Ireland in an environment where attracting mobile food investment is extremely competitive and challenging. In this context, Enterprise Ireland has noted an increase in interest in Ireland coming from the United States and Asia. A strong pipeline has been developed in 2017 with the objective of securing 6 FDI projects in 2017.

Tourism

Action 151: Develop the impact of investment in the Irish arts sector both at home and abroad to identify new markets for Irish work, and build awareness of the range and quality of work produced by Irish artists and working with other State bodies.

Ongoing Measure: Support up to 300 events worldwide through Culture Ireland in 2017, generating the equivalent of up to 200 full-time jobs for Irish artists and art organisations abroad. (DAHRRGA, Culture Ireland)

Update: On schedule

Culture Ireland continues to increase global awareness of the diversity and strength of work of Irish artists. Up to end-May 2017, Culture Ireland has supported events in 42 countries and reached over 1.24 million live audience members and 2.15 million online. Working with State bodies, in particular

Tourism Ireland, the Irish Film Board and the IDA Culture Ireland achieved a heightened focus, especially around the St Patricks Day period in key territories such as the US. So far in 2017 Culture Ireland has generated 170 days of employment .

Action 151: Develop the impact of investment in the Irish arts sector both at home and abroad to identify new markets for Irish work, and build awareness of the range and quality of work produced by Irish artists and working with other State bodies.

Ongoing Measure: Support up to 300 individuals and over 500 organisations across a wide range of arts venues, festivals, arts organisations and touring initiatives around Ireland in 2017. (DAHRRGA, Arts Council of Ireland)

Update: On schedule

The Arts Council's festival and events scheme have been open for applications including both the multi-disciplinary festivals and single artform festivals. Details of the scheme may be accessed on the Arts Council's website. The delivery of supports to individuals and organisations is continuing.

Action 151: Develop the impact of investment in the Irish arts sector both at home and abroad to identify new markets for Irish work, and build awareness of the range and quality of work produced by Irish artists and working with other State bodies.

Ongoing Measure: Develop cultural digitisation initiatives to enhance Ireland's roots tourism offering. (DAHRRGA, GRO, NLI and NAI)

Update: On schedule

A Genealogy Working Group has been established with DAHRRGA, NLI and NA to develop an updated National Genealogy Policy. DAHRRGA continues to work with the GRO and has made historical GRO records available on the www.irishgenealogy.ie website since 2016. The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs launched a €1m Digitisation scheme for the National Collections in June 2017 – applications are currently being assessed.

Action 152: Work with Fáilte Ireland, the OPW and other strategic partners to develop heritage tourism initiatives, based on Ireland's built and natural heritage and the enhanced management and presentation of collections held by the National Cultural Institutions and other bodies, to contribute to the implementation of the growth objectives set out in People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025.

Ongoing Measure: Invest in construction/refurbishment works at the National Gallery, National Library, the National Archives, and Cork Event Centre. (DAHRRGA, National Cultural Institutions, LAs, OPW)

Update: On schedule

The National Gallery Historic reopened in June 2017 after extensive refurbishment. Phase one of the National Library of Ireland development plan and the National Archives Warehouse development plan are due to go to tender during H2 of 2017. Cork City Council are continuing to work with their preferred bidder to progress Cork Event Centre. Stream 3 of the Arts and Culture Capital Scheme was launched in May 2017 to provide small capital grants. A capital scheme for the digitisation of the National Cultural Institutions collections was also launched in June 2017.

Retail

Action 153: Work with Fáilte Ireland, the OPW and other strategic partners to develop heritage tourism initiatives, based on Ireland's built and natural heritage and the enhanced management and presentation of collections held by the National Cultural Institutions and other bodies, to contribute to the implementation of the growth objectives set out in People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025.

Ongoing Measure: Develop trailways in National Parks and Nature Reserves, in partnership with key stakeholders. (DAHRRGA, Fáilte Ireland and National Trails Office)

Update: On schedule

The Inter-Agency Group on Outdoor Recreation was set up in December 2015 and is chaired on behalf of the Minister by Assistant Secretary for Heritage Division of DAHRRG. The Group includes representatives from NPWS, Rural Recreation Division, Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Bord na Móna, OPW, Udarás, Inland Fisheries, Fáilte Ireland and Sports Ireland. The Group convenes every 6 to 8 weeks in various locations related to the purpose of the Group and hosted by associates of the partner representatives.

DAHRRGA has also entered into a strategic partnership with Failte Ireland which will target investment at developing and enhancing the tourism offering at the 6 National Parks and Coole Park Nature Reserve.

Action 153: Work with Fáilte Ireland, the OPW and other strategic partners to develop heritage tourism initiatives, based on Ireland's built and natural heritage and the enhanced management and presentation of collections held by the National Cultural Institutions and other bodies, to contribute to the implementation of the growth objectives set out in People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025.

Ongoing Measure: Collaborate with the relevant Departments and agencies to ensure that National Parks, Nature Reserves, National Monuments and historic buildings contribute as signature experiences along the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East routes. (DAHRRGA, Fáilte Ireland, OPW, LAs)

Update: On schedule

Formal Strategic partnership entered into with Failte Ireland and OPW to develop key national monuments located along Ireland's Ancient East Routes covering the period up to 2022.

- On-going funding of historic buildings through various grant initiatives operated by this Department, including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Structures at Risk Fund (SRF), and through the Heritage Council. It is anticipated more than 560 heritage projects nationwide will share in a €4.8 million investment package as part of the BHIS and SRF Funding framework for 2017.
- The funding will allow for the conservation and repair of protected structures across the country and it is expected the schemes will leverage more than €11 million in private funds and will generate significant employment in the conservation and construction industries.
- Formal Strategic partnership entered into with Failte Ireland and OPW to develop key national monuments located along Ireland's Ancient East Routes covering the period up to 2022.
- The Department (NPWS) launched a formal Strategic Partnership with Fáilte Ireland with the

aim of enhancing the tourism offering at Ireland's National Parks. As part of this partnership the Department has commissioned the production of a Tourism Interpretation Masterplan for all six National Parks and Coole Park and a Visitor Management Plan for Glenveagh National Park.

- Work on the Tourism Masterplan is advanced with workshops having already been held at 6 of the 7 locations covered. A strategy will be put in place for the phased improvement of visitor centres and facilities in the parks ensuring there is a consistency of approach, style and theme throughout. This will feed into the development of signature experiences for Fáilte Ireland's two brand propositions, The Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East. The completed final report is due during the final quarter of 2017.
- The Glenveagh Visitor Management Plan has been advertised and will be awarded shortly.

Action 153: Work with Fáilte Ireland, the OPW and other strategic partners to develop heritage tourism initiatives, based on Ireland's built and natural heritage and the enhanced management and presentation of collections held by the National Cultural Institutions and other bodies, to contribute to the implementation of the growth objectives set out in People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025.

Ongoing Measure: Develop and promote Blueways (multi-purpose activity trails on or beside water) on the Royal, Grand and Barrow Canals and on the Shannon Navigation to expand the recreational and tourism offering. (DAHRRGA, Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland)

Update: On schedule

- Waterways Ireland is progressing the development of a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Fáilte Ireland to develop heritage and tourism marketing initiatives on and along the inland navigable waterways. The initiatives will centre on the visitor destination experiences of 'Ireland's Ancient East' and 'Dublin – A Breath of Fresh Air' and will tell the stories of the heritage of the waterways and how they have developed through time. Waterways Ireland is currently undertaking family trips on the navigations with Fáilte Ireland staff in order to develop the offering.
- Work is commencing on Royal Canal Blueway which will provide 22km of Blueway around Mullingar, 140km of walking from McNeed's Bridge in Westmeath to Richmond Harbour in Longford, along with 60km of cycling. Infrastructural requirements are currently being assessed and capacity building workshops are being organised in 2017 prior to formally launching the Blueway. Recreational Hubs in Mullingar and Richmond Harbour are also being established as part of the Blueway.
- Infrastructure has been put in place along Lough Derg for the establishment of a canoe trail. Work is also on-going in association with the Local Authorities, with the assistance of REDZ funding, for the development of a Lough Derg Blueway.
- On-going funding of historic buildings through various grant initiatives operated by DAHRRGA, including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Structures at Risk Fund (SRF), and through the Heritage Council. It is anticipated more than 560 heritage projects nationwide will share in a €4.8 million investment package as part of the BHIS and SRF Funding framework for 2017.
- The funding will allow for the conservation and repair of protected structures across the country and it is expected the schemes will leverage more than €11 million in private funds and will generate significant employment in the conservation and construction industries.
- The Lough Allen Board Walk will be completed by the end of August 2017. The boardwalk will provide an extra attraction to the already successful North Shannon Blueway.
- The Dublin Docklands team are actively working with private sector organisations, community

and voluntary organisations and other public sector agencies in order to market and promote the docks area and the urban canals as a 'must place to visit'. A host of festivals and events are planned throughout the summer months to bring the urban canals to life by attracting locals and visitors alike to this wonderful asset.

Design

Action 157: Maximise the potential of the design sector to drive innovation and competitiveness.

Ongoing Measure: Promote Irish design internationally through activities such as trade fairs and missions in order to develop export opportunities and enhance Ireland's international reputation for design. (EI, DCCol and Embassy Network, DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland continues to support the international buyer dimension of Showcase & which is held in January each year. In 2017 Showcase saw an increase in attendance, with strong international buyer interest and giving a positive outlook for business in 2017. Enterprise Ireland remains committed to working with QVC USA supporting their annual St Patrick's Day sale of Irish craft & consumer products. The 2017 day saw strong increase in sales over previous years. In addition, a new Inward Buyer event targeting the Museum & visitor attraction sector was held in June 2017 involving 20 buyers from the UK, targeted EU markets, and the USA - promoting the very best of Irish Design. The event received positive feedback from participants.

In February the Board of Enterprise Ireland approved a series of recommendations to better support Design Driven Innovation in both Enterprise Ireland & LEO client companies. Enterprise Ireland is currently developing an implementation plan to embed these plans operationally within Enterprise Ireland.

Construction and Housing

Action 159: Implement Rebuilding Ireland - Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, providing monthly updates on activity levels and quarterly progress reports.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DHPCLG and relevant Departments, LAs and other bodies)

Update: On schedule

The implementation of Rebuilding Ireland – Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, consisting of 113 specific actions with associated timelines, has been overseen by the Cabinet Committee on Housing, chaired by An Taoiseach. Monthly Housing Activity Reports are in place and show that the key indicators of housing activity (i.e. planning permissions, commencement notices and ESB connections to the National Grid) all point to an increase in housing supply, albeit from a very low base.

Quarterly Progress Reports are also published outlining the key steps taken by relevant Departments, Agencies, Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies in fulfilment of their commitments against individual actions. Both sets of reports (monthly and quarterly) are available

on the dedicated website www.rebuildingireland.ie established to keep the public informed of key developments.

The Minister for Housing has been tasked with reviewing the Action Plan to consider if additional measures may be required, including consideration of a greater quantum of social housing build, a vacant home tax, and measures to encourage landlords to remain in or enter the rental market

Action 160: Progress funding the delivery of 20,000 residential units, on a commercial basis and subject to commercial viability, by the end of 2020.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (NAMA, DoF)

Update: On schedule

Section 10 of the NAMA Act requires NAMA to obtain the best achievable financial return for the State, deal expeditiously with the assets acquired by it and protect or otherwise enhance the value of those assets. In line with this, NAMA is working with debtors and receivers to identify, where commercially feasible, opportunities to bring forward new residential development. In this respect, NAMA aims to facilitate the delivery, through the provision of funding and otherwise, of up to 20,000 new residential units in Ireland by 2020, subject to commercial feasibility.

Since 2014, NAMA has funded the construction of 4,840 new residential units in Ireland on residential development land securing its loan portfolio. As at end-March 2017 an additional 2,064 units were currently under construction by NAMA-funded developers and receivers. Funding had been approved for an additional 1,114 units which have planning granted, but are not yet under construction. Planning permission has been granted for an additional 7,475 units and planning applications have been lodged, or will be lodged within 12 months, for an additional 10,000+ units.

Glossary of Terms

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|--------------|--|
| APJ | Action Plan for Jobs | DTTAS | Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport |
| BAI | Broadcasting Authority of Ireland | EGFSN | Expert Group on Future Skills Needs |
| BIM | Bord Iascaigh Mhara | EI | Enterprise Ireland |
| CIF | Construction Industry Federation | ERC | European Research Council |
| COSME | EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs | ETB | Education and Training Board |
| CRO | Credit Review Office | ETBI | Education and Training Boards Ireland |
| CSR | Corporate Social Responsibility | EU | European Union |
| daa | Dublin Airport Authority | FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| DAFM | Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine | FET | Further Education and Training |
| DAHRRGA | Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs | FP7 | Framework Programme 7 |
| DCCAIE | Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment | GNP | Gross National Product |
| DCCoI | Design and Craft Council of Ireland | GRO | General Register Office |
| DCYA | Department of Children and Youth Affairs | HEA | Higher Education Authority |
| DES | Department of Education and Skills | HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| DFAT | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade | HICP | Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices |
| DoF | Department of Finance | HIHI | Health Innovation Hub Ireland |
| DHPCLG | Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government | HPRA | Health Products Regulatory Authority |
| DJEI | Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation | HPSU | High Potential Start-Ups |
| DJE | Department of Justice and Equality | HRB | Health Research Board |
| DoD | Department of Defence | ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| DPER | Department of Public Expenditure and Reform | IDA | IDA Ireland |
| DSP | Department of Social Protection | IFB | Irish Film Board |
| D/Taoiseach | Department of Taoiseach | IFS | International Financial Services |
| | | IFSC | International Financial Services Centre |
| | | IP | Intellectual Property |
| | | IRC | Irish Research Council |
| | | IRDG | Industry Research and Development Group |
| | | ISIF | Ireland Strategic Investment Fund |
| | | ITI | InterTradeIreland |

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|---------------|--|
| IUA | Irish Universities Association |
| KDB | Knowledge Development Box |
| KTI | Knowledge Transfer Ireland |
| LAs | Local Authorities |
| LCDC | Local Community Development Committee |
| LEADER | Liaisons entre actions de developpement de l'économie rurale |
| LEO/s | Local Enterprise Office/s |
| LGMA | Local Government Management Agency |
| LPC | Low Pay Commission |
| Mbps | Megabytes per second |
| NAI | National Archives of Ireland |
| NAMA | National Asset Management Agency |
| NCC | National Competitiveness Council |
| NCCA | National Council for Curriculum and Assessment |
| NCDAF | National Civil Aviation Development Forum |
| NLI | National Library of Ireland |
| NPF | National Planning Framework |
| NSAI | National Standards Authority of Ireland |
| NSC | National Skills Council |
| NTMA | National Treasury Management Agency |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OGCIO | Office of the Government Chief Information Officer |
| OGP | Office of Government Procurement |
| OPW | Office of Public Works |
| PAYE | Pay As You Earn |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| PEIL | Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning |
| PPP | Public Private Partnership |
| Q | Quarter |
| R&D | Research and Development |
| RDI | Research, development and innovation |
| RSF | Regional Skills Fora |
| SBCI | Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland |
| SBIR | Small Business Innovation Research |
| SEAI | Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland |
| SFI | Science Foundation Ireland |
| SFSI | Sustainable Food Systems Ireland |
| SI | Statutory Instrument |
| SICAP | Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme |
| SLMRU | Skills and Labour Market Research Unit |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprise |
| SOLAS | An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics |
| UN | United Nations |
| naG | Údarás na Gaeltachta |
| VAT | Valued Added Tax |
| WEF | World Economic Forum |
| WRC | Workplace Relations Commission |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |

