

**ACTION  
PLAN  
FOR  
JOBS**  

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**2015-2017**

**SOUTH EAST  
REGION**

**Second Progress Report:  
June-December 2016**



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## An Tánaiste and Ministers' Foreword



We are delighted to see the publication of this second Progress Report for the South East Action Plan for Jobs. Since it was launched in September 2015, the objective of this Plan has been to provide a platform for Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford to work together, building on the unique strengths of the region to support businesses to start up, grow and generate exports. We believe that we, as a small country, can achieve much more by working together, across county and provincial boundaries, combining resources and expertise, than we could acting alone.

The Regional Action Plan initiative as a whole remains a central pillar of the Government's ambition to create 200,000 new jobs by 2020, 135,000 of which are outside of Dublin. Employment figures from 2016 show that real progress is being made on this vision: an additional 66,100 jobs were created over 2016, 70% of which are outside Dublin.

During 2016, in every region the unemployment rate has fallen while the number in employment has increased. The enterprise agencies have also been working hard to make a significant contribution to employment across the whole country – in 2016, 61% of new jobs by Enterprise Ireland firms and 52% of new jobs by IDA firms were outside Dublin.

Progress in the South East has been very positive. The number employed in the South East has increased by almost 13,000 since Q1 2015, while the number unemployed has fallen by 7,500. In 2016, the South East was the third fastest growing region in terms of employment, after the Mid-West and the West, with numbers employed up 4.6%

The sectors which have seen the largest increases in numbers employed since Q1 2015 are Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities (up 5,800), Wholesale and Retail (up 2,400), and Human Health and Social Work (up 2,100).

At end-2016, the Unemployment Rate in the South East stood at 9.4%. While this was the highest unemployment rate in the State, it had decreased by 3.4% since Q1 2015, and by 1% in the last quarter of 2016 alone.

Recent job announcements from firms such as Netwatch Systems, Se2 and Sanofi demonstrate the continued confidence of industry in the South East region to support both established and growing companies, often requiring specialist skills. The commendable work undertaken this year by the South East Regional Skills Forum, bringing business together with education providers, will further benefit the region's competitiveness by enhancing its pipeline of skilled workers.

We are looking forward, in the coming months, to meeting the committee for the South East Plan: in reviewing this progress report, it is clear to see the hard work being undertaken by all the individuals and

organisations who are dedicated to making this plan a success. We would like to sincerely thank Frank O'Regan, Chairperson of the Implementation Committee, and Sean McKeown, Project Director, for their ongoing commitment to the initiative. We would also like to thank the Enterprise Champions and members of the Implementation Committee for the valuable input they bring to the process. This is a genuine public service which will make a real impact to the South East region.

Our colleagues across Government are, however, keenly aware that while our economy is growing strongly and unemployment is at the lowest level since 2008, we cannot be complacent. Our goal is that we must continue to ensure that all areas of the country are supported to achieve economic growth in line with their potential.

While 2016 was a successful year in many respects, it was one in which new challenges arose, in particular as a result of the UK referendum to leave the EU. You can rest assured that we and our colleagues across Government will work hard to protect our economy from any adverse effects of Brexit. Building resilience among potentially affected companies will be crucial, and we will ensure that Enterprise Ireland, IDA, InterTradeIreland and the LEOs are working with these clients, helping them to focus strategically on competitiveness, research and innovation, and people.

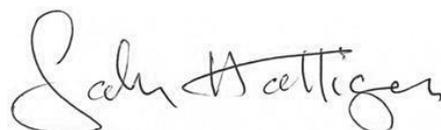
The Regional Action Plan for Jobs initiative will continue to support and drive job creation across the regions by encouraging the enterprise development agencies, Local Authorities, higher education institutions, as well as the private sector and communities, to come forward with innovative ideas to boost job creation in their area.

Following the success of 2016's Enterprise Ireland Regional Competitive Funding Calls, additional funding of up to €60m is being rolled out by Enterprise Ireland over the next 4 years to support the best regional enterprise projects, and to see each region building on the strengths they have in areas such as food, medical devices, software, aviation, engineering, and others. We believe that this is the right approach – directing these resources towards projects led by local people, for the benefit of their own communities and local economies.

In advocating this approach of collaborative working, we want to assure you that we will work closely with our Cabinet colleagues to ensure that we are aligned in our approach to important issues, and that we work together on initiatives that benefit us all. 2016 was a year in which we re-focused on the holistic development of our regions, with projects such as the Action Plan for Rural Development, the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, the Action Plan for Housing, and the National Broadband Plan, working to ensure that every region has the capacity and capability to support sustainable job opportunities. We will endeavour now to ensure that this approach continues.



**Frances Fitzgerald, T.D.**  
**Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise and Innovation**



**John Halligan, TD**  
**Minister of State for Training, Skills and Innovation**

## Message from the Chairman



I present this, our Second Progress Report, to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, on behalf of the South East Action Plan for Jobs (APJ) Implementation Committee. This Second Progress Report covers activity during the 6-month period from June to December 2016.

This Report demonstrates that the South East APJ is making a positive impact on the local economy of the region. The Q4 2016 CSO QNHS figures reveal that there are now almost 215,000 people employed in the labour force in the South East. This represents a net increase of almost 13,000 jobs in the region since Q1 2015. That is over half of our target of 25,000 jobs by 2020. At the same time the unemployment rate has fallen to 9.4%, a drop of almost 3.5 percentage points over the same period. While these trends are extremely encouraging, we cannot be complacent. The rate of unemployment in the region is still almost 3 percentage points above the national average. We therefore need to continue our efforts to close the gap. The scale of the challenge facing the South East is such that greater levels of intervention and support are required to match the determination of the stakeholders in the region. We are striving to identify and progress initiatives that will make the most significant impact on job creation in the region. This Report provides details of the many actions being implemented across the region.

A number of the key strategic initiatives emerging in the region were presented and considered at the Implementation Committee meeting held last October. This was in the context of the Regional Competitive Fund to be launched nationally by EI for the regional APJs in 2017. Meetings and workshops have been taking place among stakeholders to progress these initiatives since then, and I am looking forward to the outcome of the applications that will materialise under the Competitive Regional Enterprise Development Fund.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the stakeholders involved for their continued efforts in the APJ process. I would especially like to acknowledge the work of the Action Monitoring Committee for their assistance in compiling and reviewing this Progress Report on behalf of the Implementation Committee. I would also like to extend thanks to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and her officials for the on-going support and advice provided.

**Frank O'Regan**  
**Chairman, South East APJ Implementation Committee**

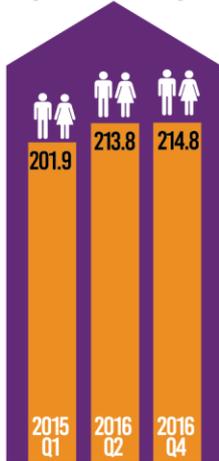


# ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS: SOUTH EAST

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

2nd Progress Report, June – December 2016

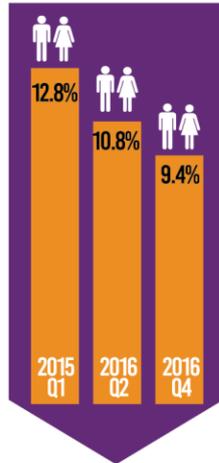
## Numbers Employed (Thousands)



Persons aged 15 years and over in **Employment** (Thousand)

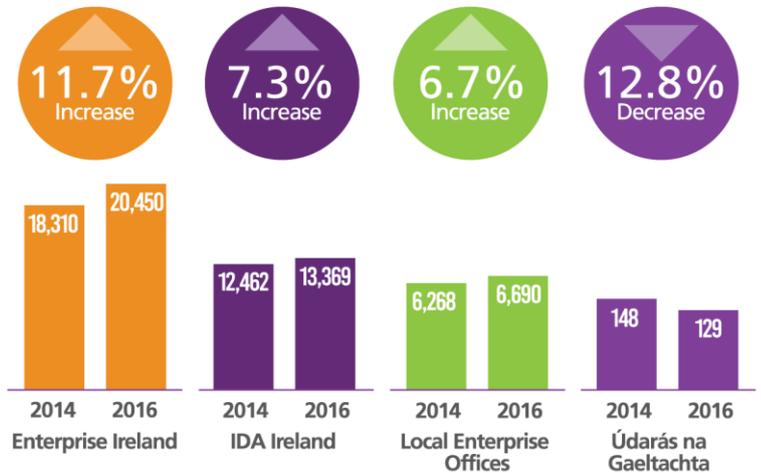
Source: CSO QNHS (QNQ22)

## Unemployment Rate



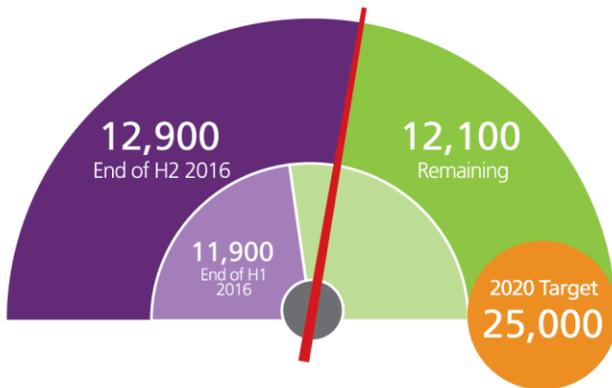
ILO **Unemployment Rate** (15 - 74 years) (%)

## Jobs in Agency Supported Businesses



Sources: DJEI Annual Employment Survey, Local Enterprise Office Annual Employment Survey, and Údarás na Gaeltachta LEO figures include North Tipperary

## South East Regional Jobs Target Q1 2015 – Q4 2019 Progress from Q1 2015 to Q4 2016



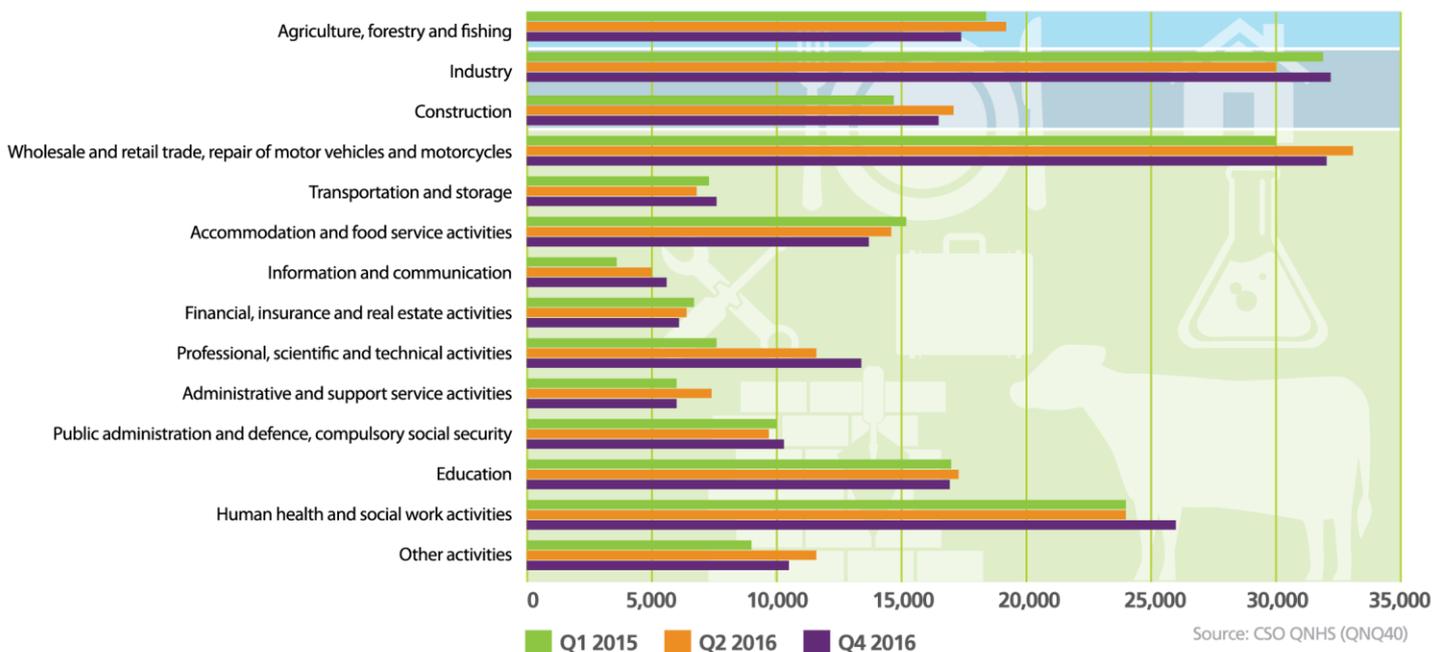
Source: CSO QNHS (QNQ22)

## Tourism in the South East



Source: Fáilte Ireland  
2016 figures unavailable at time of publication

## Employment by Sector



Source: CSO QNHS (QNQ40)

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

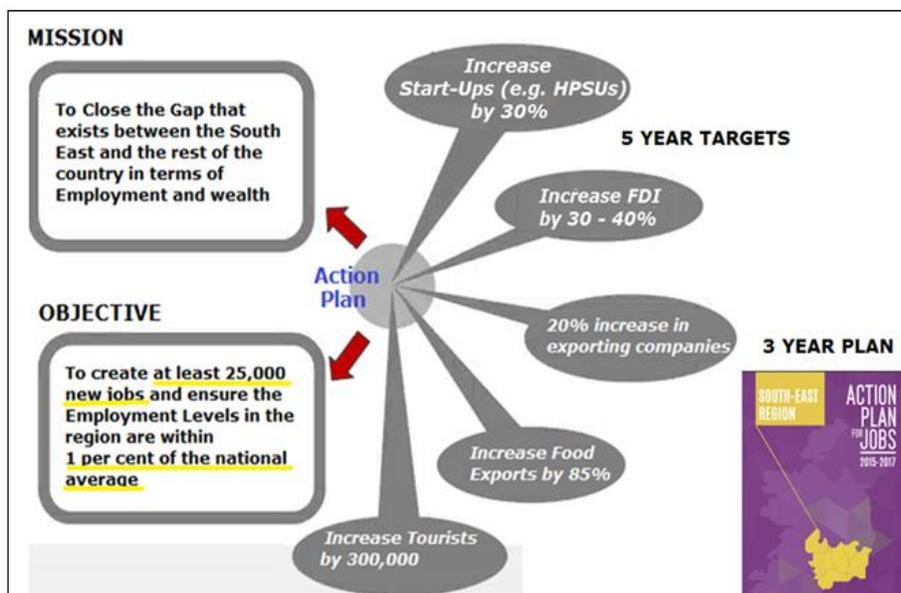
The South East Action Plan for Jobs (APJ) was launched in September, 2015 and covers the 5 counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. An Implementation Committee comprising of executives from all of the main stakeholder organisations in the region is in place.



**Figure 1:** List of main stakeholder organisations involved in implementing the actions contained in the South East Action Plan for Jobs.

### Objective

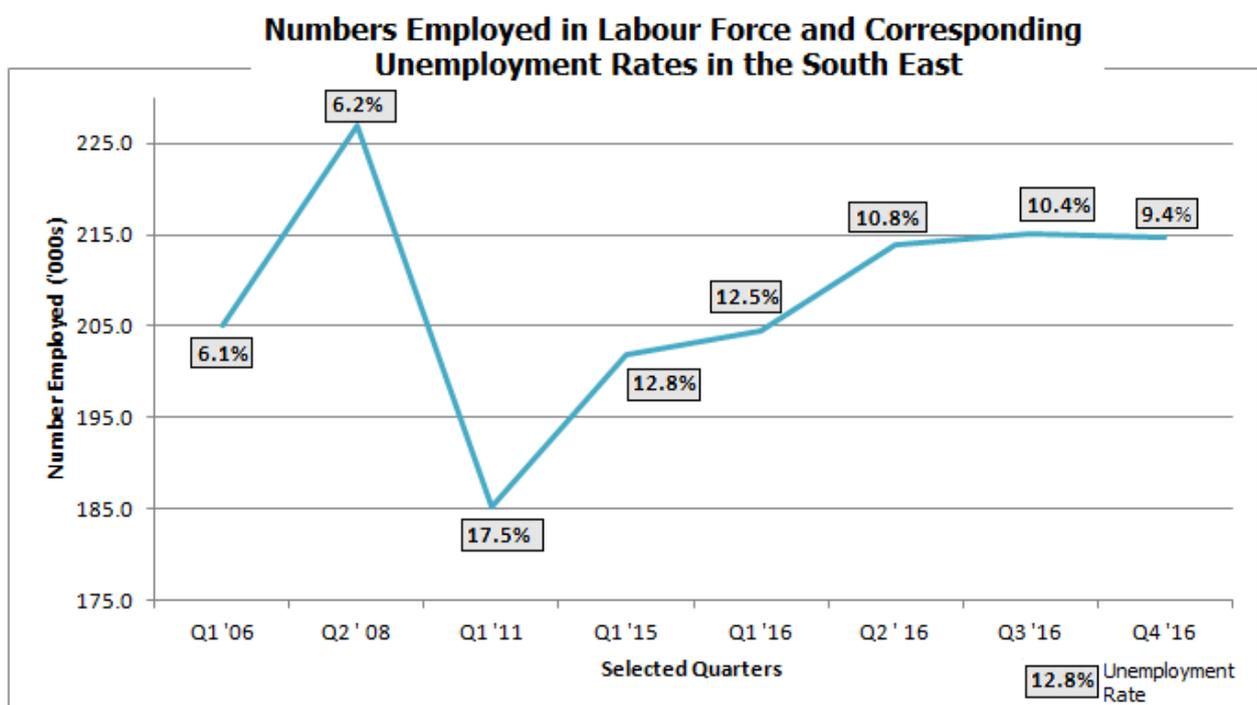
The main objectives of the South East APJ are to create an additional 25,000 jobs and to ensure that the unemployment level in the South East is within 1 per cent of the national average by 2020.



**Figure 2:** Main Objectives of the South East Action Plan for Jobs.

## Progress to Date

The implementation of the South East APJ is making a positive impact on the local economy of the region. Figure 3 below details the key labour force statistics from the CSO Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) at selected dates over the last 11 years. The numbers employed in the South East peaked in Q2 2008 at 227,000, when the corresponding unemployment rate was 6.2%. The numbers employed in the labour force plummeted from then as the economic crisis set in. By Q1 2011, the number of people employed in the region had fallen by almost 42,000 (or c18.5%) to just over 185,000. The baseline labour force statistics for the South East APJ are those at Q1 2015, when the number employed in the South East was just under 202,000, and the corresponding unemployment rate was 12.8%. The CSO QNHS figures for Q4 2016 show that there are now almost 215,000 people employed in the labour force in the region. This represents a net increase of almost 13,000 jobs in the South East since Q1 2015 (or 52% of target).



**Figure 3:** Main Labour Force Statistics at Selected Dates

While there was a slight decrease in the numbers now employed in the labour force in the region compared to Q3 2016 (i.e. the numbers employed fell by 300), the corresponding unemployment rate has fallen by one percentage point to 9.4%. This is extremely encouraging. However, the rate remains comparatively high at almost 3 percentage points above the national average (at 6.6%), is the highest unemployment rate of the 8 regions in the country. There is still a great deal of effort required to meet the target set in the Plan of closing the gap to within one percentage point of the national average by 2020.

## Highlights in the Second Progress Report

It should be noted that 4 actions (namely actions 88, 149, 159 and 160) originally listed in the South East APJ are no longer progressing for various reasons. The number of actions now contained in the Plan is therefore 190. A total of 165 of the 190 Actions listed in the South East APJ are to be reported on in this Second Progress Report. This Progress Report covers the

activity during the 6-month period from June to December, 2016. All actions are to be reported on in each Progress Report until they are complete. An additional 5 actions were completed by the end of December, 2016, bringing the total number of actions completed in the Plan to date to 29 (or c16%). By their nature the vast majority of actions are on-going and are therefore unlikely to be completed within the timeframe of the Plan.

The South East APJ Action Monitoring Committee (AMC) met on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2017 to review and approve the Second Progress Report for submission to the Minister on behalf of the South East APJ Implementation Committee. The AMC recommend that actions 95 and 151 be merged into one action and this is reflected in the Report.

Some highlights of the actions reported on in the Second Progress Report are as follows:

- The LEOs in the South East organised Bizfest, attended by over 270 businesses in October, 2016. The “Inspiring Success” video, which was developed to promote doing business in the South East, was launched at the event.
- there have been a number of significant jobs announcements in relation to both EI and IDA client companies during the period, including Netwatch Systems; Se2; Sanofi; and Eurofins Lancaster. There has been a 4% increase in employment numbers among IDA client companies in the South East in 2016, and a 3% increase in employment in EI client companies. The South East is now the second highest nationally for Local Enterprise Office-supported jobs per capita, with 6,690 jobs supported by LEOs in the South East in 2016<sup>1</sup>.
- the South East APJ is working closely with the South East Regional Skills Forum on a number of joint initiatives. Both entities have agreed to collaborate where beneficial on matters relating to industry skills needs in the pharma/medtech, engineering, global business services, agri food, hospitality and construction sectors. Current initiatives include a Pharma MedTech Skills Survey of large employers in these sectors in the region (co-ordinated by WIT) and working with the sector to identify actions to respond to skills needs. Both have been involved in the initiation of a pilot Engineering Career Traineeship (being developed by the ETBs).
- a Working Group has been established to develop a new value proposition for the region and to promote the South East as a great place to live and work. One of the main functions of the new value proposition will be to showcase the key industry sectors in the region; the main employers based here; the wide range of career prospects available; and current job opportunities.
- a South East Micro Food Export Initiative aimed at assisting micro food companies to export has been developed by the South East LEOs and will be launched shortly.
- Five companies from the South East participated in the Bord Bia Food Academy Start programme in 2016 out of a total of thirty nationally. Some of these may well progress to the Food Academy Advance programme, which would include trial listings in SuperValu stores. A total of 57 food businesses in the region are now listed on SuperValu shelves.

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<sup>1</sup> LEO Tipperary figures include both North and South Tipperary

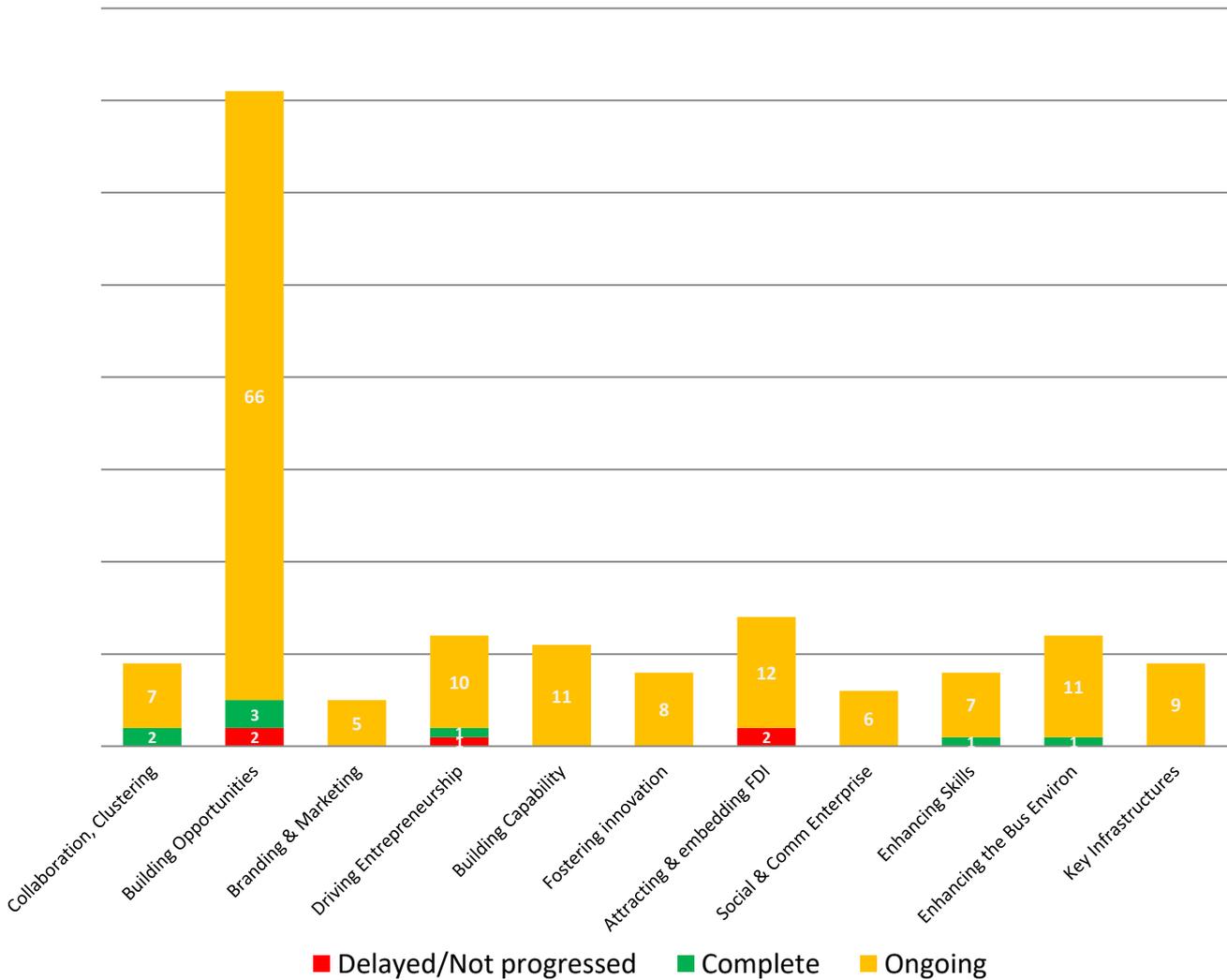
- a Stakeholder Group has been established comprising the 5 Local Authorities; LEADER Companies; BIM; Irish Sports Council; and Waterways Ireland to plan the development of a regional greenway / blueway network in the region. The Local Authorities in the South East have also established a project office to progress the development of the regional greenway network.
- Each of the 5 local authorities in the region have initiated the preparation of a Digital Strategy for their respective area in line with the National Broadband Plan.
- The LEOs in the region supported an additional 78 approved loan applications under the Micro Finance Ireland (MFI) loan scheme. This brings the total number of loan applications supported since the launch of MFI to 187. These loan applications have a total value of almost €3.5m and support the creation of an additional 425 jobs.
- The Design+ Technology Gateway was launched in October, 2016. Design+ will be a national industry portal, complementing existing Technology Gateways.

Updates received in respect of the 164 actions to be reported on are listed in the following section of this Progress Report.



*Minister Mitchell O'Connor, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation in attendance at the South East Action Plan for Jobs Implementation Committee Meeting held in Waterford in October, 2016. Also in the picture (left to right): Sean McKeown, Director, South East APJ; Anne Marie Tierney Le Roux, IDA Regional Manager; Frank O'Regan, Chairman of South East APJ; and Willie Donnelly, President, WIT.*

## Scorecard: Actions to End 2016



### Actions due by end 2016

165 of the South East Action Plan’s 190 actions were due to be initiated or completed by the end of 2016. 162 of these are on track to be delivered, or have been completed and 3 actions are delayed or no longer being progressed (see below).

## **Actions not being progressed or delayed**

**Action 33:** *‘Evaluate the potential for the development of a National Precision Dairy research and innovation centre in the region supporting the creation of new products and services.’* Teagasc has no plans to develop a National Precision Dairy Research and Innovation Centre in the South East. Teagasc envisages developing all dairy research and innovation activities on the Moorepark campus in Fermoy and also developing an Innovation Hub in Moorepark to further strengthen links between Teagasc and the dairy processing industry, thereby strengthening innovation in the industry. The Moorepark Centre is well located to serve agriculture and industry in the South East.

**Action 46:** *‘Údarás na Gaeltachta will run a pilot project in the Déise Gaeltacht to build further capacity in existing and emerging tourism-related enterprises’.* This action was delayed due to staffing resources. A further update will be provided in the third progress report.

**Action 112:** *‘Údarás na Gaeltachta will develop an internationalisation programme aimed at SME’s operating in minority language areas in the Déise Gaeltacht and in Munster region in partnership with a Welsh Development Agency.’* This action was delayed due to funding issues. A further update will be provided in the third progress report.

**Actions 148:** *‘Develop a Regional ConnectIreland Plan that is integrated with the Local Authorities’ enterprise development and job-creation activities. Formalise the name of a nominated officer from each county in the region for the roll-out of the Plan.’* This action is no longer being progressed as the contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.

**Actions 150:** *‘Liaise with HEIs with a view to holding partnership events to create a network that will allow greater communication between the institution and its alumni. Develop initiatives with the alumni of colleges, diaspora networks and Connect Ireland to promote and attract skills back to the Region.’* This action is no longer being progressed as the contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.

## **PROGRESS ON NATIONAL INITIATIVES**

### **National Broadband Plan**

The High Speed Broadband Map, which is available at [www.broadband.gov.ie](http://www.broadband.gov.ie) shows the current extent of the State Intervention area. The areas marked BLUE represent those areas where commercial telecommunications providers are either currently delivering or have previously indicated plans to deliver high speed broadband services. The areas marked AMBER on the High Speed Broadband Map represent the target areas for the State Intervention.

A formal procurement process is in train to select a company or companies who will roll-out a new high speed broadband network within the State Intervention (AMBER) Area. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Energy (DCCA) will shortly update the High Speed Broadband map to finalise the Intervention Area for the Procurement process, taking into account industry investments

that have not materialised in BLUE areas, together with new industry investments within the proposed State Intervention Area, along with concrete and credible commitments by industry for further new investments within the current Intervention Area.

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. The timeframe for the procurement continues to be dependent on a range of factors including the complexities that may be encountered by the procurement team and bidders, during the procurement process. During the Department's extensive stakeholder consultations in 2015, telecommunications service providers indicated a 3-5 year timeline from contract award to roll-out a network of the scale envisaged under the NBP.

As part of the competitive process, DCCAIE will engage with winning bidder(s) on the best roll-out strategy, in order to target areas of particularly poor service, business needs and/or high demand. This will need to be balanced with the most efficient network roll-out plan. A prioritisation programme will be put in place in this regard, in consultation with the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. A detailed roll-out plan for the network will be published once contract(s) are in place.

## Update on Actions to be reported on from June – December 2016

### **Action 2:** South East Chambers

**Measure:** Increase the collaboration of regional Chambers of Commerce for businesses and start-ups to share knowledge and best practice and to provide a combined ambition for the overall development of the South East region.

**Update: Ongoing**

The South East Region Chambers Ltd (SERCHAM) is the vehicle through which the various Chambers of Commerce based in the South East share information, adopt best practice and make decisions on regional issues for the benefit of businesses. Examples of how this engagement works have been included in previous reports and this collaborative approach continues under the auspices of SERCHAM. Furthermore, SERCHAM also proactively engages with the South East Regional Skills Forum and all of this supportive work and involvement continues on an ongoing basis, and ensures that the voice of small business is represented on key regional Fora and that Chambers can fully input into initiatives that are developed in response to the needs of small business.

### **Action 3:** South East Chambers

**Measure:** Develop a cross-regional female entrepreneurship network and events focussed on key themes and potential for cross collaboration between businesses.

**Update: Complete**

A variety of events have taken place throughout the region during 2016 specifically targeted at female entrepreneurs, including Women’s Inspire events in Wexford, and Women in Business events in Kilkenny and Waterford. The regional Bizfest networking conference was also held in Kilkenny in October 2016, and this event attracted a large number of businesses promoted by women. Further reference is made to these in the relevant LEO reports.

### **Action 4:** LEOs

**Measure:** Develop a ‘Bizfest South East’ Business Networking Event and hold annual Sector Specific Networking Events to promote and encourage sector development between LEO and EI Clients

**Update: Complete**

Bizfest was held on 20th October, 2016 in the Lyrath Estate Hotel Kilkenny. The event was attended by over 270 attendees and featured case studies from 5 entrepreneurs from around the South East. The LEOs in the South East are planning for Bizfest in 2017. LEO Wexford will host Bizfest in 2017 and the proposed venue is the National Opera House, Wexford on the 21st

June. The LEOs in the South East also launched the “Inspiring Success” video, which was developed to promote doing business in the South East, as part of Bizfest 2016. The video can be viewed at: <https://vimeopro.com/user7528993/carlow-county-council>

#### **Action 5: Ibec**

**Measure:** Strengthen existing Ibec networks across the SE region by developing additional Ibec development and best practice networks in the region including in PharmaChem and Medtech and food and drink sectors, together with Leadership Forums.

#### **Update: Ongoing**

IMDA, Engineering Enterprises and Plastics Ireland have come together to develop a joint OHS/EHS (Occupational and Environmental Health Standards) forum. Effective procedures can promote business efficiency, tackle lost working days and have positive impacts on the wider environment. EHS and OHS standards broadly impact the operation of every company and any legislative changes can have far-reaching effects. This makes it essential to keep up to date with new trends and changes. Key synergies exist in the Medtech, Engineering and Plastics industries so the aim of the Medtech and Engineering EHS OHS Forum is to leverage this overlap to develop best practice models and new ideas while providing a platform for members to share insights and knowledge in this area. Three meetings of the EHS OHS Forum have taken place during 2016.

The first meeting in mid-February 2016 was hosted by Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics Manufacturing and covered two broad themes of accident identification and resource management. Siemens Healthcare provided an overview of their advanced Zero-Harm/Close-Call safety system which records accidents and near-miss situations. A site tour was included allowing delegates to witness this initiative in practice. In early-July the group met for the second time in the First Polymer Training Centre, Athlone. The final meeting took place on 2nd December and revisited the theme of workplace accident investigations and claims at the request of forum members. Member engagement with the forums EHS query facility has also dramatically increased in the second half of the year and will continue to be encouraged, with over 270 contacts engaged.

#### **Action 7: Industry**

**Measure:** Establish four regional industry-led Fora in the areas of: Precision Engineering; Financial Services and Business Services; Biopharma/Medtech; AgriTech and Food Forum.

#### **Update: Ongoing**

The Implementation Structure of the South East APJ has provided for a number of sectoral sub-Groups to be established, and the above sectoral areas are covered within same. Each sub-group

is led by a local industry champions. Workshops have been held in each of the sectoral sub-Groups involving the support agencies and local business to discuss the actions contained in the Plan, and to prioritise initiatives that have the potential to make the greatest positive impact on the respective industry sector. Some of the sub-Groups have subsequently established ad-hoc working groups to pursue some of these strategic initiatives. For example, an Engineering sub-Group (led by industry champion Seamus Kilgannon of Schivo, Waterford) is working with the ETBs in the region on the development of a pilot Engineering Career Traineeship. The Pharma and MedTech sub-Group (joint chaired by Patsy Carney, Eirgen Pharma, Waterford and Pat McLoughlin, Abbott Vascular, Clonmel) have initiated a study to assess the feasibility of developing a Pharma Incubation and Training Centre in the region. This group along with the Engineering sub-Group are also working with Colin Gordon of Glanbia and the South East APJ Branding Champion, to establish how the region can better promote itself as a place to live and work, and in particular showcase the key industry sectors in the region; the main employers based here; the wide range of career prospects available; and current job opportunities.

Furthermore, the Precision Turned Parts Manufacturing Association (PTMA) have been meeting once a quarter in LIT. LIT are considering hosting an exhibition/conference in May 2017 in conjunction with the UK based Gauge and Tool Makers' Association. There could be potential Brexit opportunities arising.

**Action 8: LEOs**

**Measure:** Develop Regional Networks and Clusters in Food & Craft microenterprises to promote development of the sector and to network and collaborate on key development needs.

**Update: Ongoing**

The South East Micro Food Export Initiative was launched on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at Dunbrody Country House Hotel, Wexford. This Initiative, funded by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation under the LEOs Competitive, fund, aims to establish a cluster of fledgling micro food exporters across the South East Region and develop their export capability to assist them to grow and develop in an international context. The first phase of the Initiative, Exploring Food Exporting Seminar will be held at a later stage, and will provide micro food companies with an overview of the export journey and assist them to assess if their business is export ready. From the diverse range of companies who will take part in the initial phase, 15 companies will be selected to participate in a further three phases of intensive training to assist them to plan, develop and implement a focused export proposition over a 10 month period.

**Action 9: InterTradeIreland**

**Measure:** Promote connections with South East business networks on a cross border basis.

**Update: Ongoing**

InterTradeIreland worked closely with SEBIC to deliver a business planning workshop and equity advisory clinic in the South East Region in 2016. The Workshop took place in the Tower Hotel, Waterford on 17th June 2016 and 12 companies attended.

**Action 10: Southern Regional Assembly**

**Measure:** Develop a plan to grow exports and sales through the new Ireland Wales Scheme funding.

**Update: Ongoing**

There is a good pipeline of potential projects. 116 new cross-border links have been established. Under the 2007-2013 Programme there were 41 Projects. So far under the 2014-2020 Programme, seven Ireland-Wales projects were formally approved:

- Dwr: Uisce €3.0m TPC, €2.67m ERDF
- CALIN €11.60m TPC, €9.34m ERDF
- pISCES €2.28m TPC, €1.82m ERDF
- Irish Sea Portal €1.39mTPC, €1.11m ERDF
- Acclimatize €6.25m TPC, €5.38m ERDF
- Bluefish €6.62m TPC, €5.30m ERDF
- CHERISH €5.00m TPC, €4.14m ERDF

A further 14 proposals are currently under assessment, 10 of which are in business planning.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to redress regional imbalances in the European Union by funding certain initiatives. The current Fund, which runs from 2014 to 2020, is delivered in Ireland through two Regional Operational Programmes managed by the relevant Regional Assembly. Enterprise Ireland (EI) has responsibility for implementing and managing relevant ERDF grants.

**Action 11: South East Chambers**

**Measure:** Establish a USA/SE region collaboration "SE Irish American Association", based on existing town-twinning initiatives, to provide a network for promoting investment and collaboration in the region with US companies through clubs, associations and routes-to-market for SE firms and to attract investment from the US.

**Update: Ongoing**

South East Region Chambers (SERCHAM) has reached out to the American Irish Chamber and the individual Chambers have also engaged locally with American multi-national companies based in their locality to explore opportunities to further network and collaborate in this context. This continues to be an ongoing work in progress for South East Chambers.

**Action 12: WIT**

**Measure:** Develop a smart specialisation strategy for the South East Region as part of the eDIGIREGION project.

**Update: Ongoing**

eDIGIREGION is a collaborative project that brings together four high-potential research-driven clusters in diverse European regions (South East Ireland, Central Hungary, Castilla-La Mancha, Spain and Bucharest-Ilfov, Romania). The aim of eDIGIREGION is to use the triple helix partnership to plan, design and implement an ecosystem of research, innovation, creativity and commercialisation that supports the implementation of the EU Digital Agenda in each region. It is funded by the European Commission under the FP7 Programme and coordinated by Waterford Institute of Technology.

The eDIGIREGION project is due to finish on 31st March, 2017. During 2016 - five potential areas of Smart Specialisation for the South-East were identified. These Smart Specialisations, in line with the objectives of the project, are ICT focused and include ICT-AGRI, ICT in Tourism, ICT in Advanced Manufacturing (Industry 4.0), ICT in Pharmaceutical and Digital Media. A champion was identified for each of the Smart Specialisations and the project partnership elaborated each Smart Specialisation opportunity in consultation with the champion.

**Action 13: Bord Bia**

**Measure:** Through the expansion as part of Food Wise 2025, achieve an 85% increase in exports over the next decade and develop the region as a leading food producing location in Europe.

**Update: Ongoing**

Notwithstanding Brexit, the target for 2025 remains in place. Sectors which are well represented in the South-East, both numerically and value-weighted, recorded growth in 2016 over the previous year matching or beating the overall national growth recorded of 2% in a very challenging year – Beverages by 4%; Dairy by 2%; Pigmeat and Sheepmeat both by 4% and Prepared Foods by 9%.

**Action 14:** Enterprise Ireland

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland will target food companies in the South East to scale and innovate in line with National Policy

**Update: Ongoing**

Enterprise Ireland works on an on-going basis with all dairy and food business clients in the region, which is a key sector in the South East Region. This entails working through a business diagnostic and business planning process. The outcome of these plans are New Product Development (NPD) /Innovation/ Export Market opportunity development/Scaling and Jobs growth.

Enterprise Ireland delivered a Food Innovation Voucher pilot scheme at the end of 2015 to specifically target NPD in the sector. Enterprise Ireland continue to run the Food Works Programme targeting food companies that wish to make the next step in their business growth, and the LEOs run a Food Academy programme with Musgraves/SuperValu to target early stage companies who wish to bring their product to market.

**Action 15: Bord Bia**

**Measure:** Food producers and processors to work with retailers to develop market-led products so as to increase shelf space for local produce.

**Update: Ongoing**

Five companies from the South East participated in the Food Academy Start programme in 2016 out of a total of thirty nationally. Some of these may progress to the Food Academy Advance programme which would include trial listings in SuperValu stores.

**Action 17: LEOs**

**Measure:** Examine the potential for shared actions, including distribution activities, across the SE region of artisan food producer networks at county level.

**Update: Ongoing**

LEO Kilkenny & Kilkenny Leader Partnership provided funding to the Irish Food Co-op (a not for profit cooperative of South East artisan producers who have joined forces to maximise their sales and distribution.) The Irish Food Co-op links food producers from across the region to multiple customers nationwide. The Co-op facilitates the delivery and invoicing from multiple producer sources with the frequency, volume and quality that is considered best practice by the customer and increases the rate of sale on behalf of all participating producers.

**Action 18:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Develop an artisan food hub pilot project in the region based on international best practice of such hubs.

**Update: Ongoing**

The Virtual Food Hub will become a pilot for the Region focusing support on scaling food enterprise, increasing turnover and jobs, increasing exports and in essence will be an accelerator for micro food enterprise growth in the South & East Region. The South East LEOs are also currently preparing an application under the Regional Enterprise Development Competitive Call to further support the development of an artisan food hub.

**Action 20:** Industry

**Measure:** Explore the development of a dedicated agri research centre, through the further expansion and development with Kildalton College and Carlow-Kilkenny Local development and a focus on R&D on projects relevant to smaller food producers.

**Update: Ongoing**

As outlined in the first Progress Report, WIT has a number of significant ongoing research collaborations with Teagasc. In addition, in Q4 2016 WIT secured in excess of €550,000 for 4 separate PhD studies in partnership with research supervisors from Teagasc (Moorepark and Oakpark).

WIT continues to develop its 40 year undergraduate education partnership with Teagasc and Kildalton Agricultural College in addition to the Botanic Gardens and Ballyhaise Agricultural College Co. Cavan.

IT Carlow has developed an INTERREG V project (Bucanier), with partners in the South East and in Wales. This project is going through the evaluation process and the outcome will be reported on in subsequent progress reports.

**Action 22: EI**

**Measure:** Continue to exploit the full potential of the dairy industry for value-added food and nutrition product innovation and development.

**Update: Ongoing**

This action has been merged with action 14 due to similarity of objectives.

**Action 23: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Creation of civic and festival markets similar to the English Market in Cork and Harvest Festival in Waterford in cities and towns in the region.

**Update:** Ongoing

Tipperary CoCo was awarded funding under the CEDRA initiative to roll out a “Taste” series across the County in 2016/2017, including "Taste of" markets in Roscrea, Cahir, Lough Derg and Nenagh.

Kilkenny CoCo supports the ‘Savour Kilkenny’ Festival of Food that takes place annually during the October Bank Holiday weekend. This festival is firmly established on the map for Food Festivals in Ireland and celebrated its 10th birthday in 2016, hosting a very successful 4-day programme which attracted over 30,000 visitors, 100 exhibitors and another 120 at the Young Food Producers Event at MacDonagh Junction.

The latest addition to the Festival calendar is ‘Yulefest Kilkenny’- a Christmas festival which was initiated by the County Council. The inaugural event ran over 3 weeks in December during which the ‘Taste Kilkenny’ group ran a popup shop in Rothe House showcasing the best of local producers and an artisan food market was held at Grace’s Castle. Yulefest Kilkenny will be an annual event. The Council administers licensing for the popular ‘Kilkenny Farmers Market’ which takes place every Thursday on the Mayor’s walk.

Carlow CoCo supports a variety festivals and events across the County. This includes the development of Carlow's Culinary Christmas & Taste of Carlow events, which are delivered in partnership with Carlow Tourism. Carlow Culinary Christmas is now heading into its third year and expanding from a 1 day event to a 3 day event and is working in a collaborative way with Carlow Farmers Market & Food Producers. Taste of Carlow will be delivered this year as part of the Pan Celtic Festival in Easter 2017.

Wexford CoCo supports a number of such festivals in the county including the Maritime and Food Festival, The Rockin Food Festival, The Market House Festival, the 4th July America Festival and The Wexford Food and Wine Festival. Combined attendance at these festivals is in excess of 100,000 people.

Waterford City and CoCo have committed €1.4m to festival funding in 2017. This funding will aid 70 festivals and events throughout the towns and villages of Waterford. There are also two food markets run in conjunction with Harvest and West Waterford Festival of Food. A review is currently being undertaken of all farmers markets in Waterford, supported by CEDRA Agri-Tourism funding.

**Action 24: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Expansion of Dublin Food Chain initiative to locations in the South East

**Update:** Ongoing

The Wexford Food Family is an established network of 46 food producers in the county which operates in a very similar fashion to the Dublin Food Chain. The Food Family is the only fee based network of its kind in the country. The Wexford Food Family has received support, both financial (€25,000 in 2016), and significant time resources from Wexford County Council. Wexford CoCo is supporting a new strategic plan for the Food Family, which will be launched in the coming months.

Waterford City & CoCo in conjunction with LEO Waterford is currently developing a Waterford Food Trail as part of the greater Waterford Food Story, which is designed to support the development of the micro-enterprise food sector and its branding, marketing and development.

Kilkenny Tourism and LEO Kilkenny, supported by Kilkenny CoCo are developing the #tastekilkenny brand to raise the profile of Kilkenny as a food destination by increasing visitor numbers and brand awareness, and ultimately encouraging job creation. A new website, photography database and print material will market the brand as well as collaborating at trade shows, etc.

**Action 25:** LEOs

**Measure:** Create a pipeline of companies growing beyond Artisan/Small Food Business definition via the introduction of both bespoke 1:1 and group multi-level supports across strategic planning, marketing and marketing finance (for example Ascent, Superbrands and Step Change Fund).

**Update:** Ongoing

The Food Academy programme in conjunction with Bord Bia and Musgrave / Super Valu has been very successful in the South East. 57 food businesses in the South East are now listed on Supervalu shelves. A total of €5.2 million sales have been made by these food producers from Supervalu shelves.

A new initiative led by LEO Tipperary is bringing together potential food exporters in the South East with a view to developing their export potential. This initiative was launched on the 28th February, 2017.

**Action 26 :** BIM

**Measure:** Develop effective measures to attract additional landings into ports in the South East and continue to invest significantly in necessary infrastructure at the Fishery Harbour Centres

**Update:** Ongoing

Within Food Wise 2025 a lack of seafood raw material has been acknowledged as a long term barrier to developing scale and enhancing competitiveness. During 2016, BIM was tasked with developing a strategy to enhance access to raw material through engagement with non-Irish fishers and their representatives. A cross-divisional team from BIM's Fisheries Development Division and Business Development & Innovation Division was formed and a tender was drafted to seek third party support to develop a strategy. In July 2016 a tender was awarded to Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd. to develop a strategic roadmap to increase access to raw material from foreign landings. A BIM Steering Group will work with Poseidon to deliver a strategic plan during 2017.

**Action 27: BIM**

**Measure:** Develop a national strategy with implementable actions to deliver scale in the key seafood sectors, including food ingredients, while also including elements to upskill personnel across the sector in the key areas.

**Update: Ongoing**

Bord Iascaigh Mhara defines scaling as reducing costs of processing and duplication between companies, and investing the savings in professional company structures and global marketing, to generate higher premiums and capturing value in Ireland for its seafood.

BIM supports projects that drive consolidation and scaling in the main seafood categories and companies working in groups towards the collective development of the industry. This may include strategic options such as:

- Joint venture approach to new markets
- Marketing groups
- Vertically integrated producer & processor groups
- Logistics co-operation groups
- Partnerships, mergers, acquisitions and alliances with external partners

**Seafood Scaling & New Market Development Scheme**

The BIM Seafood Scaling and New Market Development Scheme supports industry-led projects that promote economies of scale through industry cooperation, joint ventures, and shared route to market structures.

In 2016, 7 projects were approved from projects including collective development of the Asian market for Irish shellfish and joint ventures on the Irish domestic market.

This scheme will continue in 2017 and will evolve to reflect the BIM vision for developing scale within the sector.

**Action 28:** BIM

**Measure:** In line with FoodWise 2025, develop a national strategic plan with practical and implementable actions to significantly increase the quantity of seafood added value across all main species groups. This strategy should complement the strategic plan to deliver scale in the key seafood sectors, including food ingredients. The aim will be to reduce the level of produce sold in commodity form from 70% to below 50%.

**Update: Ongoing**

During 2017, the Business Development & Innovation Division will develop a Strategic Innovation Plan which will build innovation capability in BIM (Bord Iascaigh Mhara) and Industry, with the goal of increasing share of value added seafood from 30% to greater than 50%.

The plan will build on the progress with Teagasc and Nofima during 2016, in the development of a Multicentre Centre of Excellence (MCOE). As part of the MCOE, BIM are progressing a range of R&D projects, following on discussions with industry and research partners. Projects include extracting ingredients from by-products as well as technology transfer from broader food to seafood.

A key innovation objective will be to build the commercial effectiveness of the Seafood Development Centre (SDC) with seafood sector across Ireland. This will include increasing the knowhow in seafood technology and strengthening the Seafood Innovation Academy to offer a range of innovation and upskilling programmes to companies at different stages of development.

**Action 29:** BIM

**Measure:** Develop heritage fishing industries and related artisan foods. The key focus will be on value added industry, drawing on the imagery and branding of the Norman constructed weirs on rivers in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Bord Iascaigh Mhara support value added seafood through the BIM Seafood Development Centre and through funding under BIM's Seafood Innovation Scheme and Fisheries Local Area Development Scheme.

**Action 30:** BIM

**Measure:** Improve the environmental sustainability of the seafood sector, including improved gear selectivity, replenishment of depleted inshore stocks by the use of aquaculture techniques.

**Update: Ongoing**

A report on the trial aimed at improving selectivity of Nephrops during February 2016 to investigate the potential use of square mesh codends (to improve the selectivity for Nephrops) was issued by BIM in May 2016.

In addition a BIM trial to test T90 cod-ends as a means of improving selectivity for whiting - on vessels targeting that species - was conducted in Q2 2016. Preliminary results were very encouraging with the T90 80 mm cod-end catching substantially less small whiting and substantially more large whiting compared with a traditional 80 mm diamond mesh cod-end. A full report will be issued on this study in due course.

**Action 31: BIM**

**Measure:** Work to ensure that to the greatest extent possible, 100% of all seafood exports in the South East region will be verified Origin Green by 2016.

**Update: Ongoing**

Under the Green Seafood Business Programme, the Seafood Development Centre (SDC) assist seafood processing companies to reduce utility costs and waste while improving environmental profiles. The programme is aligned with Bord Bia's Origin Green programme and enables seafood companies identify potential target areas for improvement in order to develop their Origin Green Sustainability Charter.

During 2017, the Green Team will develop programmes to measure environmental credentials so as to be able to communicate the environmental achievements of the industry that is understood by the consumer, market and NGO's.

There are currently 43 seafood operators who are fully verified members of Origin Green. This number includes aquaculture operations. There are a further 10 companies at the plan submitted stage. Focusing on the South East region the following companies are fully verified members: Atlantis; Sofrimar; Dungarvan Shellfish; Goatsbridge Trout Farm; Yawl Bay Seafoods; Woodstown Bay Shellfish.

**Action 32: Industry**

**Measure:** Explore the development of an agricultural manufacturing cluster with engineering collaboration and develop the South East as an agri-tech centre of excellence, linking to expertise in the South West and Mid-West regions.

**Update: Ongoing**

A proposal for a Precision Agriculture Centre of Excellence (PACE) has been elaborated. The proposal, led by WIT and developed in conjunction with other regional stakeholders, sets out a

business plan for the new centre which will be based in Kilkenny. PACE will be a commercial innovation centre, focused on developing market-ready technologies (TRL 8-9) for industry. PACE will leverage emerging ICT technologies to accelerate the growth of Ireland's agri industry and propel the development of a new ICT-AGRI industry, with potential to become a leading exporter of agri. technology solutions to the rest of the world. PACE will establish the South-East as an international leader in precision agriculture, enable the region's agri-food companies to leverage advanced technologies to improve their competitiveness and sustain growth, support new agri-tech HPSUs and SMEs by giving them access to cutting-edge technologies and attract FDI to the region. Separately a joint proposal submitted by Teagasc, WIT/ TSSG, UCD and Tyndall to the SFI Research Centres Programme entitled 'Future Milk' is currently being evaluated.

Design +, the EI funded technology gateway in IT Carlow is also building an innovation partnership proposal with an agri engineering company. The proposal is being developed and will be reported on in future reports.

**Action 33:** Teagasc

**Measure:** Evaluate the potential for the development of a National Precision Dairy research and innovation centre in the region supporting the creation of new products and services.

**Update:** Not being progressed

The Teagasc strategy envisages the development of all dairy research and innovation activities on the Moorepark campus in Fermoy and also developing an Innovation Hub in Moorepark to further strengthen links between Teagasc and the dairy processing industry, thereby strengthening innovation in the industry. The Moorepark Centre is well located to serve agriculture and industry in the South East. Teagasc has no plans to develop a National Precision Dairy Research and Innovation Centre in the South East.

**Action 34: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Further advance the proposal for a European centre of excellence for ICT in Agriculture in Kilkenny.

**Update:** Ongoing

This action is very closely aligned with activities as outlined in Action 32.

**Action 35:** Fáilte Ireland

**Measure:** Develop a minimum of two cross county tourism initiatives which focus on delivering a quality international tourism experience which are hung off the Ireland Ancient East Brand, and include the Munster Vales area.

**Update: Ongoing**

Munster Vales, led by Tipperary CoCo has been awarded funding of €400,000 (flagship status) under the REDZ scheme by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaelteacht Affairs. This will be matched by €100,000 from the local authorities in the Munster Vales geographic catchment area, including Tipperary, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. The funding will enable product development and marketing of the region in 2017.

The Munster Peakes Ltd. has 12 directors, including representatives from Tipperary County Council, Waterford City and County Council, Cork County Council and Limerick City and County Council. In addition to representatives from the Local Development Companies of Ballyhoura Development, South Tipperary Development Company & Avondhu Blackwater Partnership, the Board is also made up of community representatives from across the Comeraghs, Knockmealdowns, Galtees, Ballyhoura's & Nagles regions, including the following community organisations; Glen of Aherlow Fáilte Society, Comeragh & Knockmealdown Forums & Ballyhoura Fáilte, and is supported by Fáilte Ireland who provide strategic direction and marketing advice.

In 2017, one of the goals of Ireland's Ancient East is to unlock Ireland's living culture and ancient heritage attractions through a unique visitor experience based on best-in-class storytelling and interpretation that delivers the most engaging, enjoyable and accessible cultural holiday experience in Europe. To achieve this goal, stakeholders and the tourism community will develop and implement a shared plan that will build out the Ireland's Ancient East experience on the ground. There are nine signature themes in Ireland's Ancient East, delivering cross county tourism experiences.

A Waterford Greenway Workshop was held in April 2016 in conjunction with Waterford City and County Council to look at how the Waterford Greenway, and the surrounding area, can benefit from Fáilte Ireland's investment in the new brand experience Ireland's Ancient East. (40 participants)

As part of the Signature Experience Stories development, storytelling workshops exploring the themes of Castles & Conquests, Sacred Ireland, Vikings, Big Houses and Hard Times were held in 2016 (with 125 participants.)

Fáilte Ireland and LEO Wexford hosted a Master Class on Visual Storytelling in January, 2017. This workshop provided One to One rapid reviews of the tourism businesses ability to visually tell your story (with 31 participants.)

Fáilte Ireland are working with Smithwicks Experience Kilkenny, Rothe House, Medieval Mile Museum and St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny city in developing their storytelling experience.

In 2017, it is planned that three of the 9 themes will develop and implement Visitor Experience Development Plans with a further three themes beginning the process of industry engagement to scope and prepare for their experience development plan.

It should also be noted that a Stakeholder Group (chaired by Liam Griffin, SEAPJ Tourism Champion) has been established and held its first meeting in December, 2016. The membership of the Stakeholder Group comprises the 5 Local Authorities; LEADER Companies; BIM; and Waterways Ireland. The main objective of the Stakeholder Group is to plan the development of a regional greenway / blueway network as a major tourist attraction in the region. The Group notes the extensive range of work already undertaken and/or being planned throughout the region, including:

- 80+km Barrow Blueway from Athy to St Mullins through Co Carlow;
- 27km New Ross to Waterford Greenway to go to planning shortly;
- Wexford CoCo about to engage consultants to undertake technical study of possible Greenways from Waterford to Rosslare; New Ross to St Mullins; and from Wexford to Rosslare;
- 49km Waterford to Dungarvan Greenway is substantially complete;
- 19km Clonmel to Carrick-on-Suir Greenway under construction;
- 56km Blueway from Cahir to Carrick-on-Suir under construction;
- Lough Derg Canoe Trail under construction with plans to develop into a Blueway;
- Wexford, Waterford and Wicklow CoCos in conjunction with BIM are investigating a coastal Blueway along the coast adjacent to the three counties.

The Stakeholder Group also recognises that the development of the regional network will involve:

1. connecting the various developments, prioritising and sequencing developments (i.e. those that can be delivered quickly; and those that can be delivered in the medium to short term; etc.), and carrying out a gap analysis;
2. developing a robust business case outlining the economic benefits of the network (e.g. activity hubs; amenities; cycle hire; accommodation; restaurants; etc.); and
3. developing a marketing strategy for the greenway/blueway network that aligns with the Ireland's Ancient East brand.
4. making a strong application for funding under the €100Mn Fund referred to in the Programme for Government for Greenways.

The Local Authorities in the South East have established a project office to progress the development of the regional greenway network.

**Action 36: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Develop the South East zone value proposition and experiences as part of Ireland’s Ancient East, including in scaling up the asset base in the region and achieving international “stand-out” for the area based on its comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage.

**Update: Ongoing**

Internationally, Ireland's Ancient East continues to be promoted by Tourism Ireland across a range of platforms overseas, including TV, print and online advertising; on Ireland.com and through social media channels; and at major international consumer and trade fairs. In the GB market, Fáilte Ireland in conjunction with Tourism Ireland (through the Access Fund), supported by Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny Local Authorities and the sea carriers ran a promotional campaign twice in 2016, delivering an increase in ferry bookings from the UK market.

A major integrated marketing campaign for the domestic audience was conducted by Failte Ireland during 2016. The objective of the campaign was to drive awareness of the new brand and to inspire holiday makers to take (incremental) short breaks and holidays in the region. The "Great Stories Stay with You Forever" campaign, valued at €2.1 million, included TV, press, online and social media advertising, and reached 3.1m Irish people.

In 2016, the consumer coverage of the Ireland’s Ancient East brand resulted in a reach of 15,006,791 had an AVE Value of €1,149,569 and a PR value of €4,822,200. Articles were carried in Cara Magazine, Sunday Business Post, Sunday Independent, Irish County Living, Irish Daily Mail, RTE Guide, Evening Herald, The Sun, and Evoke.ie and across the regional newspapers.

The RTE broadcaster John Creedon, presented the show Creedon’s Epic East which featured four 1-hour broadcasts of his travels across the Ireland’s Ancient East region. Director and actress, Fiona Shaw shared her experiences in Ireland’s Ancient East in two feature editorials in the Irish Independent Weekender magazine and Irish Examiner, along with appearing on the Marian Finucane RTE Radio 1 show

Since the launch of IrelandsAncientEast.com in May 2016 there have been in excess of 232,000 visits to the website (almost 90% ahead of target for the first year). Phase Two of the website launched in December.

Familiarisation trips for media and trade to experience Ireland’s Ancient East are ongoing. During 2016, some 206 buyers from around the world have been welcomed. In addition, 46 international publicity visits have been made to Ireland’s Ancient East including Bloggers, TV and Press Journalists.

Incremental overseas business is being reported in the South East region with increasing visitor numbers recorded at Cahir Castle and the Rock of Cashel, while at Waterford Museum of Treasures, bookings are ahead for 2017.

The 9 grant-aided projects in the South East under the New Ideas in Ancient Spaces project are now complete.

75 County Boundary signs have been upgraded with Ireland's Ancient East branding across Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. In addition, branded Ireland's Ancient East (IAE) orientation signs are installed at 29 key attractions across the 5 counties.

**Action 37:** Fáilte Ireland

**Measure:** Promote and incentivise greater business links between tourism and food sectors, promoting use of local produce by the local hospitality sector and attracting visitors to the region for food and beverage related activities.

**Update: Ongoing**

In 2017, Ireland's Ancient East will develop the food and beverage experiences in the region in an engaging way for visitors. An overarching food story will be developed for tourism and the food sectors with business supports and tools to help the industry develop food experiences. International benchmarking will be undertaken.

IT Carlow have developed an INTERREG V project (Bucanier), with partners in South East Ireland and in Wales. This project is going through the evaluation process and the outcome will be reported on in future progress reports.

**Action 38:** Fáilte Ireland

**Measure:** Identify opportunities which are appropriate to each county where co-ordination of attendance at Trade Shows can be managed at a regional level to ensure appropriate marketing and promotion of tourism offerings in SE. This will require coordination and collaboration on a) on shows to attend b) cross-marketing material and c) training on promotion.

**Update: Ongoing**

Ireland's Ancient East is the programme area in which the five counties of the South East lie and will form the basis of any marketing and promotion material in the international and domestic marketplace.

Fáilte Ireland have identified opportunities appropriate for B2B sales missions in key overseas markets and coordinated the attendance, materials and training for trade industry partners for these events. Throughout 2017, Fáilte Ireland will conduct sales training and business development work with trade and stakeholders for the delivery of Ireland's Ancient East programme. Tourism Ireland undertakes the coordination and collaboration of consumer trade shows in overseas markets.

**Action 39:** ETBs

**Measure:** Develop FET programmes for new entrants to the Hospitality and Tourism sector as well as upskilling Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes for those currently engaged.-out” for the area based on its comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny-Carlow ETB (KCETB) (Training Services) will offer a Traineeship in Hospitality in 2017. Employers are currently being contacted.

Waterford-Wexford ETB (WWETB) have designed an “Introduction to Hospitality” Part-Time Training Programme which will commence in February, 2017 (see Appendix 1). This will be a 20 week Training Programme and the course content will cover the full spectrum from Customer Service through Restaurant Service Skills to HACCP training and Basic First Aid. The programme will also include Work Experience Placement Supported by a number of local hotels, including: Kelly’s Resort Hotel and Spa; Clayton Whites Hotel; Ferrycarrig Hotel; Talbot Hotel; and the Riverbank House Hotel.

Tipperary ETB (Training Services) commenced a Hotel Front Office Programme in 2016 and is due to be finished in February 2017. The aim of this programme is to enable the learner to have the skills, knowledge and competencies to operate a hotel front office. The following modules covered in the programme are: Customer Service, Hotel Front Office Operations, Personal and Interpersonal Development and Tourism Principles and Practice. Two PLCs in Level 5 Restaurant Operations are planned for Sept 2017.

Tipperary ETB are now providing the Major Award in Culinary Skills 4M2063 in Clonmel. Tipperary ETB will have a rep on the Council Tourism Board.

**Action 40: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop schools tourism initiatives such as “Know Your Own County” Campaigns and online tourism induction programmes for schools to (1) promote offerings within the region (2) develop future tourism ambassadors for the region (3) to highlight potential career opportunities in the sector.

**Update: Ongoing**

Waterford-Wexford ETB (WWETB) runs a Student Enterprise Programme in conjunction with Wexford LEO for LCA & TY students in Wexford Schools, which highlights potential opportunities within the Sector.

Kilkenny CoCo is currently developing a 5-year Strategy and a work programme, which will include an educational programme for front line staff and volunteers in the tourism sector will be integrated with a student upskilling initiative along the lines of the Welcome Ambassador programme.

Carlow CoCo runs a Student Enterprise Programme with TY & Senior Cycle Students, which highlights potential opportunities within the Sector. This project is supported by IT Carlow & Carlow Tourism. During 2017, under the REDZ initiative, Carlow CoCo will also lead a project in Digital communications around County Carlow, which will be aimed at second level students to increase awareness and promote their locality.

Waterford Museum of Treasures (WMoT) runs an annual school tours programme and makes the 'Waterford, Where I Live' workbook available to teachers. WMoT also run teachers courses in the summer months in association with the Teachers Centre.

**Action 41: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Ensure appropriate marketing material is available at Rosslare Port on visitor experiences and key destination locations in the South East Region.

**Update:** Complete

A new Pocket Guide has been produced for the Ireland's Ancient East region, highlighting visitor experiences and key destination locations. This guide is available at Tourist Information Offices and Visitor Discovery Points across the region.

**Action 42: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop the rivers and coastal 'water margins' assets of the South East region as key elements of the Failte Ireland South and East region offer, including blueway trails linking activity hubs and amenities.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny CoCo is supportive of the Blueway trail along the river Barrow in the east of the county to Graiguenamanagh. Kilkenny CoCo has also completed the Part VIII planning requirements for the South Kilkenny Greenway from Waterford into South Kilkenny along the Barrow Riverbank. Furthermore, Kilkenny CoCounty Council supported the development of the Thomastown river activity project, and is including the development of a river activity amenity in the Abbey Creative Quarter in Kilkenny City.

The Celtic Trails Interreg funded project supported by Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford local authorities will examine opportunities along the coastline of the three counties.

A maritime and estuarine blueway project is being developed, in conjunction with the local authorities in Wicklow and Wexford and the rural development LEADER companies in all three counties. An Interreg project, Celtic Routes, is also being developed with Wexford and Wicklow

local authorities, and three Welsh partners to develop tourism trails, which will have a strong emphasis on coastal communities.

*(See update on Action 35 in relation to the Stakeholder Group that has been established to develop a regional Greenway/Blueway network in the South East.)*

**Action 43: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop a plan to improve the visitor experience and business capability of water activity providers (SMEs) active in tourism in coastal and river areas considered key to delivering on the objectives of both Fáilte Ireland's Experience Development strategy and the DAFM's marine strategy Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth (HOOW).

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny CoCo is working with river activity groups in the City to support a river activity centre as part of the Abbey Creative Quarter Development. Kilkenny CoCo also supports Kilkenny Tourism in collaborative marketing and PR of existing activity/water based tourism businesses. Kilkenny CoCo has supported the expansion of Castlecomer Discovery Park with additional outdoor activities.

Carlow CoCo is currently actively working with a variety of stakeholders in respect of a Community Based Tourism Barge Project on the River Barrow funded under the REDZ initiative.

Waterford City & CoCo has received funding under the REDZ programme to undertake improvements at access points in the River Blackwater, in support of The Munster Vales initiative. These improvements will include infrastructural works, interpretative, informational and directional signage and story-boards.

**Action 44: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop a strategy to increase adoption and use of ICT technologies in marketing and delivery of tourism experiences for the South East.

**Update: Ongoing**

IT Carlow works with agencies and other stakeholders to build ICT usage and adoption through for example the BA in Culture and Heritage Studies, the Higher Diploma in Digital Marketing, Higher Diploma in Tourism Marketing and the MSc in Digital Marketing. These programmes and the Special Purpose Awards derived from these programmes have been offered in Carlow, Wicklow and Wexford.

**Action 45: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Tourism and hospitality enterprises to collaborate to develop appropriate training for the hospitality sector to improve customer service standards.

**Update: Ongoing**

Fáilte Ireland continues to collaborate with stakeholders and local communities to support the development and delivery of plans and initiatives that have the potential to strengthen the delivery of a unique Ireland's Ancient East visitor experience.

Kilkenny-Carlow ETB (KCETB) (Training Services) will offer a Traineeship in Hospitality in 2017. Employers are currently being contacted.

IT Carlow works with agencies and other stakeholders to build ICT usage and adoption through for example the BA in Culture and Heritage Studies, the Higher Diploma in Digital Marketing, Higher Diploma in Tourism Marketing and the MSc in Digital Marketing. These programmes and the Special Purpose Awards derived from these programmes have been offered in Carlow Wicklow and Wexford

**Action 46: Údarás na Gaeltachta**

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will run a pilot project in the Déise Gaeltacht to build further capacity in existing and emerging tourism-related enterprises.

**Update: Delayed**

This action was delayed due to staffing resources. In recent months ÚnaG appointed a senior officer with specific responsibility for development of the tourism sector in the Gaeltacht areas including the South East region and it is envisaged that this appointment will enable ÚnaG to focus on the above action in the coming months.

**Action 49: IDA**

**Measure:** Promote the region to attract more data intensive activities in light of the strength of broadband connectivity, energy and skills in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

IDA Ireland continues to position the region for all relevant projects of scale in this area. Of significance to note is that IDA Ireland is looking to secure land banks nationally which could host data centre type projects of scale. This process started in February 2016 and will see the appointment of a consultant to oversee the project.

**Action 50: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop the skills base for the business processing activities in the region, with HEIs, to provide training courses on the infrastructure and management / supervision side to support and develop this sector.

**Update: Ongoing**

Over 200 companies engaged with IT Carlow last year on a range of activities from training and development to product / service innovation. Bespoke programmes have been designed and delivered in response to identified company / industry needs from short programmes for example in CAD / HR / Finance for non accountants to complex masters degrees in medical device regulatory affairs.

**Action 51: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop multilingual talent base in the region through increasing promotion and take-up of foreign language modules in third level and further education courses.

**Update: Ongoing**

The offering and delivery of language programmes remains part of the IT Carlow programme portfolio. The interest in and uptake on such programmes and modules is very low. However, IT Carlow will continue to promote and encourage greater uptake of language options and Erasmus mobility opportunities.

LIT offer French and German language modules as electives on full-time Business and Marketing undergraduate programmes. Unfortunately, despite LIT promoting and emphasising the benefits of a second language, take-up for the language modules is low.

WIT's School of Humanities provides language modules and programmes in French, German, Italian, Spanish, Irish and English as a foreign language, which are taught across almost all Departments and Schools within the Institute.

**Action 52: Wexford CoCo**

**Measure:** Wexford County Council to progress the development of a financial services hub in Wexford town, building on the strengths already established in the sector in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Wexford CoCo has purchased a ten acre quay front site in Wexford Town known as Trinity Wharf. This brown field site, previously a manufacturing site for Wexford Electronics, will be developed into a business and financial services area and marina. Architects were appointed in

late 2016 to ‘masterplan’ the site and are currently developing the plans for this site and a further section of Wexford quay front linking the site.

**Action 53: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Increase collaboration in the development of education and training infrastructure to support FinTech programmes from entry through to postgraduate level.

**Update: Ongoing**

IT Carlow are developing a proposal aimed at the achievement of this action. Progress will be reported in the next report.

As outlined in the First Progress Report, WIT through its School of Business provides a very comprehensive offering of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes specifically designed to support the development of the FinTech industry both at a regional and national level.

**Action 54: EI**

**Measure:** Support enterprises and startups to fully exploit new opportunities as part of the implementation of the Government’s International Financial Services Strategy, IFS 2020.

**Update: Ongoing**

In Q2 2016, Enterprise Ireland launched the FinTech Competitive Start Fund under Action 35 of the Government’s International Financial Services Strategy, IFS 2020. The Enterprise Ireland CSF initiative is based on supporting early stage companies with €50,000 financial support for 10% equity. The FinTech Competitive Start Fund invested in 10 early-stage FinTech/Payment companies. In addition to the €50,000 investment by Enterprise Ireland, the startups were given space at Dogpatch Labs in the IFSC, a series of masterclasses from corporate members of the FinTech Payments Association of Ireland (FPAI) and access to Ulster Bank’s Innovation Team.

**Action 55: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** HEIs to support business growth through participation in Horizon 2020 proposals, SFI, EI and other funded and co-funded research opportunities related to Financial Services.

**Update: Ongoing**

IT Carlow continues to engage with funders and stakeholders to support Horizon 2020 applications. In addition, Enterprise Ireland, through 1-to-1 engagement, press advertising, events and social media channels, promotes and increases awareness of national supports available for innovation.

**Action 56:** IT Carlow

**Measure:** Assess the development of an ICT in International Financial Services centre through the further expansion of the UNUM software development centre in Carlow.

**Update: Ongoing**

IT Carlow are developing a proposal aimed at the achievement of this action. Progress will be reported in the next report

**Action 57:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Develop specific county level approaches to ensure that new office and industrial developments can come on stream quickly working with the private sector.

**Update: Ongoing**

Tipperary CoCo maintains a database of all available workspace and land banks and continues to monitor deficit areas in the County. The Council is proactively working with Chambers of Commerce in Thurles and Roscrea to advance the development of new Community Owned Enterprise Centres. A number of Feasibility Studies are ongoing to gauge demand for sector specific space such as food and digital which may progress as PPPs.

In Kilkenny, the Invest Kilkenny brand has an initiative whereby building owners and developers are assisted in information sharing, pre-planning to assist site selection and investment decisions. Kilkenny CoCo has lists of property available as well as land banks, and monitors these on a regular basis.

Carlow CoCo provides building owners and developers with an information and pre-planning service and actively assists in market information for potential investors via its economic development section.

Waterford City and CoCo have also invested in the MRF site in Dungarvan. As needs arise, online resources are used to help identify property solutions.

**Action 58:** Solas

**Measure:** Increase, as appropriate, capacity for training of apprentices for construction as the sector recovers, together with addressing the continued need for upskilling of craft persons and training for the unemployed.

**Update: Ongoing**

Back to Education Initiative Carlow (Kilkenny-Carlow ETB) will run a QQI accredited Level 3 construction course in 2017. This will provide a pre development option for those interested in pursuing apprenticeships or careers in construction.

Waterford-Wexford ETB (WWETB) apprenticeship programme has recently been approved to fill instructor posts in Plastering, Electrical, Agri-mechanic and Carpentry/Joinery. WWETB have also made application to Solas for 6 new apprentice programmes.

Apprentice provision is increasing. In 2016/17 IT Carlow expect an increase of 40%- 50% in carpentry and joinery, electrical and electrical instrumentation apprentices attending the Institute. IT Carlow will continue to work with the Construction Industry Federation, Solas and other stakeholders to promote construction careers.

**Action 59: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Ensure sufficient land for residential development and infrastructure in the region shall be provided for in the City or County Development Plan of each local authority as set out in the Core Strategy of the Development Plan, which shall be consistent with the regional population targets.

**Update: Ongoing**

This action is a legal requirement under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The National Planning Framework which is currently being prepared, will provide new national population targets. Following completion of the NPF, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies will be prepared by the Southern Regional Assembly, and these will include new regional population targets. Local Authorities will have to ensure that City and County Development Plans comply with same. This process is likely to take at least 5 years.

The planning departments of Local Authorities are tasked with strategic planning, zoning and developing local area plans. This is done in consultation with the economic development units.

**Action 60: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop mechanisms for working closely with the construction industry, local government and building owners to enhance the energy efficiency of buildings and to remove barriers to retrofitting.

**Update: Ongoing**

Tipperary Energy Agency continues to work with both public and private sector agencies to promote energy savings.

Qualibuild is an EU funded project led by LIT to upskill construction trade workers to meet the needs, standards and quality required for energy efficient buildings.

Waterford City & CoCo (WCCC) have upgraded 182 social housing units under the SEAI Better Energy Communities (BEC) scheme. These measures included external / attic insulation, replacing windows / doors, installing air sourced heat pumps, gas condensing boilers / heating control upgrades and insert stoves.

WCCC have worked with a number of businesses in improving energy efficiency and have sourced funding for energy efficiency upgrades.

WCCC have developed an energy efficient building at local enterprise office, with innovative led lighting, dimming system and motion control of light fittings.

**Action 61: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop a showcase of the region's manufacturing base, with a dual focus on attracting young people to careers in manufacturing. The skills demand is for a mix of apprenticeships and third/fourth level qualifications. Manufacturing companies to promote more STEM participation in primary and secondary schools.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny-Carlow ETB (KCETB) has registered an Expression of Interest with SOLAS to develop and deliver phase two electrical apprenticeships. SOLAS are meeting with KCETB to review and scope this expression of interest. If successful, training should commence by mid 2017.

This South East Regional Skills Forum organised a 'Careers of the Future' industry led event in Kilkenny in December 2016. A series of career promotion videos were published and distributed to guidance counsellors and others throughout the region. New apprenticeships in manufacturing and engineering have been promoted to industry in the region.

Waterford Wexford Training Centre ran Open days in November to allow students to experience the 'apprenticeship' experience and investigate possible options. These events were attended by over 400 young people.

**Action 62: Solas**

**Measure:** Increase, as appropriate, capacity for training of apprentices for manufacturing and engineering together with addressing the continued need for upskilling of craft persons and training for the unemployed.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny-Carlow ETB (KCETB) has registered an Expression of Interest with SOLAS to develop and deliver phase two electrical apprenticeships. SOLAS are meeting with KCETB to review and scope this expression of interest. If successful, training should commence by mid 2017.

The South East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF) organised a 'Careers of the Future' industry led event in Kilkenny in December 2016. The SERSF has also been actively promoting the adoption of new apprenticeships relevant to manufacturing in the region.

**Action 63:** Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Develop case studies of collaboration between HEIs and enterprise, showcasing increased efficiency and reduced cost.

**Update: Ongoing**

This action is being undertaken by the South East Regional Skills Forum. To date 10 case studies of collaboration have been collated. The focus will go beyond efficiencies and cost and focus on the wider benefits of education / industry interaction.

WIT's Technology Gateway Centres and the Technology Transfer Office continue to produce (on a quarterly basis), case studies of research collaborations with enterprise demonstrating the benefits and added value of such partnerships.

**Action 64: EI**

**Measure:** Target manufacturing companies in the South East Region to scale, innovate and develop international markets.

**Update: Ongoing**

Enterprise Ireland works on an on-going basis with key manufacturing client businesses in the region. This entails working through a business diagnostic and business planning process. The outcome of these plans are New Product Development/Innovation/Export; Market opportunity development / Scaling; and Jobs growth.

The South Eastern Applied Materials Research Centre (SEAM) based within the Waterford Institute of Technology, seed funded under the Enterprise Ireland's Technology Gateway Programme, has been providing assistance to industries in the South and South East region of Ireland and beyond since its launch in Feb. 2009. It has currently established collaboration with over 140 industries in Ireland.

SEAM organized the following events at WIT in 2016:

(I) SEAM hosted an Irish Medical Device Association (IMDA) sponsored workshop on 3D Metal Additive Manufacturing (AM) at its premises in WIT on 31st Aug. 2016. Over 100 delegates from 65 companies from all over Ireland attended the event. This one day workshop, which had speakers from reputed organizations from UK and Ireland, was designed to provide a good understanding of Metal Additive Manufacturing and its current status for companies based in Ireland. The topics were chosen carefully by SEAM so as to cover all aspects of Metal AM such

as principles, design and process requirements, powder requirements, the readiness of the technology to meet industry needs including Industrialization of AM processes and regulatory/standards. The companies found the event so useful they explicitly asked the SEAM Centre Director to arrange more such practical oriented workshops in the future.

(ii) Three months later, on 1st November, SEAM in Partnering with Schivo (Waterford Based Precision Engineering Company) hosted an Additive Manufacturing Training Workshop for a select group of industries. This one day training event was sponsored by the Irish Manufacturing Research Centre. The morning session of this event was held in the SEAM premises, while Schivo hosted the afternoon session. The companies had the opportunity to see the Additive Manufacturing in action at both these premises and it gave them a good feel and understanding of this fast developing technology.

**Action 65: IDA**

**Measure:** Build global services base around manufacturing base already in the region and explore growth opportunities in finance, supply chain, HR and procurement.

**Update: Ongoing**

IDA Ireland continues to engage with the manufacturing base in the South East Region in order to maximise opportunities for a more services led agenda. These discussions are actively explored with the existing client base, and those new companies looking at investing in the region.

**Action 66: IMDA**

**Measure:** Expand existing cross-sectoral lean mentoring programmes in the SE region.

**Update: Ongoing**

The Irish Medtech Association MÓRTM Benchmark model is an Operational Excellence industry standard for companies to improve strategic deployment, organisational culture and employee behaviour, designed by the Irish Medtech Association member companies. This diagnostic tool assesses where companies are upon their lean journey and how to progress. The tool is applicable to both SME's and large companies and over 190 people have completed the cost effective training to date. Irish Medtech Association now offer a suite of services in lean manufacturing which use the MÓRTM Model framework, including a level 9 lean leadership programme, a highly successful lean mentoring programme, and an e learning tool is in development. Irish Medtech Association's Lean Mentoring Programme was showcased at the European Shingo Conference in Cork in October, 2016. Four new Lean Mentoring Partnerships have been announced in 2016.

- o Abbott Diagnostics Longford and KPW Print

- o Boston Scientific Cork, and Tecomet
- o DePuy and Gilead Lifesciences
- o Waters Technologies, Wexford and Automatic Plastics

**Action 67: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** As part of a programme of upgrading of the industrial strengths of the region, expand capability through targeting potential strategic infrastructure investment opportunities available through SFI and EI in order to accelerate the adoption and integration of 3D printing and additive manufacturing technologies in relevant engineering businesses.

**Update: Ongoing**

LIT ACORN Research Centre is a national centre of excellence in innovation for industry and works closely with a wide range of national and international companies, including Stryker, DePuy Synthes, Vistakon, Analog Devices, GlaxoSmithKlein (GSK), Flextronics, Dell Computers and Kostal. Additionally, ACORN collaborates with a large range of indigenous SMEs. This collaboration involves on all aspects of enterprise and product development and has taken place largely amid the energy, renewables, controls, monitoring, waste and water sectors. Within these sectors, ACORN has developed both hardware and software solutions for implementation in a range of applications; the list below illustrates these strands of multi-disciplinary research:

- Intelligent Systems: ICT, Informatics, InfoGraphics, SCADA, Data Historians, PLCs, Controls, Embedded Systems, Sensor Networks.
- Renewable Energy: Technologies Electrical Generation from Renewables, Thermal Generation from Renewables, Bio-Fuels, Renewable Energy Technologies.
- Energy Management and Environmental Ecosystems: Energy Management and Monitoring Systems, ISO50001, Environmental Ecosystem Monitoring and Management, ISO14000. Air, Water and Soil; Sustainability and Policy
- Sustainable Manufacturing: Zero Carbon Production, Human Factors, Energy Awareness and Sustainability.
- Smart Facilities: Smart Maintenance Systems; Resources Usage in Facilities / Utilities, Energy, Water, Waste; Condition based Maintenance.
- Smart Electrical Networks: Smart Grids, Demand Side Management, Power Quality, Integration of Renewable Energy, Alternative Energy (CHP) and Embedded Electrical Generation.

Acorn has focused on the Engineering of Sustainable Solutions for Industrial, Commercial and Utility Applications. Beyond this, a further host of innovation vouchers were completed by the research staff. Various innovation partnership and research projects under the helm of ACORN have been completed some of which have been awarded further funding from funding bodies

such as Enterprise Ireland. At a local level, ACORN also facilitates postgraduate positions with new research postgraduates increasingly joining the centre of excellence. These researchers have specialised in areas such as facilities engineering, cyber physical systems and wave energy. Many postgraduate students have completed their research in conjunction with the projects being coordinated by ACORN. This is advantageous for early-career academics who benefit from the wide range of expertise that exists within the centre. As a result of such research, many national and international conference papers, presentations and reports have been presented and guided under the auspices of ACORN.

A proposal relating to this action is being developed by IT Carlow and will be more fully reported on in the next progress report.

In Q4 2016 WIT's Pharmaceutical and Molecular Biotechnology Research Centre (PMBRC) was successful in securing €1.15m under SFI's Research Infrastructure Programme. This state of the art infrastructure will enable WIT researchers to develop the next generation of drug delivery devices, as well as novel sensors with applications in smart agriculture and biomedical diagnostics. Further information is available on <https://www.wit.ie/news/science/wit-research-boosted-by-more-than-1m-funding-from-science-foundation-ireland>.

**Action 68:** SEAM

**Measure:** Collaborate with companies to develop their capabilities in the area of design, prototyping, validation and scale to manufacture of 3D additive components and provide assistance to other engineering manufacturing companies in enhancing their overall capabilities.

**Update: Ongoing**

The South Eastern Applied Materials Research Centre (SEAM) will continue to collaborate with companies to develop their design and 3D additive component capabilities. In 2016 SEAM completed 145 separate projects for industry.

**Action 69:** SEAM

**Measure:** Conduct Industry focused workshop at SEAM-WIT to disseminate advances in 3D additive printing for manufacturing based companies in the South East region.

**Update: Complete**

In continuation with creating the awareness and supporting the transfer of knowledge in the 3D Additive Manufacturing field, SEAM hosted an Irish Medical Device Association (IMDA)

sponsored workshop on 3D Metal Additive Manufacturing (AM) at its premises in WIT on 31st Aug 2016. Over 100 delegates from 65 companies from all over Ireland attended the event. This one day workshop, which had speakers from leading organisations from the UK and Ireland, was designed to provide a good understanding of Metal Additive Manufacturing and its current status for companies based in Ireland. The topics were chosen carefully by SEAM so as to cover all aspects of Metal AM such as principles, design and process requirements, powder requirements, the readiness of the technology to meet industry needs (e.g. Industrialisation of AM processes and regulatory/standards.) The companies found the event so useful they explicitly asked the SEAM Centre Director to arrange more such practical oriented workshops in the future. On 1st November 2016, SEAM in Partnership with Schivo (Waterford Based Precision Engineering Company) hosted an Additive Manufacturing Training Workshop for a select group of industries. This one day training event was sponsored by the Irish Manufacturing Research Centre. The morning session of this event was held in the SEAM premises, while Schivo hosted the afternoon session. The companies had the opportunity to see Additive Manufacturing in action at both premises, which gave them a good feel and understanding of this fast developing technology.

**Action 70:** SEAM

**Measure:** Enhance SEAM’s Applied research capabilities specifically related to applications in 3D printing to the benefits of Irish manufacturing sector.

**Update:** Ongoing

Every year SEAM procures key items of equipment that is of prime use to the Irish manufacturing sector. In 2016, SEAM procured one new analytical piece of equipment and is in the process of procuring another worth €160K. SEAM's next priority is to secure funding for a higher laser power 3D printer (for printing higher thermal conductive materials like Aluminium and other novel hybrid materials) and the associated post processing and finishing equipment.

**Action 71:** IT Carlow

**Measure:** IT Carlow to establish Design+ Technology Gateway in order to support and enhance technology driven disciplines, linking that technology to business opportunities and user needs. Design+ will develop an inclusive design-led regional and national industry portal which will complement existing Technology Gateways.

**Update:** Complete

Design + is now launched and operating. It will be a national industry portal, complementing existing Technology Gateways.

**Action 72: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop plans for each of the key town centres in the region with collaboration with business and representative organisations and incorporate social and community development aspects. These will include proposals to enhance the consumer experience and attractiveness of town centres for shopping and to develop world class retail centres throughout the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Tipperary CoCo has facilitated the development of Town Centre Plans for each of the nine towns in the County. For delivery of the actions in the plans a Town Centre Forum is required in each town and work commenced in 2016 in five of the towns. The remaining four towns are part of the 2017 programme of work.

As part of the Kilkenny LECP (Local Economic and Community Plan), each Municipal District of Kilkenny CoCo will have its own LECP. Castlecomer is the first to have this under development. Discussions are underway to pilot a community ‘destination group’ approach to support tourism clusters and spread the benefits of increased economic activity (e.g. regarding festivals/up-selling and knowledge sharing.) Two towns have been chosen for village renewal projects, which are progressing and these will enhance the attractiveness of the respective towns.

Carlow CoCo is currently progressing a plan for Carlow Town Centre. As part of the Towns & Village Scheme a Town Plan is being created for 7 Towns & Villages in County Carlow. This process will be completed at the end of Q1 2017 and it is envisaged that a further 5 towns and villages will have Health Checks and Plans put in place during 2017.

The District Area managers in County Wexford are developing town plans for New Ross, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross. Enniscorthy and New Ross will both be by-passed in 2018-2019, so particular attention will be focused on these two areas.

Waterford City & CoCo have worked with stakeholders to create a Tramore Town Centre Management Plan, a Dungarvan Town Centre Management Plan and the City Centre Management Plan 2017-2020 will be issued in the coming weeks.

**Action 73: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Local Authorities and Retail Associations to develop collaborations to support the regeneration/development of their town and city centres through Town Centre Strategic Development Plans.

**Update: Ongoing**

In County Tipperary this action is being progressed as part of the work programme for Action 72.

Waterford City & CoCo have management groups and plans in Tramore, Dungarvan and Waterford City with liaison officers appointed for each area.

Kilkenny CoCo has held two Town Hall retailer meetings to share plans and make presentations to retailers namely on: the development of the Abbey Creative Quarter Masterplan; and a city centre development plan for the strategic development of the city core site.

**Action 74: LEOs**

**Measure:** Promote the move to ecommerce and double the number of on-line vouchers drawn down by retailers in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

The number of Trading On-Line Vouchers approved by the LEOs in the South East in 2016 is illustrated in the Table below:

LEO	No. of Vouchers Approved 2016	Value of Vouchers Approved (€)
Carlow	22	€38,057.50
Kilkenny	27	€53,398.00
Tipperary	33	€67,894.00
Waterford	49	€100,154.50
Wexford	49	€98,168.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>€357,672.05</b>

**Action 75: ETBs**

**Measure:** ETBs will work in collaboration with a number of new partners to develop and deliver targeted responses to local skills needs, such as Retail. These approaches will be piloted in 2015.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny Carlow ETB are piloting a number of part time courses for those wishing to return to education and eventually enrol for a full time programme. The programmes offer:

- The opportunity to return to learning gradually - starting with 2 days per week;
- Support, information and guidance on the route towards further education or training (FET) or work, while building skills, abilities, talents, and the confidence to start other courses or training, getting a qualification, or work;
- opportunity to try a range of different subjects, depending on what is of interest, useful or important to participants in furthering their study, training or work.
- The chance to get ready to start working towards a qualification.

Waterford-Wexford ETB (WWETB) is working through the Regional Skills Forum to deliver targeted responses. Current identified priority clusters for the South East include Life Sciences, Engineering and Hospitality. WWETB, in partnership with the LEO Waterford, are engaged in a Local Training Initiative in the West Waterford area to support the garment industry.

Tipperary ETB (TETB) has given consideration to the requirements of Government Policy by prioritising the need of the long term unemployed (LTU) in moving towards a more flexible model of course provision. Courses are aligned with local and regional labour market demands. The ETB consulted with the South East and Midwest Regional Skills Fora, to gain a greater understanding of regional requirements. Tipperary has a number of key industries such as Pharma, Retail, Logistic, Distribution, Finance and Construction. Courses have been planned to meet this demand. Courses have been developed with extended work placement and on the job training to ensure there are improved outcomes. This accounts for 37% of overall courses.

A strategic review of the course provision was carried out County wide to ensure Training courses were not duplicated with FE course. FIT was consulted in relation to ICT and are supporting TETB in recruitment for a number of programmes.

Course provision has been more evenly dispersed throughout the County. The majority of Contracted Training courses offered in 2016 achieved maximum capacity with an average of 85% achieved over the year from April 2016.

As requested in the Action Plan for Jobs and the “Demand for Training DSP clients 2016-2017” courses have been provided across the FET sector in TETB, in the areas where potential job opportunities may arise. City & Guilds are being considered as an alternative accreditation body. An internal review of PLCs has resulted in more course provision in career clusters highlighted at launch of SE Regional Skills Forum. All Major Awards at Level 4-6 have a workplace component. The Skills for Work programme links directly with employers to provide courses for upskilling the workforce. TETB works collaboratively with Local Community Development Committees to deliver provision. TETB (BTEI) will provide a Major Award in Retail Skills 4M1998 in Clonmel. This course will be part time and will facilitate students who left school early who are already working in Retail or plan to work in this sector.

**Action 76: PMBRC**

**Measure:** Building on the very successful Pharmaceutical & Molecular Biotechnology and Research Centre (PMBRC), assess the feasibility of developing a Pharmaceutical Research and Incubation Centre in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

An initial stakeholder meeting of representatives from PMBRC, WIT, IT Carlow, EI, local industry and South East Business & Innovation Centre (SEBIC) was held on 18th April, 2016 to further explore this action. It was agreed that the proposed facility could provide for a combination of:

specialist incubation space for start-up pharma companies to cater in particular for secondary processing; incubation space for medical device start-ups (with the spec being less onerous); clean room environment to “Class D” standard; testing facilities for high-end food start-ups (given the proposed spec); specialist training facilities for employees of existing pharma / med tech companies (In this regard the Waterford-Wexford ETB have expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of partnering in this project should it prove viable). (Furthermore: note there are currently 20+ major employers in the ‘lifesciences’ sector operating in the region, employing a cumulative total of c7,500 people, and these companies are planning to create a further c1,800 additional jobs over the next 2-3 years, so training and re-skilling of employees is an on-going critical issue.) It is accepted that a detailed feasibility and business case needs to be undertaken of the project. SEBIC have prepared outline terms of reference for the scope of work to be undertaken.

**Action 77: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Leverage regional expertise and create a centre of excellence for the South East in the fields of IT and Engineering support for the growing medical devices sector.

**Update: Ongoing**

Since its inception in 2009, SEAM has always had a strong focus on the Medical Device Sector with over 35% of its strong 150 client companies are working in this field. The growing strength of this sector had ensured that SEAM continues to develop and invest in Medical Device Analysis infrastructure and expertise. The combination of state of the art X-ray Tomography equipment, the recent procurement of Metal Laser Sintering System along with various analytical equipment has created a unique facility in the South East to assist Medical Device sector in developing new prototype products and for various device analysis. Likewise the Pharmaceutical and Molecular Biotechnology Research Centre (PMBRC) has a number of critical research and innovation partnerships with companies in the medical device sector based in the South East.

**Action 78: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Exploit the potential of convergence opportunities in the SE, linking life-sciences with pharma/med devices/engineering/ICT/Telecoms.

**Update: Ongoing**

Design + in IT Carlow has initiated projects with SMEs across the region.

WIT through its 3 Technology Gateway Centres (SEAM, MSTG and PMBRC) continues to provide a comprehensive offering of research, innovation and bespoke technical solutions to these industry sectors in the South East.

LIT are continuing their process of engagement with Life Science companies in the Tipperary area using their Research Unit and Shannon ABC to work with the Enterprise Team to identify synergies and potential for collaboration.

**Action 80:** Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Explore the extension of existing campus incubation capacity in the Region.

**Update: Ongoing**

With both Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre (TCEC) and QUESTUM enterprise/acceleration centres operating above 85% capacity, LIT and its enterprise partners in the respective centres, have been looking at the physical expansion possibilities for both locations. The LIT Enterprise Team has also been actively running a Student Engagement initiative, with a view to increasing the number of student spin-out companies, into the centres.

In Q4 2016 WIT appointed the design team to progress the development of the planned €2.5m extension of WIT's ArcLabs centres in Waterford, which will double the incubation capacity available in ArcLabs Waterford.

**Action 81:** Wexford CoCo

**Measure:** Pursue the development of an ICT innovation Hub in North Wexford capitalizing on location south of Dublin and building the SE capacity around cutting edge IT, through Wexford County Council working in partnership with industry and education sectors.

**Update: Ongoing**

The 36,000 square feet Innovation House in Gorey is nearing completion with an anticipated opening date in June 2017. This prime office block will host a new 5,000 square feet co-working and incubation space called The Hatch Lab. The Hatch Lab [www.thehatchlab.ie](http://www.thehatchlab.ie) will include 37 permanent desks and 17 hot desks, a large conference space and 3 private meeting rooms and will be open to new start-ups, and existing tech focused businesses looking for an inspirational space to grow.

**Action 82:** DCCoI

**Measure:** Develop a plan to exploit the potential to further expand Digital Media and Design activities.

**Update: Ongoing**

The proposed development of a National Design Innovation Centre to be based in the South East will be aligned with plans for developing design activities in the region.

Important new collaborative links have been initiated between the Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) and key partners include LIT's key enterprise related departments.

Following a proposal by LIT and QUESTUM, LEO Tipperary have been granted approval by Enterprise Ireland to undertake a feasibility study to determine the viability of setting up a "seat ready" studio in Clonmel. The "seat ready" studio could be offered to national and international animation/VFX studios. The aim would be for these companies to locate an element of production to Clonmel and start to employ from the local pool of graduates from both Thurles and Clonmel campuses. The proposal would help to initiate investment in the Digital sector and attract inward investment to the County. The proposed study would validate if there is a market and demand for an outside of Dublin location for studios. The feasibility study would also look at and assess infrastructural requirements, broadband and other resources. It is anticipated the report will be ready at the end of July 2017.

The National Design Innovation Centre will also focus upon targeted activities which will contribute towards the governments 'Creative Ireland Programme' with a strand of work considering the 'excellence in media production' ambitions.

**Action 83: DCCoI**

**Measure:** Position Waterford as a centre of excellence in glass design and production, working with key stakeholders in planning the development of other such centres in jewellery and ceramics

**Update: Ongoing**

Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) met with Waterford City & CoCo in November, 2016 to scope the project. A meeting between DCCoI and WIT in December further refined this document. Further discussion with the three parties, DCCoI, WIT and WCC, is planned.

The focal point for the project could be the development of an International Centre for Glass Heritage and Design. This Centre would complement the existing Waterford Crystal Visitors' Centre. The Centre would host a range of features including contemporary glass exhibitions curated by the National Museum of Ireland and Waterford Museum, a centre that links with Waterford Institute of Technology presenting glass used in architecture, packaging, medical devices etc showing the wide range of uses of non decorative glass. In addition plans to explore the development of a resource centre for glass related business are under consideration, subject to market demand during 2017 and 2018.

**Action 84:** DCCoI

**Measure:** Develop a ‘Design Thinking’ initiative for young people, through partnership between LEOs, culture and arts venues and education to deliver enterprise skills to young people using existing resources, similar to the coder dojo model for enterprises and drawing on the success of the creativity programme in Sligo.

**Update:** Ongoing

Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) and IT Carlow have agreed to develop a ‘Design Dojo’ pilot project to be initially rolled out in Kilkenny and Carlow. This programme will be developed with a number of strategic partners including Local Enterprise Offices in the region and VISUAL in Carlow. Design Dojo has been devised as a design, technology and craft-innovation based action research initiative for post-primary students aimed at engaging students in the use of technology, user-centered design and craft innovation in the classroom and community. It will build on DCCoI’s existing designED, CRAFTed and Future Makers programmes and complement curricular learning in the visual arts, craft and design by developing connectivity through technology and user-centered design processes.

LIT, QUESTUM and DCCI held a video-conference to discuss the adaption the LIT developed format used for the annual Irish Technology Leadership Group (ITLG) Young Innovators event, for use with the proposed Design Dojo. A follow meeting is scheduled for 2017.

Phase 1: Nov 2016 – Feb 2017

Activities have commenced with the appointment of a researcher to commence rollout of the pilot project.

**Action 85:** DCCoI

**Measure:** Develop and promote the Design capability in Carlow.

**Update:** Ongoing

Carlow IT launched the Design+ Technology Gateway in October 2016 aimed at applying industrial design capabilities to developing companies in the engineering, ICT & software and bioscience sectors.

Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) is collaborating with Carlow Local Enterprise Office on a number of initiatives including support for the local designer/maker network FORM Carlow as well as preparation for the Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase – Ireland’s International Creative Expo, which took place in January 2017. As part of the consultation process for ‘Towards a National Design Strategy’, being developed by DCCoI as a follow up to Year of Irish Design 2015 (ID2015), Carlow LEO hosted consultation workshops with local SMEs and Carlow IT facilitated a workshop on behalf of Enterprise Ireland with design-led Gateway clients.

DCCoI continues to work with ITC and Carlow LEO in developing Design Dojo for Carlow (ref. Action Point 84).

In November 2016 DCCoI and Kilkenny Local Authority issued a tender to undertake a feasibility study to establish the need for and impact of a National Design Innovation Centre based in the South East.

The Centre will be focused on the training, production and dissemination of high quality research and knowledge transfer in contemporary design and craft making and manufacturing in Ireland. Centre will provide industry focused training to meet industry needs, provide CPD training, helping to up-skill the existing sectoral workforce, as well as provide incubation and mentoring facilities and training to help creative start-ups.

Following a submission to Failte Ireland's "What's the Big Idea" call out, DCCoI has succeeded in securing funding for a feasibility study which will focus on assessing the potential development of an International Design Futures Festival for the South East, with a particular reference to its potential to develop as a significant tourism asset for Ireland's Ancient East. The feasibility study will commence in 2017.

#### **Action 86: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Expand the Better Energy Communities (BEC) initiative in the SE, to promote energy efficiency measures to the Local Business Community. LEOs will work with the Economic Development Units of the local authorities and the Energy Agencies in the region to build on the work already undertaken.

#### **Update: Ongoing**

In line with the Tipperary Sustainable Energy Action Plan, Tipperary Energy Agency and Energy Communities Tipperary will continue to apply for and deliver Better Energy communities, and Superhomes deep retrofit programs for SME's, homes and Community facilities. A total of €4M and 100 jobs have been supported under this initiative in 2016. It is proposed to increase this program, in line with the national increase in funding, to €6M investment and 150 Jobs in 2017.

The Carlow Kilkenny Energy Agency has presented to Kilkenny businesses through Bizfest 2016 and Town Hall Retailers Meeting.

Waterford City & CoCo were successful in sourcing funding under the BEC for a number for SME's in Waterford. Innovative technologies installed as part of the works included gas fire chp, solar photo voltaic, LED lighting, etc. A funding application has been submitted to SEAI for 2017. There is potential to include new business within the 2018 application, where businesses can receive funding achieved for energy efficiency measures/renewable energy technologies. A renewable Energy Strategy for Waterford City & County 2016-2030 has also been adopted.

**Action 89:** Eirgrid

**Measure:** Ensure that the electricity transmission grid in the South East is strengthened to enable maximum investment by industries that rely on large energy consumption

**Update:** Ongoing

EirGrid are continuing to ensure that required grid strengthening initiatives are undertaken in the South East and nationwide. This includes, where required, the upgrade and refurbishment of the existing transmission network, including both line and station improvements. These ongoing works will ensure that the South East region has a secure and reliable supply of electricity in order to maximise the potential for investment in the region.

**Action 90:** SEAI

**Measure:** Promote and assist the delivery of costs savings through energy efficiency programmes and training for businesses and public sector organisations in the region.

**Update:** Ongoing

Qualibuild is an EU funded project led by LIT to upskill construction trade workers to meet the needs, standards and quality required for energy efficient buildings. FREED - a project funded by the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (NPA), in which LIT are a partner, is involved in providing mentoring and knowledge transfer of innovative energy efficient ideas from 6 SME's within the NPA region.

**Action 91:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Commence pilot upgrade of public lighting by replacing the existing LA stock of sodium lamps with high efficiency LED units to reduce energy consumption costs and also to reduce lamp maintenance costs.

**Update:** Ongoing

Tipperary CoCo Roads Department have undertaken the following actions in relation to public lighting in 2016;

- A survey of public lighting throughout Co Tipperary completed in accordance with the national template, including the mandatory 32 fields.
- Introduction of Deadsure software in Tipperary as the management tool for managing the public lighting inventory.
- Tender process commenced in Q4 2016 for a public lighting maintenance contractor, co-ordinated by Tramore House Regional Design Office, in conjunction with 3 other local authorities in the South East Region.

### **Replacement Programme 2016**

Orders were placed for approximately 450 LED's to replace old sodium lamps with high efficiency LED units. All LED's are expected to be installed by end of Q1 2017.

### **Replacement Programme 2017**

Old Sox and Son lanterns will be replaced in suitable locations subject to availability of funding.

Nationally, a Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) working group is looking at the possibility of a national replacement and upgrade programme.

Waterford City & CoCo have replaced some and are in the process of replacing others, located in specific areas. There are discussions in place around a national scheme to upgrade lighting on a large scale. A survey of public lighting is in progress (circa 15,000 lights are be included on the database.) The viability of LED light replacements will be analysed in the coming months. Agreement on funding for a national retro fit programme is to be made in 2017.

### **Action 92: Coillte**

**Measure:** Assess the economic value added potential of the forestry sector in the region. Promote research opportunities for added value product development for timber harvested in the region

**Update:** Complete

The forestry sector is relatively young but is increasingly important in the national economy. It has a vital role to play in the context of rural development. Over the past decade the importance of wood processing as a component of the sector has greatly increased, as levels of roundwood output have grown and the return on State and private investment in afforestation, and related areas, becomes more tangible. This trend will continue as the scope of forestry policy broadens, with increasing attention being paid to competitiveness in the growing and processing of forestry products, and to Ireland's comparative advantage in growing wood.

The national forest estate has increased from a modest 89,000 hectares (ha) in 1928 to 731,650 hectares by the end of 2012; an area that represents 10.5% of the total land area of the country (Redmond, 2013). Approximately 46% is privately owned while the remaining 54% is publicly owned, primarily by Coillte Teoranta. The total growing stock is estimated at 70 million cubic metres, with 74% being in publicly-owned forests.

One of Coillte's Divisions, MEDITE SMARTPLY, which has manufacturing sites based based in Clonmel (MEDITE) and Belview outside Waterford city (SMARTPLY), is the market leading manufacturer of environmentally produced, sustainable timber construction panels. MEDITE SMARTPLY products are exported to over 30 countries. In 2016, a €59 million upgrade of the Belview plant was completed securing it as one of the South-East region's largest exporters.

Medite SmartPly employs over 160 people directly at the Belview plant with a further 200 jobs supported indirectly in the wider community. Coillte advised at the launch that the €59 million investment was part of a strategy to develop innovative, value added products that meet customer needs and enable the company to increase sales and added that for suppliers, including farmers and private forestry growers, the new facility provides a long-term destination for pulp wood from forest thinnings, as well as underpinning Coillte's own supply to Medite SmartPly.

**Action 94: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Regional approach to raising awareness of job opportunities in the region and qualifications required and available in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

The South East Regional Skills Forum has collated and disseminated a variety of information about career opportunities in sectors of importance to the region, where there are identified skills shortages and is supported by the Careers and Alumni offices of IT Carlow and WIT in driving this action.

LIT are also active in the Limerick for Engineering initiative with learnings brought back to Tipperary and the South East region.

**Action 95: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Convene a South East Enterprise Conference with themes to include the strengths of the region and branding with a focus on investors.

**Update: Ongoing**

***This action is closely linked with Action 151. See Action 151 for update.***

**Action 96: LEOs**

**Measure:** Deliver an annual set of South East microenterprise Events for the South East

**Update: Ongoing**

LEOs in the South East will roll out a series of events during Local Enterprise Week 2017, from March 5th to 10th, including seminars, workshops, clinics, master classes and networking events and will host both the National Enterprise Awards and the Student Enterprise Awards County Competitions. It is expected that circa 3,000 individuals will participate in the series of events

planned across the region. In addition, the regional IBYE awards took place on 31<sup>st</sup> January in Wexford and regional winners progressed to the National Final on 5th March in Google HQ. Throughout 2017, the Local Enterprise Offices across the region will deliver a comprehensive range of business skills training programmes to meet the needs of owner/managers and early stage entrepreneurs. This will include the provision of Start Your Own Business courses and dedicated boot camps for pre-startups, while Management Development, LEAN and sector specific training such as a 'Building Craft and Design Enterprise Development' Programme will be rolled out to meet the needs of existing firms.

**Action 97: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Establish a programme for large employers to collaborate to brand the region as a tourist destination.

**Update: Ongoing**

Further to the commencement of the Visitor Experience Development Plans, Ireland's Ancient East Signature Experience Workshops will be held in central locations across the region. The Dwell on Excellence in Ireland's Ancient East, a cross selling programme targeted at trade (accommodation, food, attractions, retail) has become the IAE Champions/ Service Excellence programme. It is a self-replicating programme, where participants undertake to train further personnel in their businesses and communities.

**Action 98: IDA**

**Measure:** Continue to use relevant data (for example Maynooth University's AERO) to inform evidence based planning and identify development opportunities in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

IDA remains informed of all research completed on the region that may assist its FDI efforts. IDA has engaged with SOLAS on regional data reports produced.

**Action 99: LEOs**

**Measure:** Each of the Local Enterprise Offices in the South East region will aim to increase employment in its baseline through increased startups and scaling of existing clients. Annual Business Plans setting out clear targets and objectives across a range of services and for 2015 these include:

- €2.6 million will be available in grant assistance and enterprise development supports;
- Almost 400 training courses run, for up to 3,800 participants;
- 1,150 one-to-one mentoring assignments will be arranged;

- 50 MicroFinance Ireland applications to be received;
- Up to 2,000 female entrepreneurs to avail of LEO training and soft support programmes;
- 121 schools to engage with the LEO Student Enterprise Programme, with just under 2,600 participants

**Update: Ongoing**

Annual Business Plans are currently in development throughout the LEO Network. Plans are expected to be finalised by the end of February, 2017.

**Action 100: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Promote the supports available to companies, from startups to established businesses through [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie). For startups, the key services required and available include, funding and proposal writing advice, incubation facilities and technical expertise. For established companies, the key information required relates to access to R&D, info on export markets and on business networks. Encourage more startups through better leveraging of 3rd level expertise for funding proposals, including for incubation facilities and providing access to technical expertise (3rd level). For established companies, promote access to R&D experience in the region and greater information on export opportunities. Develop a database portal and a central event guide 'meet-up', to highlight the means to access all the required information.

**Update: Ongoing**

In 2016 WIT continued to work in close collaboration with industry through its 3 Technology Gateway Centres (i.e. SEAM, TSSG & PMBRC), in addition to 2 other research centres, namely RIKON in the School of Business and Building Information Modelling (BIM) in the School of Engineering. WIT signed 7 licence agreements with companies, had 1 spin out company, signed 113 research agreements of less than €25k and 19 agreements of greater than €25k. 29 companies were supported through ArcLabs, which employed 280 people locally and abroad.

In addition to the Thurles Chamber Enterprise Centre (TCEC) and QUESTUM enterprise / acceleration centres, which provide office space, hot desk facilities and R&D lab space for startups and early stage companies, the R&D support via innovation Vouchers and access to researchers and business mentors, LIT will be running a number of targeted enterprise development programmes in Tipperary during 2017.

**Action 101: ETBs**

**Measure:** Inputs in entrepreneurship will be provided to all ETB participants on relevant further education and training programmes. The Adult Guidance Service will promote self-employment options.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny-Carlow ETB (KCETB) has Entrepreneurship modules in two of its PLC Centres. Both Carlow Institute of Further Education (Carlow) and Ormonde College (Kilkenny) run Entrepreneurship as part of some of the accredited options they offer.

Waterford-Wexford ETB (WWETB) currently has 2 specific programmes in entrepreneurship running the Kilmacthomas VTOS and the Training Centre in Waterford. A number of L5/6 courses offer an enterprise module. Ongoing discussions are taking place with LEOs in Wexford and Waterford to explore enterprise options in the Further ED sector.

Tipperary ETB (TETB) Adult Guidance Service offers support for those exploring their own business. Many Major Awards include an element of Project Work that is entrepreneurial, i.e. grooming for pets as part of Animal Care Award, or making of Crafts for sale at Christmas fairs. There are strong link with Development Companies and LEO who have a specific remit for Self-Employment.

**Action 103: EI**

**Measure:** Agree and implement a Services Level Agreement with all Business Innovation Centres (BIC) to ensure their interaction with startups in the South East region is deepened and the value maximised.

**Update: Complete**

Enterprise Ireland has completed a Services Level Agreement with the Business Innovation Centres. This process required significant consultation with DJEI and the individual BICs in advance of the final Service Level Agreement being presented for sign-off with respective stakeholders. In December 2016, EI and the South East BIC signed off on the Service level agreement.

**Action 104: EI**

**Measure:** In line with the National Action Plan for Jobs 2015, Enterprise Ireland will assess the potential for enhancing the accelerator environment nationally.

**Update: Ongoing**

Enterprise Ireland approved the initial €3m pilot of the Regional Development Scheme in 2016 making commitments to a number of accelerator proposals targeting multiple industry sectors across the country. The approvals were made on the basis of the applicants securing the balance of funding for the project and EI being satisfied with the final structure. Enterprise Ireland is continuing to work with each of the successful applicants on the final content and structures of the programmes and legal negotiations are ongoing.

- This work is progressing well and the applicants have been successful in raising the balance of funding. It is expected that a number of accelerators will be launched in the near term. Once the accelerators are officially launched they will be actively seeking applicants to participate on the first cohort.
- It is expected that most accelerators will commence their first cohort before the Summer 2017.

**Action 105: LEOs**

**Measure:** Implement a regional programme to inform secondary schools of the key enterprise sectors in the region and consequential career opportunities in the Region and create awareness amongst Career Guidance teachers. All schools and industry to participate in an ‘Adopt a School’ programme for the South East.

**Update:** Ongoing

The South East Local Enterprise Offices as part of Bizfest 2016 launched an educational video which can be utilized by Teachers. Pre-Development conversations have been had in respect of the programme with the Regional Skills Forum in order to ascertain if the proposed action can complement the current Student Enterprise Programme rolled out by the Local Enterprise Offices.

**Action 107: Crowd Funding Ireland**

**Measure:** Encourage greater use of alternative funding sources, such as crowd-funding for startups.

**Update:** Ongoing

***This action is merged with Action 180***

**Action 109: LEOs**

**Measure:** Ensure that as many potential entrepreneurs as possible in the region avail of and benefit from LEO supports. (e.g., through a collaborative working relationship with Department of Social Protection (DSP) case officers to target participants on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance and to encourage these startups to participate in SYOB training. encourage bank advisers to refer startups for SYOB training, etc.)

**Update:** Ongoing

In Tipperary the Local Enterprise Office developed a new initiative (“Kickstarter”) in collaboration with North Tipperary Leader Partnership and South Tipperary Development Company to ensure that local organisations are providing a service that meets the needs of

unemployed individuals interested in self employment. The Department of Social Protection case officers make referrals to the “Kickstarter” programme, specifically those individuals seeking entry to the Back To Work Enterprise Allowance scheme. Participants are provided with a Start Your Own Business Guide (SYOB), 10 steps to Starting Your Own Business, Business Plan, Marketing Plan and Cash Flow Projections templates, Schedule of key contacts in local agencies etc, information leaflets (LEO, Leader, MFI, DSP, Revenue etc.). Participants receive a Certificate of Attendance after “Kickstarter” which they can use in support of DSP, Leader, financial institutions, MFI etc. or other funding applications. In 2016 Local Enterprise Office Tipperary held 20 courses involving almost 200 participants.

LEO Carlow in association with Carlow Local Community Development Committee will provide a monthly 1 day programme for Back to Work Enterprise Allowance participants called "Platforms to Self-Employment". This programme is designed to be a 1 day SYOB Programme, which include a post course diagnostic method aimed at signposting clients to the variety of supports available from the state; and helping them identify next steps in developing their business idea.

LEO Waterford has developed and delivered an extensive proactive promotional campaign at local level (aimed at potential entrepreneurs), to ensure a strong awareness of its products and services. The LEO is also a core member of Start-Up Waterford, which is a collaboration of all the main enterprise support agencies along with representatives of the entrepreneur community aimed at increasing the numbers and quality of business start-ups in Waterford. It is also a member of the Waterford Skills Forum, a sub-committee of the LCDC and of the Waterford Social Enterprise Network, all both of which provide significant information sharing opportunities (i.e. in relation to services, supports, events etc.)

**Action 110:** LEOs

**Measure:** LEOs to develop partnerships with all frontline access points for business in the region, including banks and accountants refer startups, to ensure there is maximum awareness of the supports available from the LEOs.

**Update:** Ongoing

The Local Enterprise Offices in the South East made a number of presentations to the business support staff in financial institutions in the main pillar banks and provided information stands at a number of events such as Bank of Ireland Enterprise Town. The Local Enterprise Offices also targeted accountants and financial institutions to attend a funding workshops held featuring presentations by EI, MFI, InterTrade Ireland, DSP and other stakeholders.

**Action 112:** Údarás na Gaeltachta

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will develop an internationalisation programme aimed at SME's operating in minority language areas in the Déise Gaeltacht and in Munster region in partnership with a Welsh Development Agency.

**Update:** Delayed

Údarás na Gaeltachta met with six potential partners in Wales with a view to applying under the Ireland-Wales Interreg Fund for funding for this project. The funding mechanism which was envisaged for this project did not materialise and Údarás na Gaeltachta have therefore to revisit the proposal in early 2017 to see how it may be brought to fruition.

**Action 113:** Údarás na Gaeltachta

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will provide support for startups in the Déise Gaeltacht and continue to support the existing enterprise base to expand their operations and increase employment.

**Update:** Ongoing

Grant aid of €119,530 was sanctioned by Údarás na Gaeltachta for client companies in the Déise Gaeltacht in 2016 to develop and expand their businesses which included the creation of 3 new full-time jobs. Employment in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies was 129 at the end of 2016.

**Action 114:** LEOs

**Measure:** LEOs in conjunction with the Economic Development Units of Local Authorities will carry out an audit of industrial and incubation workspace in the region. A key part of this approach will be to work with the CECs across the region to develop local protocols for enterprise support (co-working spaces and hotspots)

**Update:** Ongoing

Merged with Actions 157 and 171 due to similarity of objectives.

**Action 115:** LEOs

**Measure:** Development of a Strategy to Growth Programme for microenterprises to encourage the progress pathway to Enterprise Ireland

**Update:** Ongoing

Local Enterprise Offices in the South East Region in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland have introduced supports and services focussed on scaling and growing microenterprises so that they can graduate to the Enterprise Ireland ladder of supports. LEOs will proactively support their clients to introduce innovation, new product development, LEAN techniques and exports.

**Action 116: EI**

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland will promote the information services offered by its Market Research Unit to a wider cohort of companies, ensuring companies based in the South East can access those services through EI's Office. The LEO will utilise and make available a number of On line Resources such as Local and National LEO Websites, NUBIE.ie, SME Online Tool.

**Update: Ongoing**

Enterprise Ireland promotes the availability of Market Research Facilities at a national and regional level through its website, social media, The Market Magazine (e-zine distributed to all clients on quarterly basis) and through referrals at 1:1 meetings between Development Advisers/Market Advisers/Regional Development Executives and client companies embarking on expansion in to new or existing export markets. In the South-East headquarters in Waterford, EI has a dedicated resource who schedules and provides relevant preparatory advice to all clients who wish to access data bases via the local office. EI is actively trying to increase the number of companies utilising this facility at present through its post Brexit 5 point export support package of initiatives.

**Action 117: LEOs**

**Measure:** Support the development of early-stage ICT businesses by establishing mentorship and support.

**Update: Ongoing**

The LEOs in the South East Region have in place comprehensive panels of business mentors including mentors with significant ICT experience with early stage start-ups. During the course of 2016 the 5 LEOs in the South East provided mentor assignments to 905 businesses including many early stage start-ups. The LEOs continue to refer many early stage ICT businesses to the New Frontiers programme in both WIT and IT Carlow and also continue to support these start-ups post New Frontiers with advice, training and further mentoring.

**Action 118: Industry**

**Measure:** Promote career opportunities to second level students to grow the existing industry base through Milk Round type events with industry.

**Update: Ongoing**

This action contains two target groups, namely second and third level students. Local industry arrange a wide range of initiatives aimed at both target groups on an annual basis. The South

East Regional Skills Forum also held a “Careers of the Future” Event on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016. This involved a panel discussion to highlight sectors in the South East with strong career prospects for the future. This event was attended by 100 guidance counsellors and additionally by representatives from industry and higher and further education & training. The event provided up-to-date insights into career prospects across a variety of industry sectors that have significant job opportunities in the region. A careers video and other resources about career prospects were produced and disseminated to Guidance counsellors throughout the region.

**Action 119:** Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Introduce and promote ICT adoption, innovation and investment in R&D across all sectors to drive transformational change in key enterprises in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

WIT through the supports of ArCLabs, New Frontiers and TSSG continues to provide support to early stage and scaling ICT businesses in the region and nationally.

LIT QUESTUM has a number of resident start-ups/early stage companies in the fields of high-tech and medical devices, that have engaged with LIT researchers to improve their product and explore new markets.

**Action 120:** Údarás na Gaeltachta

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will implement measures to support early-stage business with a particular focus on regional competitive advantage in specific sectors, including cultural tourism, audio-visual and digital technology, marine resources, niche manufacturing, food beverages and creative language-based services.

**Update: Ongoing**

Údarás provided mentor support to early stage entrepreneurs to help them research and develop their business concepts; through employment and capital support schemes Údarás has supported the development of two audio-visual companies in the area in which 3 new jobs will be created. Full-time employment in Údarás client companies in Na Deise Gaeltacht at y/end 2016 was 129.

**Action 121:** EI

**Measure:** Implement the National Mentoring Strategy in the region by supporting networks and increasing the provision of mentoring sessions for businesses in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

The rollout of mentor assignments with EI client companies and through the LEOs in the regions continues.

Enterprise Ireland is working closely with DJEI to implement the National Mentoring Strategy, with key areas of focus currently being (1) merging of EI and LEO mentor panels, (2) setting up a volunteer mentoring portal and (3) delivering the current Microsoft CSR Volunteer Mentoring Pilot with EI and LEO clients.

Enterprise Ireland is currently working with a panel of 20 mentors from the South East region who collectively cover areas of business development, such as, Strategy, Sales, Marketing, Finance, Operations and Innovation. In 2016, 57 one to one mentor assignments were set up with clients based in South East.

Mentor Networking events for EI Mentors in South / South East region took place in April and October 2016. Enterprise Ireland is working closely with DJEI to implement the National Mentoring Strategy.

**Action 122: IMDA**

**Measure:** IMDA to expand its HPSU and cross sectorial lean mentoring programmes established in 2014 and 2015 respectively, aimed at raising the bar with respect to manufacturing.

**Update: Ongoing**

The Irish Medical Devices Association (IMDA) launched a new event for medtech start-ups with BioInnovate in Feb 2016, with three Brews taking place in 2016. These events covered topics such as starting a business, the commercial model and funding. More than 130 people attended the last Brew which took place in September, 2016 in Galway. Medtech Brews give Irish entrepreneurs a chance to discuss breakthroughs and challenges affecting their business. IMDA will continue the Brew series in 2017.

**Action 123: LEOs**

**Measure:** Develop and promote existing networks across the region to take advantage of LEO EEN (Enterprise Europe Network) status to ensure supports to assist microenterprise across the South East region to enter new markets.

**Update: Ongoing**

The Local Enterprise Offices held EEN workshops throughout the region during 2016 and are actively promoting the initiative as an effective mechanism to enter European markets or source new products or components.

For example, LEO Kilkenny in conjunction with LEO Carlow held an information seminar entitled “Enterprise Europe Network - Developing International Sales and Partnerships” in November

2016. This led to a number of one-to-one sessions (7 in Kilkenny and 6 in Carlow) with local business to explore the option of using the network for business opportunities.

LEO Tipperary also featured an EEN Presentation at an Owner Manager Business Breakfast with 24 attendees.

**Action 126: EI**

**Measure:** Promote the use of EI 'hot desk' facilities in overseas markets to businesses in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Enterprise Ireland's international office network, has access to more than 60 countries around the world. Enterprise Ireland can support companies to increase their sales in the global market. Enterprise Ireland's overseas offices have experienced business personnel with a wide network of in-market contacts and access to the most up-to-date market information. Enterprise Ireland also have their own and / or existing relationships to in-market office facilities and incubator units. EI overseas offices continue to promote the use of their facilities (subject to booking) for companies to use while in the region for meeting customers, hot desking and short term incubator office lease (where available). Enterprise Ireland also operates a network of consultants who can support companies' market development needs in markets where EI do not have offices. EI is also currently developing a map of available office space across its overseas network which will be promoted through all existing channels.

**Action 127: InterTrade Ireland**

**Measure:** InterTradeIreland will promote cross border trade opportunities to small business in the region. InterTradeIreland will promote its Acumen, Trade Accelerator Voucher scheme and Elevate programmes.

**Update: Ongoing.**

InterTradeIreland have interacted with every LEO on the island to promote their trade supports in 2016. Going North workshops have been delivered in various locations aimed at companies in Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Mayo and Roscommon to highlight the opportunities in Northern Ireland. ITI also work very closely with Enterprise Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the chambers of commerce to ensure their clients are aware of the range of supports available to them.

**Action 128: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Increase participation by enterprises in the region in National Research Centres and target an increase in enterprise RDI investment to levels comparable to other regions. All HEIs in the region to draw up metrics to support enterprise innovation upgrading including number of

industry engagements and by company size, category of industry engaged with and level and type of investment by enterprise and outputs.

**Update: Ongoing**

IT Carlow continues to engage with research funders and stakeholders to support applications. Metrics relating to these issues are developed in consultation with EI.

LIT developed and keep under review, a number of metrics to measure its engagement with enterprise and innovation, which were included in their HEA Compact submission, as well as those used for internal reporting.

In 2016 WIT and IT Carlow achieved their metrics as agreed with KTI. In summary, the Institutes combined, signed 7 licence agreements with companies, had 1 spin out company, filed 5 patent applications, signed 181 research agreements of less than €25k, and 19 agreements of greater than €25k. In addition, 29 companies were supported through ArcLabs, which employed 280 people locally and abroad.

**Action 129: EI**

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland will facilitate an intra- Regional Innovation Process to encourage peer-to-peer interactions and SME-HEI linkages (people, resources, training and research). HEIs involved in this event will include: Maynooth University (MU) working with Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), Institute of Technology Carlow.

**Update: Ongoing**

Regional SME Innovation Forum seeks to foster regional collaboration between industry and the higher education sector to drive the innovation agenda at a regional level. During 2015, Enterprise Ireland piloted this process in the West and South West Regions. These events were well attended by SMEs and the higher education sector has been supportive of this initiative. Enterprise Ireland is currently reviewing the pilot with a view to rolling it out, in a sustainable manner, nationwide. The Monitoring Group will be kept informed on progress relating to this action. WIT will also be involved in this initiative.

**Action 130: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Explore the expansion of existing ICT incubation facilities available in the region to further serve the growth of the indigenous base and potential FDI investment in ICT

**Update: Ongoing**

In Thurles, the potential expansion of the Thurles Community Enterprise Centre will have a significant ICT focus.

In Clonmel, the exploration of the viability for a 'seat ready' design studio would make a significant impact in the region (see Action 131.)

As outlined in Action 80, in Q4 2016 WIT appointed the design team for the 1,000m<sup>2</sup> extension to the ArcLabs Incubation Centre in Waterford.

**Action 131:** LEOs / Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Develop a Regional Management Development & Innovation Programme for microenterprise in partnership with the HEI's & the LEOs

**Update: Ongoing**

Following a proposal by LIT and QUESTUM, Tipperary LEO have been granted approval by Enterprise Ireland to undertake a feasibility study to determine the viability of setting up a "seat ready" studio in Clonmel. The "seat ready" studio could be offered to national and international animation/VFX studios. The aim would be for these companies to locate an element of production to Clonmel and start to employ from the local pool of graduates from both Thurles and Clonmel campuses. The proposal would help to initiate investment in the Digital sector and attract inward investment to the County. The proposed study would validate if there is a market and demand for an outside of Dublin location for studios. The feasibility study would also assess infrastructural requirements, broadband and other resources. It is anticipated the report will be complete by the end of July 2017.

A programme proposal in support of this action has been made to the academic council of IT Carlow. Programme design is underway with a view to having a suitable programme validated in Q2 2017.

**Action 132:** HEIs

**Measure:** Strengthen university/IoT commercialisation of research - translating it into jobs on the ground supporting the partnering with entrepreneurs/business championing and building strong business teams to succeed.

**Update: Ongoing**

Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) is the national office that helps business to benefit from access to Irish expertise and technology by making it simple to connect and engage with the research base in Ireland. KTI enables companies to innovate their business by signposting to novel technology and research expertise in Ireland and by providing best practice guidance to simplify the process of accessing this rich source of opportunity. Knowledge transfer is the means through which companies, entrepreneurs, public sector organisations, etc. can access and share

skills, knowledge, intellectual property, technologies and other resources with universities, institutes of technology and other publicly funded research institutes. Knowledge transfer can take place through various mechanisms including licensing, collaboration, consultancy or the creation of a spin out company. Companies and entrepreneurs benefit from the sharing of knowledge and expertise and accessing technology and intellectual property, which can increase business competitiveness.

WIT and IT Carlow are members of a technology transfer consortium led by Maynooth University under Knowledge Transfer Ireland managed TTSI 2 programme. In Q3 2016, the consortium performance was evaluated by an international panel of experts and in Q4 2016 the consortium was rated 'A' in terms of its performance and was approved for funding for the period 2017 - 2022. The TTSI 3 Programme aims to enhance capacity within the university and IOT sector to support the commercialisation of research.

In 2016, the Institutes achieved their metrics as agreed with KTI. In summary, the Institutes combined, signed 7 licence agreements with companies, had 1 spin out company, filed 5 patent applications, signed 181 research agreements of less than €25k, and 19 agreements of greater than €25k.

Under the TTSI 3 Programme WIT has agreed a 5 year programme of activity agreeing metrics for licences, spin outs, patents and industry agreements for the period 2017 – 2022. TTSI3 will continue to build key additional knowledge transfer strengths and outputs at IT Carlow and WIT, to include:

1. Increased output on key metrics / KPIs;
2. Increased focus on output quality, especially in terms of driving HPSUs and quality IP licenses;
3. Deeper cross-Research Performing Organisation collaborations in Technology Transfer and Knowledge Transfer;
4. A consortium brand to market our joint offerings to industry;
5. A deeper focus on business development and industry collaborations;
6. A widening of TT / KT culture embedding at each of the institutes.

**Action 133:** InterTradelreland

**Measure:** InterTradelreland will promote the Fusion Programme to SMEs in the region to get more graduates into businesses in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Since January 2016, 11 companies from the South East have either received support under or have commenced Fusion Projects. Product development and innovation is at the heart of growth but often needs costly technology support. The FUSION programme can provide that support by helping to fund a high calibre science, engineering or technology graduate and partnering with a third level institution with specific expertise. The graduate is employed by and based in the

company throughout the project (12 - 18 months) with mentoring from the academic partner and InterTradelreland FUSION consultant.

**Action 134:** InterTradelreland

**Measure:** InterTradelreland will provide access to the InterTradelreland Challenge programme.

**Update: Ongoing**

The Challenge Programme remains open to all eligible companies in the region. An information session held in Kilkenny (in October 2016), attracted 28 SMEs and 7 of these engaged further with the programme.

**Action 135:** Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Public research organisations and higher education institutions to work with enterprises, in particular SMEs in developing proposals for Horizon 2020 funding, with the objective of increasing participation and drawdown from EU programmes by SE businesses. Promote greater engagement at regional level by enterprises and research teams in collaborative research and to participate in EU Horizon 2020 projects.

**Update: Ongoing**

IT Carlow continues to engage with research funders and stakeholders to support applications. Metrics relating to these issues are developed in consultation with EI.

LIT via its Research Unit, activity engages with SME's and researchers, providing supports, expertise and knowledge in identifying suitable 'funding calls' and developing applications with the best chance of success, to ensure a continuous pipeline of collaborative research and industry/SME engagement.

While the competition for EU funding under H2020 is extremely intense, WIT continues to target opportunities at EU level to leverage research funding. In Q4 2016 TSSG secured an EU Interreg contract valued at €1.2m, which will involve SME partners both in Wales and Ireland in addition to other public sector organisations.

**Action 136:** IDA

**Measure:** IDA Ireland will target a 30% - 40% increase in investments by overseas companies in the South East Region over the period 2015-2019. This will result in a minimum of 44 investments in the region over the period.

**Update: Ongoing**

There has been a 4% increase in employment numbers in 2016 among IDA client companies based in the South East. Total employment in IDA supported companies in the South East is now 14,403.

**Action 137: IDA**

**Measure:** IDA Ireland will drive Transformation with IDA client companies across the South East Region through increased client interaction with the established base of companies to sustain, support and grow their operations and support increased employment in the region. This is particularly relevant to manufacturing operations.

**Update: Ongoing**

Transformation is core to the work of IDA. IDA Ireland works closely with the existing operations of 71 companies in the region in order to ensure their operations remain relevant to parent HQ.

**Action 138: IDA**

**Measure:** Build an Advance Technology Building (ATB) in the region to provide a high quality property solution to attract new FDI.

**Update: Ongoing**

IDA Ireland completed and sold the first Advance Technology Building (ATB) in the country in Waterford in June, 2016. Two Additional Buildings will be completed in 2018 in the region under this program, one each in Carlow and Waterford.

**Action 140: EI/IDA**

**Measure:** As part of their Global Sourcing initiative, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland will work together to increase collaboration - including the sourcing of goods - between Multinational and indigenous companies. The agencies will ensure that their clients in the region, where appropriate, are engaged in this initiative.

**Action 141: EI**

**Measure:** As part of its Global Sourcing initiative and the drive to foster SME supply opportunities into MNCs, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland will embark on a major sectoral Trade Mission to the SE region.

**Action 144: IDA**

**Measure:** Develop and implement an information/networking event across the South East region for clients with EI clients to be invited also.

Note: Actions 140, 141 and 144 have been merged for ease of reporting

**Update: Ongoing**

Enterprise Ireland & IDA Ireland in collaboration with DJEI ran a series of workshops in Athlone, Sligo on the 18th May 2016 and in Limerick on the 19th May, 2016. During the course of the two days the EI Global Sourcing Team had delivered 365 1:1 meetings between 180 Enterprise Ireland clients and 64 IDA clients. The mission was led by Minister Mitchell O'Connor DJEI. The outputs are to grow the linkages between strong indigenous EI technology companies who can fulfil the supply chain needs of the IDA companies and help differentiate their product offering and improve their plant and R&D efficiencies within their corporate groups. South East based companies were actively involved in these events.

**Action 142: InterTrade Ireland**

**Measure:** Through its Trade Accelerator Voucher scheme InterTrade Ireland will help companies to identify and break down barriers to trade leading to new export opportunities in Northern Ireland.

**Update: Ongoing**

InterTradeIreland continues to interact very closely with the LEOs in the region to promote all of their cross border Trade Programmes.

**Action 143: IDA / EI**

**Measure:** IDA and EI to work on developing a “skills bank” to assist companies which may be facing downsizing in order to identify job opportunities across other client companies.

**Update: Ongoing**

Both agencies are actively working on this action, especially given the closure of 2 IDA client companies in Q1 2016 in the region. An Interagency Work Group has been established to help address new opportunities for employment for those directly affected. As part of the current process of dealing with company downsizing and closure a protocol is in place with all of the state support agencies including DSP/Solas/ IDA/EI/LEO/ etc., to ensure a consistent and cohesive response is provided to those affected. This includes an opportunity of a 1:1 Session with DSP/Solas where a skills mapping exercise is completed. Enterprise Ireland will then support those who wish to seek alternative employment and agree to share their details, by passing them on to local employers who may have vacancies.

**Action 146:** IDA

**Measure:** Encourage MNCs based in Ireland to establish satellite offices in regional locations such as SE. Support would be available to support this also potential for homeworking models.

**Update: Ongoing**

In 2017, two strategic initiatives aimed at increasing investment to regional locations will be rolled out. The first is homeworking, a relatively global model now which encourages companies to embrace distributed working. IDA Ireland will be seeking to engage with key regional stakeholders interested in increasing the skills profile of the region to collaborate and implement this model. IDA Ireland is also pursuing a second site initiative, which involves getting existing corporates to look at the region for new projects of scale.

**Action 147:** Údarás na Gaeltachta

**Measure:** Growing on the successful strategy of providing property solutions, the Údarás will continue a building and refurbishment programme to help support the attraction/expansion of Foreign Direct and Indigenous Investment in the South East Region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Discussions are ongoing with public and private sector partners in relation to the funding of an integrated development centre, which will provide additional infrastructure and services in the Déise Gaeltacht region. Appointment for architectural /engineering consultancy services for design stage will be completed before the end of Q2, 2017. Enabling works to access road and services are currently underway and will be completed at Barr na Stuac Industry Park, An Seanphobal, by end of Q1, 2017. This will allow for future potential industry development at this site.

**Action 148:** Connect Ireland

**Measure:** Develop a Regional Connect Ireland Plan that is integrated with the Local Authorities' enterprise development and job-creation activities.

**Update:** Not being progressed

The contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.

**Action 150: Connect Ireland**

**Measure:** Liaise with HEIs with a view to holding partnership events to create a network that will allow greater communication between the institution and its alumni. Develop initiatives with the

alumni of colleges, diaspora networks and Connect Ireland to promote and attract skills back to the Region.

**Update:** Not being progressed

The contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.

### **Action 151: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop an overarching brand and value proposition for the South East and build awareness of all that the connected region has to offer.

**Update: Ongoing**

Colin Gordon was appointed SEAPJ Champion to lead the development of a new value proposition for the region. Colin presented a paper to the South East APJ Implementation Committee at their meeting held in June, 2016, and the Committee agreed the branding platform presented by Colin, as a strong basis to progress this agenda (see Appendix 2.)

Since then, the Pharma MedTech and the Engineering sub-Groups of the South East APJ at recent workshops held to consider approaches to addressing some of the challenges they face (e.g. retaining and attracting skilled people to the region), agree that the first priority is to develop a clear and coherent value proposition to promote the South East as an attractive place to live, work and do business. All other initiatives, agencies and industry will be encouraged to proactively input into and support the new value proposition.

A Working Group (chaired by Colin Gordon) has been formed to pursue this initiative, comprising membership from local industry, Ibec, the Institutes of Technology, CIF, and the South East Regional Skills Forum. The Working Group have agreed that the main purpose of the new value proposition is to unify the region; focus on positive messages of what the region has to offer; help stakeholders overcome challenges; gets the message out that the region is progressive and there are a growing number of job opportunities; etc. The target audience for the new value proposition aims to help the South East attract more:

- Inward investment
- Entrepreneurs
- Talented people (in particular third level graduates from the region that have left the region)
- Tourists (domestic and international)

The stakeholder group agree that appropriate expertise is needed to assist:

- develop cohesive messaging under the brand platform agreed. The value proposition will capture the offer and reputation of the South East and communicate to the rest of Ireland and

the world what the region is about and what it has to offer. This will include advice on how the message is generally understood, widely recognised, willingly supported and available to use.

- align the new value proposition with existing local and national brands / initiatives. The intention is that this will complement existing initiatives, rather than undermine or cause confusion.
- identify and document case studies and testimonials that ‘speak to’ the value proposition for the South East.
- identify champions to advocate, communicate and spread the message. These champions will include CEOs of local agencies, industry, business, sporting community, etc.
- develop a set of guidelines on the messaging for the value proposition. Each stakeholder in the region will want to use the value proposition for their own purpose. The Guidelines will provide stakeholders with a framework to communicate a clear and coherent message about the South East. Each stakeholder in turn through the process of championing the value proposition will help will strengthen and enrich it.
- recommend a marketing strategy and any associated marketing collateral (e.g. website; social media campaign; promotional events; advertising; etc.)

A submission for financial support made by the stakeholder group is currently being considered by the local authorities in the South East. The local authorities are also exploring the potential of the ‘Three Sisters’ brand to help promote the region as a tourist destination. The local authorities in the South East are also currently exploring the potential of the ‘Three Sisters’ brand to help promote the region as a tourist destination.

**Action 153:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Aligned with the proposed value proposition initiative, tailor ‘quality of life’ communications directed primarily at our Diaspora to equip them with up-to-date information to ‘sell’ the region as a good place to live and work.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny CoCo launched a brochure targeting the Diaspora in association with Connect Ireland, which focused on Kilkenny’s quality of life as a honey pot for returning migrants. This was supported by a viral video campaign with a V-log produced by students of the UCD affiliated Innovation Academy. Kilkenny CoCo administered and co-funded the Community Diaspora Grant initiative to build linkages and encourage engagement with overseas connections and maintain visibility at all levels that Kilkenny is a very attractive place to live and work.

IT Carlow will promote this initiative in their Alumni newsletter in Q1 2017.

Waterford City & CoCo ran a Think Waterford campaign with Waterford Chamber of Commerce.

This initiative is a social media campaign, aimed at encouraging the Irish Diaspora to think about returning to Waterford as a location to live, work and invest.

**Action 154:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Devise an action plan to promote and support Social Enterprise in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Tipperary Co Co has commenced work on a strategy to maximise the potential of Social Enterprise in the County. A Social Enterprise workshop was held in 2016 and others promoted to heighten awareness. Subsequently Tipperary CoCo has worked with Groups interested in progressing individual projects.

LEO Kilkenny and Kilkenny Leader Partnership are currently working on a model to support Social Enterprise in 2 towns in the County, i.e. Graiguenamanagh and Castlecomer. This is currently in the planning phase.

Waterford City and CoCo have appointed a Rural Economic Development Officer to work with towns and villages throughout the county to maximise the economic potential of their locality. A series of consultations was also carried out in respect of Town & Village planning, as part of the preparation of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The Local Development Strategy has received government approval, which will support social enterprise development particularly in rural environments.

**Action 155:** LEOs

**Measure:** Provide a co-ordinated support mechanism and linkage to assist existing and new rural/community enterprise groups

**Update: Ongoing**

The PPN (Public Participation Network) operated by the Local Authorities now fulfils this networking requirement for community enterprise groups. The National Association of Community Enterprise Centres (NACEC) fulfils this function for Community Enterprise Centres. The Local Authorities service the PPNs which provide information, supports and representation opportunities for new and existing rural and community enterprise groups across the Region.

**Action 156:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Explore the development of a co-op type community shop / retail model operated by community groups in rural villages.

Update: Ongoing

Waterford City & CoCo, in conjunction with Passage East & Crooke Development Association, were successful in securing funding under the Town & Village Renewal Scheme, 2016 to develop a community shop in the village of Passage East.

LIT are involved with a number of social enterprise initiatives, including European Projects such as: 'SEDETT' - research and best examples of Social Enterprise across partner countries, and development of a toolkit to promote successful Social Entrepreneurship. 'SESBA' - creating a web based toolkit and training course for business advisors so they can provide advice and mentoring to potential Social Entrepreneurs. The skills, contacts and networks from these EU projects can be transferred to the promotion of Social enterprise in the Tipperary area.

4 Community Projects in Tipperary incorporating retail and tea/rooms which are ideal case studies with different funding models.

**Action 157:** Community Enterprise Centres

**Measure:** Measure: Community Enterprise Centres in the region to develop a combined strategy for promotion and management of available space so as to increase startups and entrepreneurship in the regions.

Update: Ongoing

The “South East Shared Asset Collaborative Project”, is run by 9 Enterprise Centres in the South East and is led by Dungarvan Enterprise Centre. The initiative involves amalgamating the existing assets/resources and expertise of each Community Enterprise Centre (CEC) in the South East and offering a more networked and joined-up approach to regional and local enterprise development and job creation.

With the assistance of Community Enterprise Initiative Funding to help support the project, the group have developed a portal whereby any start up in the region can identify facilities/resources that they may need in the South East and book this service online (via the portal). For example: A tenant of Tallow Enterprise Centre developing a food product and needing to do food testing, can check online and to use the food testing facility in the Dunhill Enterprise Centre; a small pharmaceutical business in Arklow that needs to conduct stability tests, can avail of the test lab in the Questum Centre, Clonmel. The portal went live in December, 2016 and is now ready to be rolled out as per the project schedule. The link to access the Booking system is: <http://www.seeca.ie/bookings>.

Once the system has been populated with each enterprise centre’s resources/assets, it will be formally launched. The CECs will actively promote the services of the South East Shared Asset portal to clients, Local Enterprise Agencies and other partners.

This initiative will help advance the technological, business and growth capabilities of client businesses availing of CEC support and/or incubation space. This collaboration will maximise the use of assets, will broaden the range of services, and will formalise referrals throughout the region. The increased accessibility to services and facilities will act as a driving force in growing sustainable and competitive enterprises for the future.

**Action 158: Údarás na Gaeltachta**

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will provide support and resourcing to local community groups and Comhlacht Forbartha na nDéise to implement a programme for economic, social and linguistic development locally.

Update: Ongoing

Advisory services and funding support totalling €50,000 was provided to Comhlacht Forbartha na nDéise during 2016 to implement an agreed development plan, including the provision of childcare facilities, services for the elderly, the organisation of training opportunities, the development of tourism products (such as walking, other culturally based products, festivals and events.) Currently Comhlacht Forbartha nDéise is working closely with Údarás na Gaeltachta on the development of an integrated language plan in line with the Gaeltacht Act, 2012 and it is envisaged that this plan will be finalised by mid-2017.

**Action 161: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Promote the value of Social Enterprise as means of direct job creation and to contribute to a wide range of community and social services

Update: Ongoing

LIT are involved with a number of social enterprise initiatives, including European Projects such as: 'SEDETT' - research and best examples of Social Enterprise across partner countries, and development of a toolkit to promote successful Social Entrepreneurship. 'SESBA' - creating a web based toolkit and training course for business advisors so they can provide advice and mentoring to potential Social Entrepreneurs. The skills, contacts and networks from these EU projects can be transferred to the promotion of Social enterprise in the Tipperary area.

LEO Kilkenny and County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership are currently working on a model to support Social Enterprise in 2 towns in the County, i.e. Graiguenamanagh and Castlecomer. LEO Kilkenny CoCo has also supported the development of Castlecomer Discovery Park, which is a social enterprise & Not for Profit company, directly employing c40 people.

Waterford City is currently being assessed under the European Urbact III program for the establishment of a creative district within the city.

**Action 162: ETBs**

**Measure:** Establish a Regional Skills Forum in the SE to undertake a structured programme of activities to promote closer liaison between employers and the education system and prioritise strengthening the outreach activities of education providers in the region, including strengthened industry liaison functions generally and develop structured programmes of awareness raising of the capabilities and assets available to enterprises in the region and develop common projects so as to best deliver on the skills requirements of the region.

**Update:** Complete

Kilkenny Carlow ETB (KCETB) is represented on the South East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF) and is also represented on the SERSF Management Group. To date, KCETB have worked with the SERSF to progress engineering traineeships in the area, and the coordinator of the SERSF will be briefing the Further Education and Training Team later in the year. Efforts are ongoing to build the ETB's capacity to support workforce development across a number of key industry sectors with the support of the SERSF.

Waterford-Wexford ETB (WWETB) are active members of the SERSF and its management group. WWETB are working in collaboration with the Regional Skills Forum on the following projects: Engineering Career Traineeship, Skills Shortages in the Pharma/Medtech sectors. These measures will bring us closer to the relevant employers. Efforts are ongoing to build the ETB's capacity to support workforce development across a number of key industry sectors with the support of the SERSF.

Tipperary ETB (TETB) is a member of the South East Regional Skills Forum and works closely with the Manager to identify and respond to regional/county needs. Employers in the county (e.g. Abbot and Amnea) are important links for Tipperary ETB in the Pharma/Medtech sectors. The TETB will also link with Teagasc on the Expand Your Horizons events to be held in March 2017. Efforts are ongoing to build the ETB's capacity to support workforce development across a number of key industry sectors with the support of the SERSF.

**Action 163: WIT & IT Carlow**

**Measure:** Continue to build on the progress achieved through the process of engagement and consultation undertaken in relation the development of a Technological University (TU) for the South East.

**Update:** Ongoing

The Governing Bodies of both Institutions remain committed to progressing the TU for the region. In Q 4 2016, representatives from both institutions and IBEC met with regional political representatives in Dublin in order to reinforce the importance and urgency of progressing the TU Bill through the Oireachtas.

**Action 164:** Solas

**Measure:** Boost apprenticeship recruitment by industry in the region as there is a growing demand across key sectors of the economy from manufacturing to construction and develop initiatives to build awareness of the different forms of apprenticeship and career paths linked to apprenticeships.

**Update: Ongoing.**

Kilkenny Carlow ETB have been successful in submitting an Expression of Interest to SOLAS for Phase 2 Electrician Training for Kilkenny. The first phase two apprentice electricians will commence in July / August 2017 with rolling intakes thereafter.

Expressions of Interest for additional craft apprenticeships have been submitted to SOLAS by Waterford-Wexford ETB (WWETB). A series of Open days for 2nd Level students were held in the Training Centre in Waterford to encourage students to consider Apprenticeship as a career. NCCA Board for Senior Cycle was held in the Training Centre in Waterford to optimise the opportunity of Apprenticeship as a career path for 2nd Level students. SOLAS has approved the filling of apprenticeship instructor vacancies.

**Action 166:** LIT

**Measure:** Accelerate the relocation of the LIT Clonmel campus from its current location so as to best deliver on the skills requirement for the region and to support existing FDIs in the area

**Update: Ongoing**

Work is ongoing between LIT and Tipperary County Council to progress this action.

**Action 167:** Údarás na Gaeltachta

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will assist in the development of educational programmes which will support local economic, social and linguistic regeneration and development in the Déise and across the Munster region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Support was provided to a partnership between WIT and Nemeton, an TV production company in An Rinn to run a full-time third level diploma in television production skills as Gaeilge in the Déise Gaeltacht. A new programme with 10 students, part-funded by Údarás na Gaeltachta, commenced in Oct 2016.

**Action 168:** PCI / IMDA

**Measure:** PCI and IMDA to deepen industry links with schools and third level institutions in the region including careers promotion, promotion of STEM and support for development of supporting promotional materials and outreach activities in STEM.

**Update: Ongoing**

The IMDA Skillnets has continued its success over previous year in delivering high-quality, cost-effective training to its members and developing bespoke programmes for the medical technology sector, upskilling and reskilling existing employees, training new entrants and providing jobseekers with useful and marketable skills. By the end of 2016 the network expects to exceed its targets and achieve 1,374 employed trainees and over 5,867 training days. Total expenditure (2008 - 2015) is over €4.2 million, with 40% contribution from member companies and the remaining 60% funded by the State. Targets of over 6,000 trainees and 30,000 training days have been achieved.

The Irish Medtech Association Skillnet has been approved for 2017 budget of over €1Million budget for the development and delivery of training to its members. Given the strong linkages between the medtech and plastics industry, we work closely with the First Polymer Training Skillnet. They operate a training network for the plastics industry in Ireland, as part of Plastics Ireland, The FPT centre is based in Athlone.

The Irish Medtech Association was approved in 2016/2017 for the 5th round of HEA Springboard funding to convert unemployed engineers to the Medtech sector. 230 trainees have completed the programme to date, with 80% completing internships or converting to employment. On 14th Nov 2016, 30 engineers starting training in NUI Galway will be available for placement in March 2017.

IMDA and Plastics Ireland have developed three new employer led apprenticeship programmes: Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship at level 6: Manufacturing Engineer Apprenticeship at level 7 and Polymer Processing Technologist Level 7. These programmes have been specifically designed to give apprentices the advanced knowledge, competences and skills necessary to move into technical and engineering roles in the Medtech and Plastics Industry. The programmes were developed in collaboration with Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (coordinating provider), Athlone Institute Technology (coordinating provider) and Institute of Technology Sligo, and will be rolled out nationally in early 2017.

**Action 169: PCI / IMDA**

**Measure:** PCI and IMDA to run a series of cross sectoral workshops in the region to bring together a number of other sectors with the Biopharma and Medical Devices sectors to explore best practice in manufacturing, quality and regulatory affairs, R&D and skills.

**Update: Ongoing**

The newly established Ibec IoMT (Internet of Medical Things) group (comprising Irish Medtech, ICT Ireland, Irish Software Association and Biopharmaceutical Ireland) met on four occasions during 2016 (in Dublin, Galway, Athlone and Dublin.) It is the vision of the group that Ireland will be the location of choice for the adoption and commercialisation of connected health solutions that deliver better patient outcomes, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health and care services, and deliver economic growth. The group explored a number of objectives to support the development of the Irish connected health ecosystem, among these infrastructure, research and commercialisation opportunities, the need to build constructive collaboration and knowledge and expertise.

Plans for 2017 will see the establishment of a national IoMT Strategy and Value Proposition for Ireland; this activity will be undertaken in collaboration with Government Agencies. The work plan for the group during for 2017 will also focus on skills development; the Irish Medtech Association's National Skills Report for the Medical Technology Sector 2020 will inform key connected health future skills requirements. The group has also applied funded to set up a new Skillnets to develop IoMT skills network.

**Action 170:** Ibec

**Measure:** Promote the development of manpower plans at firm level so as to be better positioned to engage with education and training providers and to provide skills development pathways for their staff.

**Update: Ongoing**

Ibec offer practical programmes to improve the competence and skills of staff. Ibec can meet with member companies, undertake an assessment of training needs and design the right solution for business. Ibec are also represented on the South East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF) where they engage with the main education and training providers in the region on industry needs.

**Action 171:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Compile a profile of all available office and industrial space in the region and assess gaps and/or need for additional space so as to better inform the market and highlight zoned and serviced lands.

**Update: Ongoing**

Tipperary maintains a database of all available land and property solutions which is updated twice per annum to highlight deficits, opportunities for PPP and marketing purposes. All available property solutions and landbank feature in new suite of marketing material

The Economic Development Unit of Kilkenny CoCo works closely with the commercial rates unit to identify property solutions, gaps and profile analysis.

The Economic Development Unit in Wexford CoCo (in late 2015) commissioned a review of existing office and industrial stock in Wexford town, Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross; to advise on the relevant vacancy rates; and provide advice on the nature and quantum of new development that these towns could facilitate.

Waterford City & CoCo uses online resources to identify property solutions as the need arises. The local authority also works with the IDA to secure additional strategic investment sites in the County.

**Action 173: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Investigate how best to incentivise upgrading of industrial properties..

**Update: Ongoing**

Supports and measures are required to incentivise upgrading of industrial properties, particularly those in private ownership. Tipperary CoCo is presently assessing the situation in the County for the purpose of influencing future policy, tax breaks, supports and incentives, which will lead to a reduction in the number of vacant large scale factories which are presently beyond use.

In 2015 Wexford CoCo carried out a review of its existing vacant commercial property grant incentive scheme. The scheme was originally developed with the aim of addressing vacancy rates and encouraging businesses to set up. The review showed that the scheme was possibly restrictive in terms of location and business type that was eligible for grant aid. Following on from the review it was decided to modify the scheme to cover vacant industrial, office and retail units across the whole county. The new scheme prioritises applications from the main urban centres, property located in existing business and Industrial parks and businesses operating in the Hospitality and Tourism sector. Grant relief from the scheme is based on certified fit out and improvement costs, which are submitted in Year 1. Based on these costs grant relief is issued under the following three year programme:

Year 1: A maximum total of 75% of the annual rates liability for the first year.

Year 2: A maximum of 50% of the annual rates liability for the second year.

Year 3: A maximum of 25% of the annual rates liability for the third year.

The revised scheme was adopted by Council members in January 2016 and by the end of the year there were over 100 enquiries, 26 of which resulted in applications being received. Of the 26 applications received, 14 have been approved and are receiving payments. The total amount approved under the scheme to date is €161,686, with payments already processed amounting to €107,069.

**Action 174: Údarás na Gaeltachta**

**Measure:** Growing on the successful strategy of providing innovative infrastructure solutions, An tÚdarás will work with private investors and other public bodies in examining the feasibility of developing a new development centre in the Déise Gaeltacht in support of employment and economic development locally.

**Update: Ongoing**

Talks were held with relevant stakeholder in the Déise Gaeltacht regarding the development of a new centre, however no formal agreement was reached regarding the funding streams required to undertake such a large project. Enabling site service works were carried out on an Údarás na Gaeltachta site in An Seanphobal which is available for prospective business clients.

**Action 175: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Licensing bodies to be among the first to adopt and promote the use of the new national Integrated Licensing Application System.

**Update: Ongoing**

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

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

Waterford City & County Council and Wexford County Council are two of the local authorities that offer licenses through this system.

Waterford:

- Small arms ammunition or pyrotechnics Form RP 1 - Register premises
- Category 1 Fireworks Form RP 2 - Register Premises
- Mixed Explosives Premises Registration
- Petrol Storage Licence

Wexford Co Co

- Casual Trading Licence
- Form WG 1 - Individual Water Supply Grant
- Petrol Storage Licence

Although all these licence types are very low volume, they contribute to achieving the goal of becoming a one-stop-shop for all business licensing.

**Action 176: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Local authorities and other public bodies such as the HSE to work with LEOs and others to promote greater SME engagement in public procurement.

**Update: Ongoing**

Information on all Frameworks for public procurement is circulated to client businesses on the LEO database and is also published in Local Media (e.g. the recent Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC) Frameworks for Local Authorities to procure Electrical and Plumbing Services in 2017 and 2018.) Training is provided for staff and Owner/ Managers on tendering procedures (e.g. The LGOPC will carry out a competition to appoint suppliers to a Framework. Local authorities will then run competitions with these suppliers in their particular area to procure electrical and plumbing services.) Training has been provided on tendering for government business in the County during 2016.

LEO Kilkenny, in conjunction with Kilkenny CoCo Procurement Unit, held a Public Procurement Workshop in 2016 with 23 businesses in attendance promoting greater awareness of and engagement with public procurement opportunities. This will be run again in September 2017.

LEO Waterford has delivered two public procurement workshops in 2016 with a further two planned for 2017.

LEO Kilkenny, in conjunction with the Kilkenny CoCo Procurement Unit, held a Public Procurement Workshop in 2016 with 23 businesses in attendance. The event helped promote greater awareness of and engagement with public procurement opportunities. This will be run again in September 2017.

**Action 178: InterTradelreland**

**Measure:** InterTrade Ireland will promote public tendering opportunities to SMEs in the region including cross border public sector opportunities, consortia building for larger contracts and below threshold contracts.

**Update: Ongoing**

InterTradelreland interacts very closely with all the Local Enterprise Offices in the region to promote Trade Programmes. Workshops have been delivered in Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford up to the end of 2016, attended by 42 SMEs. Under a new contract ITI will deliver an

Introduction to Tendering workshop and two standard Go2Tender workshops in Waterford and Wexford respectively.

**Action 179: InterTradelreland**

**Measure:** Intertrade Ireland will explore the organisation of a ‘meet the buyer event’.

**Update:** Complete

InterTradelreland has been instrumental in delivering significant “Meet the Buyer” events annually in Dublin and Belfast respectively. InterTradelreland undertook a regional “Meet the Buyer” event in the Munster region on 19th October in Cork City Hall in conjunction with Waterford, Wexford and Tipperary LEO offices. The event was attended by over 200 SMEs from the region. Going forward the All Island steering group are exploring the opportunities presented by sector specific workshops and pipeline led “opportunity driven” tender opportunities. EI will liaise with InterTradelreland on this action to include Public Sector Buyers.

**Action 180: LEOs**

**Measure:** Promote participation by SMEs in MicroFinance Ireland, Loan Guarantee and Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) funding.

Action 107 merged with this action.

**Update: Ongoing**

The 5 LEOs in the region supported 78 approved loans through Micro Finance Ireland in 2016. The value of these loans was €849,742 and the projects approved have the potential to create an additional 143 jobs.

Since the introduction of the Microfinance loan scheme, the LEOs in the South East have supported 187 successful loan applications worth a total value of €3,368,403. The projects supported have the potential to create an additional 425 jobs.

**Action 181: SEBIC**

**Measure:** Promote HBAN, the Halo Business Angel Network to offer local high growth potential companies the opportunity to pitch for funding from high network individuals and business angel syndicates

**Update: Ongoing**

South East Business & Innovation Centre (SEBIC) delivers the HBAN programme in the region. Since inception the BIC has delivered 34 deals raising some €11.3m for early stage companies: €5.88m of which was raised from Angels and the balance from other sources including VCs.

Through its HBAN partnership it has access to a growing number of national Angel Syndicates - Boole, Bloom, Irrus, NXSW, MedTech and Food as well as access to EBAN, Europe's most successful business angel network.

**Action 182:** SEBIC

**Measure:** Develop the Business Angel ecosystem with particular reference to Regional Angel Syndicates

**Update: Ongoing**

South East BIC, as part of its role in HBAN, continues to develop the South East Business Angel Network (SEBAN). Currently there are 91 registered members in the region. In 2016, 3 SEBAN investor forums were held where a total of 11 companies pitched for investment. SEBAN continues to leverage its linkages to the already-established angel groups and syndicates based in other regions – e.g. Boole, Bloom, Irrus, NXSW, MedTech and Food.

**Action 183:** InterTrade Ireland

**Measure:** InterTrade Ireland will host 15 workshops under their “Funding for Growth” initiative in the region to promote all traditional and non-traditional sources of finance to local businesses. Local businesses will benefit from hearing about alternative sources of finance and how to access it. Businesses will also have the opportunity to meet with a corporate finance expert to discuss their individual funding needs at the regional ‘Funding for Growth’ Clinics.

**Update: Ongoing**

This pilot programme has now ended. A “Funding for Growth” workshop and a “Funding for Growth” clinic were held in Waterford on 21<sup>st</sup> October and 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2016, respectively.

**Action 184:** InterTradeIreland

**Measure:** Promote the SeedCorn Competition to give HPSUs the opportunity to improve their investor readiness by taking them on a comprehensive mentoring journey and introducing them to investors.

**Update: Ongoing**

The ‘Seedcorn Investor Readiness Competition’ runs on an annual basis and HPSUs have the opportunity to compete and take part each year’.

**Action 185:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Local Authorities, through the CCMA and the NRA to work DCENR, DTTS and TIF to facilitate the rollout of high speed broadband. Develop demonstration initiatives with operators to stimulate demand for broadband, such as the enterprise-led initiatives.

**Update: Ongoing**

Tipperary CoCo has established a Broadband Programme Management Group, tasked with supporting the development of the digital transformation of County Tipperary. A dedicated Broadband Officer has been assigned to assist the Programme Management Group and will actively support delivery of the local Broadband Strategy and the successful implementation of the National Broadband Programme (NBP), which includes engaging with providers and users.

Kilkenny CoCo has a designated Broadband Officer and Director of Service with responsibility for Broadband under the NBP.

A Broadband Officer has been appointed in Carlow CoCo under the NBP.

Wexford CoCo has appointed an Acting Broadband Officer and a Director of Services with responsibility for broadband under the NBP.

Waterford City & CoCo have appointed a Broadband Officer to engage with Telecom providers during the NBP rollout. This role will also be responsible for creating awareness and stimulating demand for broadband services.

The Broadband Regional Action Group will review and address barriers identified by stakeholders impacting the rollout of Telecoms infrastructure. The Strategic Community Access Hubs (SCAH) initiative will provide high speed broadband to rural communities in Waterford. 20 SCAH locations in Waterford have been deemed suitable by the Department.

**Action 186:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Complete a targeted broadband needs analysis of the region targeting specific areas for shorter term economic gain.

**Update: Ongoing**

The development of a Digital Strategy for County Tipperary will commence in March 2017 and will have representation from the Community Sector.

Kilkenny CoCo has a designated Broadband Officer and Director of Service with responsibility for Broadband under the NBP.

A Broadband Officer has been appointed in Carlow CoCo under the NBP.

Wexford CoCo has appointed an Acting Broadband Officer and a Director of Services with responsibility for broadband under the NBP.

Waterford City & CoCo target is to have a Digital Strategy in place by the end of 2017. As a part of the Digital Strategy there are a number of technology drivers that will shape Waterford City and County Council's overall strategy and will help to improve the lives of citizens, improve city management and create economic development. The Strategy is currently at tender stage.

**Action 187:** ÚnaG

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will upgrade the broadband infrastructure serving its business parks by investing in fibre optic solutions.

**Update: Ongoing**

Progress has been made on this with high speed broadband to be available in the coming weeks in Old Parish and to be available in Ring by the end of Q2, 2017.

**Action 188:** NTA/Southern Regional Assembly

**Measure:** Continue to address infrastructure upgrading requirements in the region as resources become available to strengthen connectivity and the efficiency of the labour market in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

This action will be further progressed through the new Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

**Action 189:** Port Authorities

**Measure:** Promote the excellent port infrastructure in the region, most notably Rosslare, Waterford, Belview and New Ross and develop long-term strategic plans for each of the ports to ensure they can grow traffic volumes and activity over the coming decades.

**Update: Ongoing**

Port of Waterford (Belview and Waterford Ports) has adopted and published a 5 year Corporate Plan covering the period to 2020. The Plan sees activity and profitability growing significantly over this period. While no significant capital investment is required within this 5 year period a master planning process is underway to plot the course of development for the longer term, ie the next 20 to 25 years. The Port Company continues to work with the Regions local authorities and other stakeholders to maximise the impact the Ports bring to the South East and further afield.

**Action 191: Waterford Airport**

**Measure:** Complete a review of business and tourism air routes for SE region and their potential for development, in particular to connect to Britain and near continental central Europe to meet business needs.

**Update: Ongoing**

The Programme for Government includes €10million in additional funding for Regional Airports (including Waterford). This investment is in addition to the €28million already committed by the Department of Transport 2016-2020. Waterford Airport has been trying to secure new services, since VLM went into bankruptcy soon after cancelling its Waterford route. This remains the priority for Waterford Airport in the short term.

**Action 192: Irish Water**

**Measure:** Prioritise water supply and waste water treatment investment consistent with incoming business demands and tourism sector requirements, including as outlined in LA Development Plans.

**Update: Ongoing**

Irish Water (IW) will engage with potential new industrial and commercial customers and key stakeholders such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, trade representative bodies and government organisations to anticipate and deliver water services infrastructure to support industrial development and job creation. IW will engage directly with all inquiries for possible development and will seek to provide accurate and timely information on the capacity and likely cost of meeting requirements for water services. IW recognises the need to build confidence in the ability to cater for such development, responding efficiently to opportunity, as it arises.

IW is focussed on delivering critical infrastructure necessary to support social and economic development for the country. Reliable, high quality water supplies are increasingly important to attract foreign direct investment into Ireland especially in the IT and pharmaceutical sectors and also in supporting indigenous industry and employment. To achieve these objectives IW will assess the demands for water and wastewater services, based on national and regional spatial policies and plans, together with population and economic growth predictions. IW plans will ensure continuous service to all existing customers, whilst providing additional capacity to meet future population growth and industrial development.

In addition to providing critical water and wastewater infrastructure, this investment will directly support jobs in the water sector and indirectly in the construction, commercial and housing sectors.

A full listing of the IW Capital Maintenance programmes, the National Programmes and Water and Wastewater Projects are included in Appendix C of the IW Investment Plan 2017 to 2021, which includes a listing of projects in each county.

The Commissioner for Energy Regulation (CER) on Friday 30th September, 2016 published a consultation paper on the Irish Water Revenue for 2017 to 2018 (IRC2). A number of documents have been published alongside this consultation paper, including the Irish Water Investment Plan 2017 to 2021. The consultation paper and supporting documents can be found at the following link:

<http://www.cer.ie/document-detail/Consultation-on-Irish-Water-Revenue-for-2017-to-2018/1108>

### **Action 193: Irish Water**

**Measure:** Ensure that provision is made for water supply and waste water treatment to meet the requirements of development proposed under Local Authorities Development Plans and the commercial and industrial demands arising from proposed job creation activities in the region.

**Update: Ongoing**

Irish Water's 'Water Services Strategic Plan' (WSSP) – 2015 to 2040 identifies the key objectives, aims, strategies and targets of IW over the next 25 years. The main objectives are to:

- Support national, regional and local economic and spatial planning policy.
- Facilitate growth in line with national and regional economic and spatial planning policy.
- Ensure that water services are provided in a timely and cost effective manner.

In this regard, IW will engage with potential new industrial and commercial customers and key stakeholders such as the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, trade representative bodies and government organisations to anticipate and deliver water services infrastructure to support industrial development and job creation. IW will engage directly with all inquiries for possible development and will seek to provide accurate and timely information on the capacity and likely cost of meeting requirements for water services. IW recognises the need to build confidence in the ability to cater for such development, responding efficiently to opportunity, as it arises.

The commitment in the WSSP is also confirmed in the IW Business Plan and one of the nine key deliverables of the plan is to support economic growth in line with economic and spatial planning policy. The Business Plan provides further clarity on this deliverable as follows:

IW is focused on delivering critical infrastructure necessary to support social and economic development for the country. Reliable, high quality water supplies are increasingly important to attract foreign direct investment into Ireland especially in the IT and pharmaceutical sectors and also in supporting indigenous industry and employment. To achieve these objectives IW will assess the demands for water and wastewater services, based on national and regional spatial

policies and plans, together with population and economic growth predictions. IW plans will ensure continuous service to all existing customers, whilst providing additional capacity to meet future population growth and industrial development.

In addition to providing critical water and wastewater infrastructure, this investment will directly support jobs in the water sector and indirectly in the construction, commercial and housing sectors.

The IW Investment Plan 2017 to 2021 was submitted to the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) as part of Irish Water's submission for Interim Revenue Control 2 (IRC2). Following engagement with the CER, Irish Water submitted a revised Investment Plan to the CER in August, 2016. One of the main reasons for the revised plan was to accommodate additional interventions in response to Government policies, notably those set out in the recently published Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness. IW has strengthened provisions for growth in response to Government Housing Policy initiatives. IW has included Network Extension Programmes for Water (€13m) and Wastewater (€38m) and additional wastewater treatment capacity projects (€10m) in the Investment Plan. These programmes, coupled with previously identified Local Network Reinforcement projects to address known (€31m) and unknown network constraints (€31m) will help to support the Social and Economic Growth objectives of the Water Service Strategic Plan. Appendix D of the Investment Plan sets out the approach IW will take to growth in the Investment Plan. This includes an assessment and response to growth requirements in schemes where interventions are being undertaken for reasons other than growth e.g. on environmental compliance. A full listing of the Capital Maintenance programmes, the National Programmes and Water and Wastewater Projects in the final Investment Portfolio is provided in Appendix C, including a listing of projects in each county.

**Action 194:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Prioritise the development of a water supply source and reservoir for areas in the region as required.

**Update: Ongoing**

Kilkenny CoCo works with Irish Water to secure, maintain and protect clean water supplies throughout the county.

Tipperary Water Services section works closely with Irish Water to ensure that the proposed upgrade to the Clonmel water supply scheme becomes a reality and a number of projects are currently underway to improve the water services infrastructure across the county. Appendix C of the Investment Plan shows the full investment portfolio.

**Appendix 1:**



**Interested in working  
in the hospitality industry?**

In receipt of a social welfare payment OR not achieved a Leaving Certificate

## Introduction to Hospitality Part-Time Training Programme

*"Serve with Joy in your heart"*

**Starting February 2017  
Delivered in Wexford Town**

**20 week Training Programme**

**Tuesday, Thursday and Friday  
9.30am to 4.30pm**

**Contact:- Liz Duffy  
086 853 3677  
051 447 785  
lizduffy@wwetb.ie**

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- Restaurant Service Skills
- Work Experience
- HACCP training
- Basic First Aid
- Manual Handling

**Work Experience Placement Supported by:-**

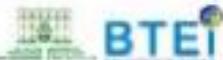
- Kelly's Resort Hotel and Spa
- Farmer's Kitchen Hotel
- Clayton Whites Hotel
- Ferrycarrig Hotel
- Talbot Hotel
- Whitford House Hotel
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[www.waterfordwexford.etb.ie](http://www.waterfordwexford.etb.ie)  

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**Appendix 2: Brand Platform for South East APJ**

### **A Platform for our Action Plan/Region**

As the process around the SEAPJ becomes more obvious and the structural supports are getting set, it's important to see how a disparate group of people, locations, ideas and issues can all be given a common sense of purpose, engagement and ambition.

The objectives set out for SEAPJ are demanding, the hurdles are multi-varied and there is much competition for the things that are needed to deliver on the potential – internal **and** external competition. *Internally* as in between the locations (towns, counties, their authorities, etc.), the institutes (e.g. Third Level Institutes), the different tourist products, and son on; and *externally*, between the other regions and their Action Plans, especially those regions which on the face of it are akin to the South East (SE).

So what is needed is a theme, a call-to-action, a real purpose that will drive the agenda and the platforms, that stands out from the other regions, that works across all of the SE and its towns, geographies, jobs targets, and which instils confidence in overcoming hurdles and challenges. It needs to be accessible to the general public as well as industry, educational institutes, tourism.

**“It’s closer than you think!”**

#### **“It’s”**

There is too much separateness in the SE. We need to look for the collective – how can we be, and seen to be better together – various local authorities, educational, industrial, infrastructural etc. bodies and institutes working as close as possible with each other and across definitions to drive a new sense of the South East.

#### **“Closer”**

Closer to airports, Dublin, each other (towns, ports, tourism centres). The targets are closer – if the right approach, attitude and policies are adopted.

“Closer” is not time-limited. It can carry on post SEAPJ!

#### **“You”**

The target is FDI; it's the general public; it's government; it's the civil service. It's all the audiences that can help make the targets attainable.

### **“Think”**

There are so many (simplistic) preconceptions regarding the SE. Let's challenge these and give audiences a reason to reappraise them.

### **Making it Real**

To move this platform on from merely a slogan to being a call to action, it needs to be:

- Unanimously adopted by the SEAPJ group.
- Used in all literature and websites.
- Explained and briefed to all local media and public representatives.
- Briefed to relevant Departments.

A set of KPIs need to be developed against which updates and briefings will be made regularly.

It is suggested that one particular sector could take a lead asap in the use of this platform (Tourism?) – NOT to the exclusion, even temporarily, of others, but to show how it can come to live. The platform should also be incorporated into the SEAPJ brand id which is perfectly suitable.

A formal launch should be considered to launch/introduce above, asap.