

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS

2012



Second Progress Report

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Commentary

This is the second report of the Monitoring Committee established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the *Action Plan for Jobs 2012*. It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the second quarter of 2012.

The Action Plan, which was published by Government in February this year, provides a comprehensive framework for actions right across Government and the public sector to support economic growth and job creation. To deliver on this, the Plan outlines more than 270 actions to be undertaken in 2012. Each of the associated measures specifies the Government Department or Agency responsible for implementation, and the quarterly deadline in 2012 by which they will be delivered.

In order to drive implementation of the measures, the Government established a Monitoring Committee which comprises representatives of the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and Forfás.

Ireland has suffered an enormous dislocation of employment as a result of the crisis. In the three years prior to the Government taking office, over 300,000 jobs were lost, and addressing the employment crisis is the Government's top priority. The continuing scale of the challenge is evident from the most recent data which shows that, on a seasonally adjusted basis, employment fell by 7,300 in the first quarter of 2012 to 1,786,100. This follows on from a seasonally adjusted increase in employment of 11,100 in the previous quarter. The Action Plan for Jobs 2012 is the first installment in an ambitious multi-year process which aims by 2016 to create the environment where the number of people at work will increase by 100,000 net - to 1.9 million - and reach 2 million people by 2020. Overall, the success of the Plan will depend on whether it fosters greater job retention and creation.

In the second quarter of 2012, Departments and agencies were to deliver 77 measures relating to 63 of the Action Plan's 270 actions. 72 of the 77 of the measures due in Q2 of 2012 have been delivered on schedule, giving a completion rate of 94%.

In delivering 72 measures in the second quarter of 2012, the Government has, for example:

- Launched a €2 million pilot programme to encourage groups of businesses to collaborate, improve competitive advantage, create mutual financial gain and support job creation. (Action 3.4)
- Enacted the Credit Guarantee Bill. (Action 3.30)
- With regard to the new Procuring Innovation Initiative, a critical mass of Departments/Agencies willing to participate has been built. We have, in addition, announced details and identified with Departments/Agencies practical projects where

the approach can be applied, and assisted them in preparing tendering documentation that encourages more innovative solutions. (Action 3.53)

- Published a draft strategy for consultation to promote employment, and support local enterprise by Local Government, to include measures in the area of business charges, local enterprise and business support arrangements, procurement support, local development and community based initiatives, the Green Economy and Local Government participation in employment support schemes. (Action 6.5)
- Set new targets for industry participation and take-up of publicly-funded research across all enterprise-relevant research programmes so that the enterprise relevance will play a greater part in research activity. (Action 1.6)
- Examined options for a more cohesive approach to Better Regulation across Government and introduced new structures to improve coordination and synchronisation. (Action 1.53)
- Articulated a clear commitment to manufacturing in Ireland, elaborated on the range of initiatives and supports that will be put in place to demonstrate this commitment, and established a Manufacturing Development Forum to assist the Government in identifying the needs of manufacturing enterprises and to progress a transformation agenda in this area. (Actions 7.1.1 and 7.1.2)
- Developed a Cloud Computing Procurement Standard with industry experts. (Action 7.6.7)
- Agreed the terms of reference with stakeholders for a National Strategy for the Construction Sector to 2015 outlining the opportunities, challenges and actions needed to realise the potential of the sector. (Action 7.12.4)

Five measures outlined in the Plan for completion in Q2 have not been delivered on schedule. These are:

- Accelerate the programme of revaluation of commercial premises, which will provide a basis for an adjustment in the burden of commercial rates. (Action 1.17 – See page 17)
- Submit proposals for Government decision on a new national waste policy. (Action 1.22 – See page 21)
- Building on the work of the Next Generation Broadband Taskforce, agree advanced broadband targets and milestones for Ireland, identify the infrastructure deficits nationally and then develop and implement a plan to achieve these targets. (Action 1.45 – See page 24)

- Following establishment of the Microfinance Fund facility (i) apply to European Investment Fund (EIF) for a guarantee facility and (ii) complete a due diligence process with the EIF. (Action 2.3 –See page 27)

The 94% completion rate in Q2 follows on the implementation of actions in Q1 where 96% of relevant measures were delivered on time and in full. All three outstanding measures from the first quarter; a promotional drive for women in business (Action 2.11), development of a programme to support industry-led clustering (Action 3.4) and development of a Cloud Computing Strategy for the Public Sector (Action 7.6.1) have now been fully implemented.

The *Action Plan for Jobs* is a rolling plan and, above all, a plan that will be judged on its results and impacts. In this context, some early stage impacts are being seen linked to the implementation of measures in Quarter 1 aimed at enhancing the operating environment for firms. For example:

- In Q1, investments by 15 multinationals in Ireland were announced with associated jobs for Dublin, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Cork, Louth and Kildare. (Action 5.1)
- 200 companies have attended *Export Awareness* events around the country while 40 companies are participating in *Exploring Exporting* workshops. (Action 3.30)
- Over 330 employers have been awarded Employer PRSI exemptions in respect of over 460 employees in Q1 2012. (Action 1.13)
- There have been upwards of 30,000 visits to the ConnectIreland website, under the Government's *Succeed in Ireland* jobs finder's fee scheme. "Connectors" have submitted up to 244 company names and it is estimated approximately 20 have potential for investment in Ireland over the next year. One project has already been announced - *Intergeo Services* is to establish its EMEA Headquarters in Carlow, with the potential for 30 skilled jobs. (Action 5.6)
- 6,000 additional free part-time higher education places for unemployed people have been rolled-out under the latest Springboard call. The places are available free of charge to unemployed people on 220 different courses in 36 public and private higher education providers across the country. The courses address the skills needs of key growth sectors of the economy, such as ICT, international financial services, medical devices and the green economy. Courses that address cross sectoral enterprise and generic skills needs are also available. Over 60% of courses include a work placement element (Action 1.34). More than 1,300 people are expected to graduate this month from ICT courses provided under the first phase of Springboard 2011. A further 2,200 places on ICT programmes from certificate to masters degree level have now opened for applications under Springboard 2012. (Action 1.35).

- In Q1 the JobBridge Scheme was extended providing an additional 1,000 places and widening the eligibility criteria to include recipients of One Parent Family or Disability allowances. More than 900 of the participants on the JobBridge scheme have progressed directly into employment on completion of their internship. Almost 4,500 companies have participated in the scheme to date. (Action 1.35).
- 29 entrepreneurs in the food and drink sector will have their business idea taken forward to commercial stage through the Q1 inter-agency entrepreneur support programme which involves mentoring, intensive workshops, market research, technical expertise and a feasibility grant of €5,000. It is anticipated that up to 15 of these will progress to High Potential Start Up (HPSU) status. (Action 7.4.9).
- Both the *Immigrant Investor Programme* and the *Start-up Entrepreneur Programme* are operational and have commenced accepting applications. There has been a significant level of enquiries about both the schemes, and the first five applications for the entrepreneur scheme have been received. (Action 4.7)
- Irish firms have signed multi-million euro contracts with international customers, made international acquisitions, and launched new products, while education institutes have agreed memoranda of understanding with numerous universities overseas on foot of trade missions undertaken in Q1 to the US, China, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, UK and Russia. (Action 3.12)
- The agri-food and services Trade Mission to China, resulted in memoranda of understanding on phyto-sanitary issues, research and mutual cooperation on trade. Successful commercial outcomes were achieved for Irish firms on dairy and nutritional ingredients, seafood products, horses and machinery. Joint ventures were also agreed for an equine facility and a demonstration farm. (Action 7.4.14)
- Business Development Managers are being appointed to 37 Community Enterprise Centres across the country as part of a €2 million programme aimed at protecting and growing businesses in the community. (Action 2.5)
- Over 50 companies are expected to take up NSAI's *Excellence Through People* scheme, re-launched in Q1. (Action 3.23)
- The National Procurement Service has an ongoing campaign to encourage registration by SMEs on the eTenders website. Since the start of the year there has been an increase of 8,100 in the total number of suppliers registered on eTenders. When the new eTenders system is operational, companies that register will be required to provide information in relation to employee numbers, thereby facilitating reporting in relation to supplier registrations by size of company. (Action 3.52)

As stated earlier, the *Action Plan for Jobs* contains almost 600 measures to support job retention and creation. While the majority have specific quarterly targets for completion associated with them, there are measures listed as “ongoing in 2012” i.e. rather than having a specific quarterly deadline for completion of the measure, the responsible Department or Agency is taking the required steps to ensure that the objective of the action is delivered over the year. For example:

- The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland is delivering its SME programme to businesses on an ongoing basis in order to raise awareness and provide opportunities to companies to reduce energy use and is currently providing free energy advice and assessments to 52 companies. (Action 1.14)
- Net capital expenditure by end-June was almost €1.1 billion representing 30% of the investment envisaged to ensure Ireland’s infrastructure can facilitate economic growth. (Action 1.14)
- A project to measure the burden imposed by regulation involving seven Departments and Revenue is underway with each participating Department confirming its intention to report to Government with its plans to achieve reductions by end of Q3. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has already achieved a reduction of almost 24.5% (approximately €204 million) in the administrative burden imposed on business which it expects to rise to 25% by year end. (Action 1.50)
- By the end of Q2, 8 High Potential Start Ups arising as spinouts from research have been supported by Enterprise Ireland. (Action 2.6)
- Enterprise Ireland has developed the Global Irish Contacts Programme which aims to facilitate over 100 of the Global Irish Network (GIN) members to support Irish companies seeking to achieve international growth, including an international mentoring element for Irish businesses involving top business leaders from home and abroad. (Action 3.3)
- Irish Life Investment Managers, AMP Capital and the NPRF have undertaken extensive marketing of the Irish Infrastructure Fund both in Ireland and around the world, with investor meetings in many of the leading global investment centres. This has included a major marketing road show across Asia, Australia and the Middle East in March 2012 and a number of initial meetings in the US, involving presentations to leading large scale sovereign wealth fund and pension fund investors. The Infrastructure Fund announced its first investment in June 2012 and this strong progress combined with the further development of the investment pipeline will support the next phase of marketing to investors. (Action 3.32)

- The draft terms of reference to assess the Credit Review Office have been circulated to the SME Credit Consultation Committee and the formal assessment process is expected to begin in Q3. (Action 3.40)
- Since the last quarterly update, Liam Casey of PCH International was appointed as a Start-Up Ambassador for the Greater China region and Dr Arthur Rosenthal as Life Sciences Start-Up Ambassador for the US to increase the number of inward entrepreneurial start-ups in Ireland. A further Start-Up Ambassador announcement is expected early in Quarter 3. (Action 4.3)

1. Building Competitive Advantage

Research and Innovation to Drive Job Creation

Action 1.1: Adopt 14 priority areas for research based on the recommendations of the National Research Prioritisation Exercise, where publicly-performed research will underpin specific opportunities of direct relevance to enterprise and jobs.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Establish structures through the Research Prioritisation Action Group on STI to implement priority areas across all relevant programmes. (All research funders via Research Prioritisation Action Group)

Update: Complete.

The Prioritisation Action Group (PAG) was established in March 2012 and meets on a monthly basis. The PAG has established a system of working groups to support implementation of the priority areas across all relevant programmes.

The working groups are chaired by PAG member organisations and include representatives of all research funders supporting the specific priority area. The research funders are agreeing what actions are necessary to support research activity in a particular priority area with a view to getting an economic return on the investment. The PAG has agreed a template for these Action Plans which includes a vision for the priority area, measurable objectives necessary to deliver on the vision and associated actions required to deliver on the objectives to be considered in the context of the research landscape and innovation eco-system. Through the working groups, and under the guidance of PAG, work is ongoing to develop Action Plans for 10 of the 14 Priority areas.

Following initial sign off by the PAG, a process of stakeholder consultation on the Action Plans will begin from September. In parallel, the working groups and the PAG will develop and agree metrics and targets for each of the Action Plan objectives that reflect the national metrics and targets developed as part of the framework for monitoring impact of investment in science, technology and innovation. The overall aim is to have substantial work completed on the 14 Action Plans by the end of the year.

Work has also commenced on implementation of 6 of the 13 systemic actions required to support prioritisation by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the STI system.

- Work is well underway on the development of a framework for monitoring the impact of STI investment per recommendations 1 and 2. The intention is to bring this overall framework to Government for approval before the end of 2012.

- In relation to the recommendation on the need for research funders to assess relevance to and impact on the priority areas, feedback provided to the PAG from research funders suggests that while there are different approaches, models of good practise exist but more needs to be done to ensure a consistent approach across research funders.
- In relation to policies and procedures for the commercialisation of intellectual property (IP) arising from publicly funded research, an IP Protocol has been published which outlines a clear, robust and industry friendly policy (see action 1.5).
- Significant progress has also been made on ensuring that research centres adopt a more industry focussed culture (see actions 1.2 and 1.4).
- The Irish Research Council's plans to roll out an employment based postgraduate programme for PhD and Master's students addresses recommendation 13 regarding the need to improve the alignment between the supply of trained researchers from academia and the demand for such skills from the enterprise sector.

Action 1.2: Adopt a new approach to funding Research Centres to concentrate on the identified priorities and to create a distinctive enterprise-focused culture in the centres concerned and coherence with IDA/EI supported Technology Centres.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Issue call for proposals (DJEI / SFI)

Update: Complete.

Science Foundation Ireland issued the Research Centres call in February 2012. The call is based on the new "hub and spoke" model which has been designed to:

- Support greater alignment with enterprise needs, and
- Facilitate a focus on the research priorities identified through the National Research Prioritisation Exercise

35 proposals, involving more than 460 companies, have been received under the call. Each of the proposals received is aligned with the Research Priority areas.

SFI has completed the first "stage-gate" review of the proposals using the newly instituted Impact Panel which is composed of venture capital companies, industry experienced R&D directors and technology transfer experts etc. and works to supplement scientific review for selection of projects to proceed to full proposal.

The proposals selected based on this initial review will be invited to develop full proposals for subsequent submission, panel assessment and final decision in accordance with the programme timeline.

Action 1.4: Establish new Technology Centres in Cloud Computing, Learning Technologies and Financial Services and undertake preparatory actions for Technology Centres linked to the priority areas (e.g. Connected Health, Pharmaceutical Production, Data Analytics, Medical Device Manufacturing).

Quarter 2 Commitment: Undertake needs assessment for new centres and invite bids to host centres (EI / IDA)

Update: Complete.

Technology Centres are collaborative entities established and led by industry. They are focused on research with a direct impact on industry. Nine Technology Centres have been established to date with a further seven in various stages of development.

The centres are established in a 2 stage process. The initial research phase (informed by a detailed description of needs for the industry-led research agenda), with approximately €1 million funding over 12 to 18 months, allows relationships to develop and establishes some of the early projects. Once this phase is completed a Hosting call is issued, which provides funding, typically for a period of 5 years, which establishes the Centre in its physical location.

New Technology Centres in Cloud Computing, Learning Technologies and Financial Services have been established. The calls to host the Cloud Computing and Financial Services Technology Centres were launched in May and will close in early July. The Hosting Centre for the Learning Technologies Centre has been selected and the contract has been finalised.

Preparatory actions for Technology Centres linked to the priority areas (based on the National Research Prioritisation Exercise) are well advanced. For the Connected Health, Data Analytics and Medical Device Manufacturing Centres, industry consortia have been formed and they are currently in the process of agreeing the research programme for the Centres. The Pharmaceutical Production Centre has agreed the initial research programme.

Hosting calls for the establishment of centres in these areas will be issued following the completion of the Preparatory phase in each of these cases.

Action 1.5: Agree and implement a new protocol for management of intellectual property (IP) associated with State funded research. Enabled by Enterprise Ireland, establish a strong central Technology Transfer Office (cTTO) and strengthen further the Technology Transfer function so that enterprises can avail of the ideas with greater ease and certainty.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Agree new IP Policy for State funded research. (DJEI / Forfás / Stakeholders / Government)
- Roll out new IP Protocol and updated guidelines. (DJEI with funders)

Update: Complete.

The new IP Protocol, which sets out a new national policy and guidelines for the management of IP associated with State funded research, was launched in June 2012.

The IP Protocol sets out a new system designed to make it easier and faster for entrepreneurs and companies to negotiate a commercial arrangement with publicly funded research performing organisations.

It sets out the Government's policies to encourage industry – from start-ups and small and medium enterprises to multinational corporations – to benefit from State funded research and describes the practical arrangements for this to happen.

Work on the establishment of the central Technology Transfer Office (cTTO), which will support research funding agencies in implementing the new IP Protocol, is progressing well. The cTTO will act as a one-stop shop for industry engagement with the research system to find all research opportunities and IP that has been generated across the entire publicly funded research system. The cTTO will be hosted by Enterprise Ireland. The post of CEO for the cTTO will be advertised shortly and will be based in Enterprise Ireland's offices in Dublin.

Action 1.6: Set new targets for industry participation and take-up of publicly-funded research across all enterprise-relevant research programmes so that the enterprise relevance will play a greater part in research activity including targets for:

- Collaborative research with enterprise
- Industry-based PhD students
- Employment of trained researchers within industry
- Licensing and spin-outs associated with HEI research
- Enterprise participation in the EU Framework Programme (FP7)

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI / Government via Inter-Departmental Committee on STI / Forfás)

Update: Complete.

Working through the Research Prioritisation Action Group (PAG), Forfás has compiled the appropriate metrics and proposed ambitious, yet realistic, targets based on the funding that is available in 2012 and likely to be allocated in 2013.

These metrics and targets which are at national, agency and programme level were agreed by the PAG which includes all Government Departments that are represented on the Inter-Departmental Committee for Science, Technology and Innovation as well as research funders operating under the aegis of those Departments.

30 specific targets have been agreed through the PAG addressing the five dimensions of enterprise participation and take-up of publicly-funded research. The targets have been noted by Government. Some of the key metrics and targets are summarised below.

Collaborative research between HEIs/PROs and the enterprise sector

- Share of publicly-performed research financed by the enterprise sector to reach 4% (€36 million) by 2013 from 3.5% in 2010.
- Enterprise Ireland to support a total of 960 industry-academic projects/interactions (across Innovation Partnerships, Innovation Vouchers, Technology Centres etc.) in 2013 from a base of 857 in 2011.

Industry-based PhD students

- Irish Research Council (IRC) to launch pilot programme for industry-based researchers with intake of 30-40 researchers in 2012 and in 2013.
- IRC to support 132 enrolments in 2012 and in 2013 under the existing Enterprise Partnership Scheme (from base of 75 in 2011).

Employment of trained researchers within industry

- Maintain the number of researchers employed in the Business Enterprise Sector at 4.3 per thousand employed (compared to average for EU27 of 3.2);
- 31% of researchers departing SFI-funded research teams to move to industry as their first destination (from 22% in 2010).

Commercialisation of research performed in HEIs and PROs

- Enterprise Ireland supported Technology Transfer Offices to facilitate 105 licences of IP to enterprises based in Ireland in 2012 and in 2013 (compared to less than 20 per annum pre-2006);
- 31 new “spin-outs” from the public research system to be generated in 2012 and in 2013 (compared to less than 10 per annum pre-2006).

Enterprise participation in European research programmes

Irish enterprises to secure €145 million (approximately 25%) of the €600 million national target for total draw-down under Framework Programme 7 (FP7) by end-2013 (compared to less than 20% of national drawdown under FP5 and FP6).

Action 1.9: Undertake a feasibility study to examine what structures and policies could be developed to make Ireland a world centre for managing and trading in intellectual property. Complete the report of the Copyright Review Committee on barriers to innovation.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete.

Following an open competitive tender process at the end of last year, consultants were selected to undertake a feasibility study to examine what structures and policies could be developed to make Ireland a world centre for managing and trading in IP. The objectives of the study were:

- To identify and describe the emerging trends in IP portfolio management in corporations globally; and
- Taking account of such global emerging trends, to identify options and models for Ireland to leverage its existing strengths to become an internationally attractive centre for managing and trading in IP, such that this could realise an economic and jobs potential.

The study was overseen by a steering group, chaired by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation with representatives from Forfás, IDA, Science Foundation Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. The draft final report was completed in June 2012.

The study will be considered by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and recommendations around implementation will be submitted to the Minister for his consideration.

The report of the Copyright Review Committee will be completed in Q4 as per Action 7.7.4.

Action 1.11: Support the Dublin City of Science (ESOF) event in July 2012 which will provide a global showcase for Irish research and innovation. (DJEI/CSA/Organising Committee)

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI / CSA/ Organising Committee)

The Dublin City of Science was launched by Minister Richard Bruton, T.D., Minister of State Sean Sherlock, T.D., and the Lord Mayor of Dublin in January 2012 in the Convention Centre Dublin. 160 events will take place countrywide and throughout the year as part of Dublin City of Science, in the style of a Festival of Science.

Some of these science outreach events have already taken place and the Dublin City of Science brand is very much capturing the public imagination, with a much-accessed dedicated website. The science theme was strongly to the fore for the duration of the St. Patrick's Festival in March, including for the main parade on St. Patrick's Day.

The centrepiece of this historic year for science in Ireland is Europe's largest science meeting, the Euroscience Open Forum (ESOF), which Dublin hosted from 11th July to 15th July 2012 in the Convention Centre Dublin. The conference programme, which included presentations by Nobel Laureates, leading researchers, policy makers and business people, incorporated a number of distinct strands of activity to:

- Showcase the latest advances in science and technology;
- Promote discussion on the role of science and technology in society and public policy; and
- Stimulate public interest and engagement with science and technology.

Both Ministers Bruton and Sherlock participated in a range of activities relating to ESOF Dublin City of Science, to help promote the initiative. Preparations for ESOF 2012 were led by the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser, and the overall event was a resounding success and a boost to the Irish economy via an increase in tourism numbers around the time of the conference.

ESOF 2012 was attended by scientists, business leaders, senior EU and Government officials, international scientific media and science graduates and enthusiasts. This included over 4,000 delegates, 500 speakers, 23 keynote speakers, and 5 Nobel Laureates from across 74 countries.

In terms of support, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has provided the vast bulk of the €2.97 million in funding committed to ESOF/ Dublin City of Science 2012 and the Department is also providing administrative support, including participation on the Local Organising Committee and the provision of advice to the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser. The Organising Committee also successfully secured extensive sponsorship for ESOF/ Dublin City of Science 2012, which has made a significant contribution to the initiative in terms of both financing and profile raising.

Improving Cost Competitiveness

Action 1.14: While cognisant of security of supply and environmental goals, take a series of actions to manage energy costs:

Quarter 2 Commitment: Following the completion of the review of the case for undergrounding part or all of the north-south electricity interconnector by the international expert commission appointed by DCENR, a decision will be taken quickly to provide the policy certainty and clarity required to progress the significant energy infrastructure investment needed to support future growth and competitiveness. (Government)

Update: Complete.

The North-South Electricity Interconnector has been in development since 2006 and, in line with the Programme for Government, an independent international commission was appointed to review the case for, and cost of, undergrounding all or part of the project. Their Report was published in January and forwarded to the Joint Oireachtas Committee for debate and consultation.

The Joint Committee held hearings with the Commission, EirGrid, ESB Networks and other stakeholders and published its report on 15th June 2012. Following the Commission Report and the Oireachtas Committee hearings, it will now be a matter for EirGrid to proceed to re-submit the North South Electricity project to the planning process in accordance with the Strategic Infrastructure Act as the prescribed statutory route for all major infrastructure decisions.

Quarter 2 Commitment: An appropriate balance between the right of individual citizens and the common good is essential to improve the effectiveness of the planning system. We will develop an awareness campaign to highlight the implications of delays in rolling out infrastructure for regional development and local job creation. (Government / DCENR / SEAI / DTTS / DJEI / DECLG / business representative bodies)

Update: Complete.

The Taoiseach and Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources have consistently delivered the message on the importance of timely and cost effective delivery of energy infrastructure projects in the interests of all citizens.

The Government has approved a Statement which will be made in the coming days by the Minister For Communications, Energy and Natural Resources communicating the vital importance of the timely delivery of network investment and other energy infrastructure for national energy security, economic competitiveness, regional development and job creation. The Statement includes a key message to the State companies, developers of energy projects, and stakeholders generally, about the imperative of early transparent engagement with local communities and stakeholders and the appropriateness of building community gain considerations into project budgeting and planning.

This message will be the subject of an awareness campaign which will be largely based on the public confidence building measures already devised by EirGrid in relation to progressing GridLink and GridWest.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As required by the EU-IMF agreement and based on the results of the IEA assessment of the efficiency of the electricity and gas sectors, ‘further strengthen the regulatory and market reform programme in consultation with European Commission Services, with a view to increase efficiency, improve governance, strengthen competition and improve these sectors' ability to contribute towards covering Ireland's financing needs and improving its growth potential and economic recovery’. (DCENR)

Update: Complete.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) report was published on 11th July. Taking account of this assessment, EU legal and policy developments in the energy markets, as well as the Government’s State Assets Programme a series of actions have already been taken to address regulatory strengthening. There is ongoing consultation by DCENR and the Commission for Energy Regulation with the European Commission (DG ENER) on Ireland’s gas and electricity regulatory and market frameworks.

Action 1.17: Build on the positive response to date from Local Authorities to requests from Government to exercise restraint in setting rates for businesses, to minimise costs imposed on businesses and assist struggling firms in any way they can, with a need for continuing restraint and lower costs in the coming years.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Accelerate the programme of revaluation of commercial premises, which will provide a basis for an adjustment in the burden of commercial rates. (DPER / Valuation Office)

Update: Delayed.

The Valuation Office and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform are actively pursuing ways to accelerate the revaluation programme.

A central element of this is the introduction of amending legislation to the Valuation Act 2001 which governs the valuation process. The amending legislation has been drafted and will be submitted to Government for approval on 24th July.

The amending legislation includes a series of measures and approaches to streamline and accelerate revaluation programme. It will for the first time provide the legislative basis for carrying out a revaluation via self-assessment by ratepayers and the external delivery of elements of the valuation process.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Require Local Authorities to consider the impact of development contributions on businesses and competitiveness generally. (Development contribution schemes will continue to be used to support capital investment by Local Authorities in the provision of necessary infrastructure and services which will create jobs.) (D/ECLG)

Update: Complete.

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government published draft guidelines for planning authorities on development contributions on 27th June. The publication marks the start of a public consultation phase which runs until 7th September during which all stakeholders and members of the public are invited to submit their views on the draft. Following consideration of the submissions received final guidelines will be issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2010.

The new draft guidelines have a strong focus on jobs, investment and growth in addition to a continued focus on sustainable planning and development. Key features in the new guidance include:

- A requirement for planning authorities to put in place reduced rates of development contributions or waivers for:
 - Development in town centres to support town centre development;
 - Change-of-use permissions, where change-of use does not lead to the need for new or upgraded infrastructure / services;
 - Businesses grant-aided or supported by IDA/Enterprise Ireland or other local authority or state supported local development agencies, as well as reduced rates for developments that would progress the Government’s Jobs Initiative;
 - Broadband provision and sustainable energy infrastructure;
 - Protected structures.

- Recommended use of lower rates in areas prioritised for development in the core strategy.
- A flexible approach to phasing of payment of development contributions (subject to formal agreement between developer and planning authority).
- A consistent step-by-step methodology for use by all planning authorities in the preparation of new schemes to ensure consistency of approach.

Action 1.18: Encourage all professionals (accounting, taxation, legal etc.) supplying the business sector and consumers to provide price quotations in advance.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Conduct market research and liaise with business representative groups (DJEI/ NCA/ Business representative groups)
- Compile and prioritise a list of professions where sourcing fees is currently an issue. (DJEI/ NCA /Business representative groups)
- Commence work with representative bodies with a goal to make standard fee lists available for routine services to both consumers and small businesses. (DJEI/ NCA/ Business representative groups)

Update: Complete.

Following consultation with business representative groups on the issues to be included in a questionnaire, the National Consumer Agency (NCA) engaged a professional market research company to undertake a market research project on professional fees in May 2012. A sample of 461 businesses was included in the survey.

The main finding of the survey was that a large number of small businesses do not request a quote in advance when dealing with professions. Of those small businesses that do request quotations for professional fees in advance, the survey found a percentage experience some issues or problems getting a quote: 21% in the case of solicitors; 14% in relation to banking providers; 10% in the case of accountants/tax advisors; and 9% in the case of insurance providers.

Having conducted market research in accordance with the requirements of the *Action Plan for Jobs*, the NCA has written to the relevant representative business groups to inform them of the research findings and in particular the finding that a large number of small businesses do not seek quotes in advance when dealing with professions.

As regards solicitors (which the research found to be the profession from which small businesses had the highest level of difficulty in accessing quotes), the NCA has written seeking an engagement with the Law Society to explore initiatives which could be undertaken to improve transparency in the solicitor profession in terms of its accessibility by both consumers and SMEs. This builds on existing engagement between NCA and the Law Society on consumer-related issues.

Action 1.19: Promote greater competition and reduce costs in the health sector by enacting legislation relating to general practice

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DoH)

Update: Complete.

The Health (Provision of General Practitioner Services) Act 2012 was enacted on 28th February 2012 and commenced on 12th March 2012. The primary purpose of the Act is to enable a wider range of registered medical practitioners to provide medical services to medical card holders under the General Medical Services (GMS) scheme so as to promote greater competition and reduced costs in the health sector.

The Act provides for the elimination of restrictions on general practitioners (GPs) wishing to obtain contracts to treat public patients under the GMS Scheme by opening up access to all fully qualified and vocationally trained GPs.

Action 1.20: Introduce a more effective enforcement regime for competition offences by enacting the Competition (Amendment) Bill 2011.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete.

The Competition (Amendment) Act 2012, which strengthens competition law enforcement, was enacted on 20th June 2012 and will be commenced shortly. The Act's provisions include:

- An increase in the level of fine for criminal conviction of serious offences from €4 million to €5 million;
- The maximum imprisonment sentence for an offence relating to anti-competitive agreements, decisions and concerted practices has been raised from 5 to 10 years;
- An increase in the level of fine for summary conviction of certain competition offences from €3,000 to €5,000;

- An increase in the maximum daily fine applicable to a continuing contravention from €300 to €500 in respect of a summary conviction and in the case of a conviction on indictment from €40,000 to €50,000;
- An amendment to the Companies Act 1990 to add non-indictable contraventions of section 4 or 5 of the 2002 Competition Act to the list of circumstances under which the court may order that a person shall not be appointed as a company director;
- Enabling commitments given to the Competition Authority to be made rules of court;
- Section 1 of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 will not apply to certain offences in respect of anti-competitive practices or abuse of dominant position;
- The specific inclusion of interim, interlocutory and permanent injunctions as reliefs; and
- An easing of the burden of proof for private plaintiffs taking a follow-on case for damages following public enforcement proceedings where a Court determines that an undertaking has engaged in prohibited conduct or practices.

Action 1.22: Encourage a competitive regime for waste services via careful design of the regulatory framework.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Submit proposals for Government decision on a new national waste policy. (D/ECLG)

Update: Delayed.

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government is in the final stages of developing a new national waste policy *A Resource Opportunity: Waste Management Policy in Ireland* which will provide for the development of a sustainable waste management approach to deliver improved environmental performance and quality, cost effective waste services to businesses and consumers. The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government will submit the new policy for approval by Government later in July.

Action 1.23: Finalise the strategy for future structure for water services delivery to ensure an improvement in efficiency and delivery.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Complete internal assessment process. (D/ECLG)

Update: Complete.

The Government has decided to establish a public water utility company to take over the operational and capital delivery functions of local authorities in the water services area. An assessment process examined the capacity and capabilities of a number of State agencies with the potential to incorporate the new water utility.

The outcome of this analysis is that Irish Water should be established as an independent state owned company within the Bord Gáis Group. This has been agreed by Government. Irish Water will be a public utility, wholly owned by the State, with water services remaining in public ownership.

A process is now underway led by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and involving the local authorities and Bord Gáis, and other bodies affected by the reform programme, with the objective of developing an implementation strategy for the establishment and operation of Irish Water. Key issues to be addressed in the implementation strategy are being identified and the strategy will provide the roadmap to the resolution of these issues and the timescales involved.

Action 1.28: Develop a set of competitiveness targets that are amenable to domestic action to restore Ireland's ranking

Quarter 2 Commitment: Identify a short list of key competitiveness indicators where Ireland's performance is poor and which are amenable to domestic policy action. Quantify the change required in order for Ireland to be placed in the top five most competitive economies in the OECD. (Forfás)

Update: Complete.

Forfás approved the selection of the World Bank's Doing Business index as the basis for developing 'a set of competitiveness targets that are amenable to domestic action to restore Ireland's ranking' and which are directly relevant to enterprise. Ireland currently ranks 10th of 183 countries in the World Bank's Doing Business index.

Based on this, Forfás have set out the key competitiveness targets and the degree of improvement required to achieve a top five position in the OECD. These relate to areas such as improving the costs and length of time associated with starting a business, registering property and accessing utilities.

Action 1.29: Analyse the costs associated with exporting and set out an action plan to reduce these costs.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Identify the costs of goods and services getting to markets. (Forfás/DJEI)

Update: Complete.

Forfás commissioned a study involving extensive stakeholder consultations, detailed case studies of 21 companies, and an international literature review to identify the costs of exporting for Irish firms.

The study provides a comprehensive overview of the key costs associated with exporting goods and services including transport, regulatory approval, marketing and professional services both in Ireland and in-market etc.

The next phase of the work is to develop an action plan to address these costs by quarter 4.

Action 1.30: Review public transport regulation with a view to reform that will reduce costs via increased competition.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Complete review of the Taxi industry. (DTTS)

Update: Complete.

The Taxi Regulation Review Report 2011 was endorsed by Government in January this year. The core initiatives arising from the Review are to ensure better enforcement of the taxi regulations; to improve standards within the regulated industry and in the quality of transport service delivery to customers; and to encourage exit from the industry of those who operate in breach of the required standards and regulations.

In relation to the cost to consumers of taxi services; the encouragement of price flexibility; and the “fair” reward of small public service vehicles (SPSV) drivers, the Review noted that international comparisons suggest that prices for taxis appear to be somewhat above average but that Irish fares are very similar to what would be expected given wage levels, employment and population density. The Review found that the guiding principles which have influenced recent taxi price reviews continue to be a generally valid basis for achieving a balance between the interests of taxi drivers and consumers but that for future reviews, the National Transport Authority should augment its analysis of taxi fares with updated international benchmarking.

Taken together, the actions proposed in the report will increase the administrative and operational efficiency of the regulated taxi market, for example, short-term measures aimed at improving joint-working of the relevant regulatory and enforcement agencies and longer-term measures for one-stop shop licensing and greater use of technology.

The National Transport Authority is the lead agency with responsibility for the delivery of the 46 Review actions, with 8 completed to date. The Department is also preparing legislation to support key enforcement actions proposed in the report.

Action 1.32: Identify any sheltered areas of the economy where competition is restricted and commission studies on such areas where appropriate

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Consider whether studies of such areas are important and identify which studies are of importance. (Government)
- Commence market study of top priority area. (Competition Authority)

Update: Complete.

The Competition Authority undertook an exercise in Quarter 1 to identify sheltered areas of the economy where competition is restricted. The areas identified through this exercise were port services, public service obligation bus services and retailing of prescription medicines to private patients.

Following on from this, the Competition Authority has assessed each of these areas in more detail in order to identify the top priority area. At the request of the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Competition Authority has commenced a market study of the ports sector in Ireland.

Infrastructure Investment to Underpin Employment Growth

Action 1.45: Building on the work of the Next Generation Broadband Taskforce, we will agree advanced broadband targets and milestones for Ireland, identify the infrastructure deficits nationally and then develop and implement a plan to achieve these targets.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Delayed.

The report of the Next Generation Broadband Taskforce was published in May and broadly identified the areas where investment in high speed broadband will occur over the next eight years, and the areas where infrastructure deficits are likely to arise. Publication of the Taskforce report was followed by a public consultation during May.

A National Broadband Plan is now being submitted for Government consideration. The plan, when published, will set targets for advanced broadband deployment and the measures that will be pursued to achieve these targets.

Reduced Costs through Sensible Regulation

Action 1.48: Reform and consolidate the five existing employment rights institutions into two simplified and streamlined bodies.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Implement further business process reforms including introduction of early resolution service, case management, website development. (DJEI)

Update: Complete.

A *Blueprint for Reform of Workplace Relations Services* was published in April 2012. This sets out how reform of the structures and processes will be achieved and provided a further opportunity for interested parties to contribute comments and feedback on the future design and operation of the State's workplace relations structures.

Work has commenced on the drafting of a Workplace Relations Bill to give effect to this new structure. The legislation will provide for the orderly wind down of the Labour Relations Commission (LRC), the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA), the Employment Appeals Tribunal and the Equality Tribunal and the transfer of the services of the LRC, NERA and the Equality Tribunal together with the first instance functions of the Employment Appeals Tribunal and the Labour Court to the Workplace Relations Commission. It is anticipated that a draft policy document on the legislation will be submitted in July 2012 to the Joint Committee on Jobs, Social Protection and Education prior to going to Government for approval to draft the heads of Bill.

The Pilot Workplace Relations Early Resolution Service commenced operations in May 2012. Six case resolution officers and supporting management structures are in place. A full evaluation of the pilot, which will operate for 6 months, will commence in Quarter 4. Planning for the proposed Customer Relationship Management System (CRMS) has commenced. A project team has been established in Quarter 2 to progress design and procurement.

Work has continued in relation to the embedding of the Workplace Relations Single Contact Portal (Workplace Relations Customer Services) which commenced operations in January 2012. All complaints are now registered and acknowledged by the portal and referred for inspection or adjudication.

A second release of the Single Workplace Relation Complaint Form was launched on 30th March. A major new release, which will provide for online submission, is scheduled for late July/early August 2012.

Procurement for a final workplace relations website (to replace the interim site and the websites of the 5 Workplace Relations Bodies) is underway and the new website is scheduled to be launched in Quarter 4 of 2012.

The project office is currently undertaking a business process review of complaints handling, hearings management and case management procedures and processes. This is expected to be completed in Quarter 3.

Action 1.51: Launch a single web portal for business compliance information.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Consult with business organisations and regulatory authorities on “frequently asked questions” (FAQs) related to identified regulations. (DJEI)
- Prepare material in response to FAQs to publish on new web portal, instructions for compliance, and links to regulatory authorities. (DJEI)

Update: Complete.

The businessregulation.ie web portal for business compliance information was launched on 18th June 2012 (ahead of the scheduled Quarter 3 target date).

The portal helps business to identify the main regulations affecting them and reduces the need to search through multiple pages on different websites, by providing users with over 150 separate links to information, guidance and contact details.

The portal was developed in close cooperation with business, through focus groups and feedback from the High Level Group on Business Regulation, and inspection and enforcement agencies. The portal was visited over 1,600 times during the first week following its launch.

Action 1.53: Examine options for a more cohesive approach to Better Regulation across Government and introduce new structures to improve coordination and synchronisation.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (D/Taoiseach / D/PER/ DJEI)

Update: Complete.

In April 2012 the Government agreed a cohesive approach to Better Regulation across Government and confirmed the assignment of lead responsibilities in the regulatory arena.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has lead responsibility for reducing red tape/administrative burden, for competition issues, and will represent Ireland at EU/OECD/international fora.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has lead responsibility for Regulatory Impact Assessment, and will provide training and support and will also monitor compliance.

The Department of the Taoiseach and the Office of the Attorney General have lead responsibility for transparency and quality of legislation.

The Department of the Taoiseach will also lead a review of the effectiveness of economic regulators, as signalled in the Programme for Government. Given the radical changes in the Irish economic environment in recent years there is a need to assess and reframe the role of regulators as a central part of Ireland’s recovery. Forfás is currently undertaking a study to identify changes in the operation of sectoral regulators that would enhance cost competitiveness (Action 1.31) which will be an important input to this review.

2. Supporting Indigenous Start-Ups

Action 2.3: Roll-out the micro-finance fund, to provide loans of up to €25,000, targeted at start-up, newly established, or growing micro enterprises across all industry sectors.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Following establishment of facility, apply to EIF for guarantee facility. (Microfinance Fund (DJEI))
- Due diligence process with EIF. (Microfinance Fund (DJEI))

Update: Delayed.

The *Action Plan for Jobs* envisages that lending from the Microfinance Fund will commence in Quarter 3 2012, and this is on target for delivery. When the commitment was made in the *Action Plan for Jobs* to seek a European Investment Fund (EIF) guarantee for the Microfinance Fund, it was not envisaged that legislation would be required to underpin the Fund.

Although a considerable amount of work has been completed over the last number of months to finalise the delivery structure for the Microfinance Fund (including drafting primary legislation), and Exchequer funding of €10 million has been allocated for 2012, it is not possible to meet the two specific milestones set for Quarter 2 on schedule.

While there is ongoing engagement with the EIF in relation to seeking the guarantee facility for Ireland's Microfinance Fund, a formal application to the EIF could not be made until legislation underpinning the Fund and its operation is enacted. The legislation passed through the final stages in the Oireachtas in July.

An application for a guarantee will be made to the EIF within the coming weeks. The due diligence process is part of the procedure associated with applications for the EIF guarantee facility.

It should be noted that application to the EIF for the loan guarantee facility will not impact on the commencement of lending from the Fund.

Action 2.13: Improve the legal environment to set up and operate a business by enacting the Consolidated Companies Bill. This Bill will be published in 2012.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Draft relevant section (DJEI)

Update: Complete.

The ten constituent parts of “Pillar B” of the Companies Bill have been drafted by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in conjunction with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel. This builds upon the publication of the fifteen constituent parts of “Pillar A” by Minister Bruton on the Department’s website in May 2011.

Work will now move to bringing together all 25 constituent parts of the entire Bill, including refining certain technical and other aspects, for formal publication of the full Bill in the second half of 2012.

3. Assisting Indigenous Businesses to Grow

Action 3.2: Enterprise Ireland and the IDA will establish a senior management team to drive effective collaboration on key priorities such as:

- Attracting inward entrepreneurs;
- Maximising procurement opportunities for Irish business with MNCs; and
- Coordinating a new faculty of leading edge companies to provide peer to peer learning to Irish companies.

In addition, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA will explore opportunities to further strengthen linkages including an 'informal adoption' arrangement between MNCs and SMEs.

Quarter 2/3 Commitment: Roll out piloted initiatives of collaboration. (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete.

In Quarter 2 the EI/IDA senior management team has focused on the development of a number of pilot initiatives which commenced roll-out in Quarter 2 and will continue in Quarter 3. Pilots being rolled out involve:

- EI/IDA company engagement model and shared itineraries in the Global Sourcing area.
- Joint initiatives including marketing and events for attraction of entrepreneurs and start ups to Ireland.
- Joint approaches to sectoral development.

The team will continue to work on identifying further areas of engagement as well as refining current approaches.

Action 3.4: Support industry-led clustering in key areas of export opportunity, based on new models, industry proposals, and newly developed niche market strategies.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Invite proposals from collaborative industry-led networks for support under the clustering programme. (EI / IDA and other stakeholders)

Update: Complete.

A programme to support industry-led clustering was finalised by a working group comprising the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Forfás, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland, taking account of industry views and best practice models (quarter 1 deliverable).

A €2 million pilot programme to encourage groups of businesses to collaborate to achieve specific business objectives, improve competitive advantage, create mutual financial gain and support job creation was launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and has been advertised through the national press.

Some of Ireland's major industrial success stories such as pharmaceuticals and medical devices are based on the establishment of clusters, and this initiative is aimed at attempting to replicate that success in other sectors. The call for applications under this programme will remain open until September.

Action 3.5: Run key programmes aimed at improving in-firm productivity capability. This will deliver increases in:

- The number of Lean projects supported.
- The number of participants on significant management development programmes with a total of 250 managers participating in 2012.
- The number of participants on short-course management development programmes, with a total of 700 managers participating in 2012.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Quarterly updates against progress on programmes. (EI)

Update: Complete.

As of the end of June, the following is the status of programmes to improve in-firm productivity, including:

- Lean projects supported: 64
- Significant management development programmes (100hrs+): 124
- Short management development programmes (<100hrs): 427

Enterprise Ireland is on track to deliver the 2012 targets in full.

Action 3.6: Establish a faculty of elite / leading edge indigenous businesses organised on a regional and/or national basis to promote peer to peer learning, experience sharing and collaboration with companies aspiring to leading positions.

Quarter 2/3 Commitment: Based on these learnings, promote the adoption of participative models to develop faculties of elite/leading edge businesses. (EI)

Update: Complete.

Enterprise Ireland is currently focused on building out and deepening the use of participative, peer-to-peer learning within a range of its client interventions. These interventions include:

- The long and short management/leadership development initiatives run by Enterprise Ireland's Client Management Development Unit.

In 2012, Enterprise Ireland will be placing greater emphasis on formal and informal peer-to-peer learning networks as components of, and outputs from, programmes such as Leadership4Growth and International Selling.

- Sectoral/stage of growth and functional capability fora.

In 2012, Enterprise Ireland will run a number of sectoral/stage of growth fora which will include approaches to leveraging peer-to-peer learning and learning networks. For example, two relevant fora include events on initial public offerings and Board recruitment. Enterprise Ireland will also run a number of functional capability fora, for example for 'C' Level executives from leading businesses (e.g. CEO Forum, CTO Seminar, CFO Seminar).

- Assessing the potential of Enterprise Ireland's existing Mentor Network to offer or facilitate peer-to-peer learning in a structured format.
- Continued evaluation of new models and best practice nationally and internationally to develop potential responses for discussion with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.
- The EI/IDA Senior Management team will continue to explore opportunities in line with Action 3.2/4.1/5.11

Action 3.10: Establish a new Potential Exporter Division to stimulate greater activity within companies across all regions and to reorient those demonstrating real growth potential from the domestic to the international market place. The new unit will provide assistance designed to aid client companies investigate, prepare and execute an international strategy including:

- Practical business advice, information and market intelligence
- Targeted funding supports where appropriate
- Suitable training and development

Quarter 2 Commitment: Roll-out of new engagement model. (EI)

Update: Complete.

The Potential Exporters Division in Enterprise Ireland was launched by Minister Bruton in March 2012 to encourage and promote the internationalisation agenda among companies. The Division is now fully operational with a dedicated website, helpdesk facilities and tailored support programmes.

The Division has held seven Export Awareness Events around the country with the most recent one taking place on 12th June. Approximately 400 companies have attended these events with more than 1,500 companies contacted and invited.

Enterprise Ireland has commenced five of the two-day Exploring Exporting workshops, with over 70 companies participating. Further workshops are planned for July. Mentoring and access to Enterprise Ireland's Market Research Centre has been provided to these companies. The main objective is to generate further export activity leading, to sales and jobs.

Action 3.19: Reallocate up to €1.2 million per annum from the National Training Fund to fund management development networks and mentors for SMEs through Skillnets.

Quarter 1/2 Commitment: Pilot programme to be designed and developed. (DES / Skillnets)

Update: Complete.

Skillnets has developed the pilot management development network, branded as *ManagementWorks*, which will offer a suite of programmes to SMEs. A public procurement tender was issued in May 2012 and the pilot is on target to be launched in July 2012.

Action 3.22: Promote the achievement of standards such as ISO 9001 and similar management standards.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Hold business information seminar and other promotion on ISO 9001. (AACB / INAB / NSAI)

Update: Complete.

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) hosted a certification presentation and networking event, covering ISO 9001 and other related schemes, on 14th May which was attended by more than 30 companies.

A seminar on the Quality Ireland initiative is planned for Quarter 4. In addition, the NSAI delivered the keynote address at a seminar on 'Quality in Ireland 2012' hosted by Sligo IT.

Action 3.25: Grow employment in the indigenous measuring instruments service sector by undertaking a further roll-out of the Authorised Verifiers scheme.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Increase the number of companies designated as Authorised Verifiers of measuring instruments used in trade, thus securing existing and possibly increasing jobs in the measuring instruments service sector. (NSAI)

Update: Complete.

One authorisation has been achieved and 5 further operators have been readied for imminent approval, in line with the target of 6 authorisations for Quarter 2.

Action 3.27: Develop a simple one page guide, "Managing out of the Crisis", setting out warning signs to encourage small businesses to ask for help and outline services available

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI / Small Business Representatives)

Update: Complete.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has prepared a one page guide, *Managing out of the Crisis*, which is available on the Department's website. The guide was discussed and approved by the Advisory Group for Small Business at its meeting on 19th June 2012.

The guide sets out warning signs to encourage small businesses to ask for help so as to cope with, and get through, the current economic downturn. The online guide provides web-links to information on various crisis management services available to businesses, from Government Departments, state agencies and business representative organisations.

Action 3.30: Roll-out the temporary targeted partial credit guarantee scheme, to complement existing initiatives to improve the credit environment and to address specific market failures.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Enactment of Credit Guarantee Bill. (DJEI)

Update: Complete.

The Credit Guarantee Bill has passed all stages in the Houses of the Oireachtas and will be formally enacted imminently.

Action 3.34: Monitor closely the lending targets for pillar banks and ensure these targets are met, and develop a sharper focus on the “new money” element.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Pillar banks to produce reports which incorporate figures for sanctions and draw-downs by SMEs. (DoF / Credit Review Office)
- The pillar banks to also provide figures on balance sheet volumes, sanctioned facilities and area based and industrial breakdowns of their SME lending. (DoF/ Credit Review Office)

Update: Complete.

The pillar banks have provided figures on balance sheet volumes, sanctioned facilities and area based and industrial breakdowns of their SME lending on a monthly basis to date in Quarter 2.

In addition, a working group was established in Quarter 2 consisting of representatives from the Department of Finance, the Central Bank and the Credit Review Office to examine the relationship between sanctioned lending, “new” money and drawn down facilities. This will provide clarity to the data illustrating economic activity in the SME sector.

Action 3.36: Conduct a follow-up survey on demand for credit from SMEs

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DoF)

Update: Complete.

The Department of Finance published the SME Lending Demand survey on 5th July. This independent report was carried out by specialist firm IPSOS/MRBI in conjunction with Mazars and covers the period October 2011 to March 2012.

The survey, which included 1,505 companies, shows that during the 6 month period surveyed:

- Demand for credit remains low with 38% of SMEs requesting bank credit in the period October 2011 to March 2012, a 2% increase on the previous six months.
- Excluding applications pending, 72% of those requests were approved or partially approved (a 2% increase on the previous six months).
- In relation to the 62% of SMEs who did not request bank credit in this period, 78% did not need it/had sufficient internal reserves, while 6% believed the banks were not lending.
- Trading conditions remain challenging with 41% of SMEs reported a decrease in turnover (up from 28% in the previous six months) while 27% reported an increase (1% increase on the previous six months).

The report found that 51% of companies expressed the view that banks were not lending. However, the report found that 45% formed their opinion from either media reports or statements from business representative groups, 35% from the lending experience related to them by business peers while just 20% of companies based their view on their own direct lending experience.

The full survey and findings are available on the Department's website.

Action 3.42: Establish a working group to ascertain the need for the State to continue its support, on the same terms as the private sector, for the development of the domestic venture capital sector.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI / EI / NPRF)

Update: Complete.

A working group comprised of representatives from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland and the National Pensions Reserve Fund, has been established to progress this action. The group formally met for the first time on 27th June 2012. A list of relevant key stakeholders is currently being drawn up and a series of consultation will take place with them on the matter.

The aim of the working group is to submit a preliminary report, along with recommendations, to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in the Autumn.

Action 3.47: Target the increased take-up of support schemes available to employers who take on additional workers, such as Revenue Job Assist and the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme, by increasing employers awareness of the schemes through relevant Departments, agencies and business and employer representatives; we will actively monitor the take-up of the schemes and remove any identified obstacles to increased take-up.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Mid-year review of performance. (DSP)

Update: Complete.

The Department of Social Protection has set a target of 2,000 people for approval under the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive scheme in 2012. Between January and 17th June 2011, 330 employers have been awarded exemptions in respect of 464 employees.

The Department is actively promoting the scheme to employers and ensuring that there is a high level of awareness of the scheme and how it works. Measures in this regard include:

- The Minister for Social Protection communicated with all the main employer bodies in April to ensure they were fully aware of the scheme and its enhancements in 2012, and to request that they ensure all their members are aware of the existence and benefits of the scheme.
- A press release was issued by the Minister for Social Protection, in May 2012, highlighting the enhancements to the scheme in 2012 and potential savings in terms of PRSI forgone for employers who avail of the scheme. The Minister also highlighted its compatibility with JobBridge, SpringBoard graduates and Department of Social Protection clients supported under the Department's back to work schemes for self-employment.
- The Department of Social Protection is continuing to promote the scheme to host organisations involved in the JobBridge scheme. A new link has been added to the JobBridge website which provides detailed information on the scheme. The scheme is also directly promoted to host organisations on a monthly basis. Host organisations are further reminded of the PRSI scheme benefits when they initiate the process of ending an internship. It is intended that this scheme will incentivise host organisations to employ interns.
- Working in conjunction with local community and business development organisations to promote awareness and take-up of the scheme. For example, representatives from the Department have made presentations at Employer Recruitment Incentive Seminars hosted by the Roscommon Leader Partnership Group and developed an information pack on the scheme for dissemination at these events.
- Incentivising employers to provide employment for the people who are unemployed is one of the five strands of the Pathways to Work initiative. Through its regional and national support services, DSP's Employment Services and the EURES network deliver a

range of services to assist employers in relation to their recruitment and employment support needs from a policy and operational perspective. This includes the provision of a dedicated vacancy handling service through the National Contact Centre and employer engagement by regional personnel.

A key component of the provision of services to assist employers includes providing information on incentives available to employers, such as the Employer Job (PRSI) Incentive Scheme.

Action 3.49: Facilitate more SMEs in competing for procurement opportunities by ensuring that pre-qualification criteria (e.g. turnover, insurance thresholds, experience) for public procurement contracts are proportionate.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Provide ongoing training for procurement officers to ensure that they are clear on the need for a proportionate approach in implementing procurement guidelines. (NPS)

Update: Complete.

The National Procurement Service (NPS) continually emphasises the need for buyers, to only use criteria and requirements that are proportionate to the subject matter of the procurement process. The NPS emphasises this issue in a number of ways including:

- Published guidance to accompany the standard suite of procurement documents in which buyers are advised of the need for proportionality when conducting procurement exercises.
- Expert speakers at NPS conferences held twice per year where current procurement topics are discussed. The issue of proportionality has been raised at all 5 conferences held to date.
- Specific advice on the issue of proportionality (among other issues) has recently been issued to all buyers and suppliers registered on etenders.gov.ie. Minister Hayes has also followed this issue up through the issuing of a press release to the national media.
- When providing assistance to public service buyers the NPS frequently emphasises the requirement for proportionality and will specifically advise buyers against using any criteria that could be deemed disproportionate.

Action 3.50: Establish a mechanism to allow SMEs to engage with contracting authorities on issues of concern in specific tender documentation.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Examine models in other countries and develop an appropriate mechanism for an Irish context, including consideration of assignment of responsibility for managing and operating the process. (DPER / NPS / Steering Group on SME Access to Procurement)

Update: Complete.

The National Procurement Service (NPS) has examined the model currently deployed by Scottish Procurement for dealing with issues relating to tenders. This informal system is known as the 'single point of contact', where suppliers can raise problems with tenders and see if a resolution can be agreed. The Scottish authorities however do not become involved in individual cases as the national courts are the appropriate authority in such regard.

The NPS and the National Public Procurement Policy Unit frequently give advice to tenderers and contracting authorities regarding the importance of providing feedback as part of a transparent public procurement exercise.

Late last year, the European Commission published proposals to revise the current public procurement rules. These proposals are currently being examined at working group level. The proposals contained a number of governance measures including an 'Oversight Body' which would replace the appeals mechanisms currently in operation across the EU. It was agreed at the last Competitiveness Council meeting (30-31 May) that this proposal would create undue administrative burden on the contracting authority and would be extremely costly to implement.

In this context, the NPS has recently established a collaborative working group to identify any practical solutions to challenges for the SME sector in relation to public procurement. The collaborative working group is made up of employer representative bodies and procurement stakeholders in the public service. The NPS is confident that the work of this group will help to inform the continued delivery of best practice in procurement by public sector buyers and ensure openness and equality of opportunity to all suppliers, including the SME sector.

It is intended that the NPS will issue periodic advice to buyers and suppliers based on outcomes/deliverables agreed by the collaborative working group.

Action 3.53: Develop a Procuring Innovation initiative to increase the purchasing of innovative solutions from SMEs by encouraging a more flexible approach to tendering that focuses on procuring solutions to specific needs, rather than specific products or services.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Build a critical mass of Departments/agencies willing to participate and announce details. (DJEI/ NPS/ EI)

Update: Complete.

A number of Departments and agencies have been identified as willing to participate in the Procuring Innovation Initiative:

- RPA (Railway Procurement Agency)
- ESB
- Department of Defence
- HSE
- Department of Justice and Equality
- Irish Prison Service
- An Garda Síochána
- An Post

Quarter 2 Commitment: Identify with Departments/Agencies practical projects where the approach can be applied and assist them in preparing tendering documentation that encourages more innovative solutions. (EI/ NPS/ DJEI)

Update: Complete.

Each of the Contracting Authorities referenced above has identified practical projects that are suitable for the Procuring Innovation Initiative.

Enterprise Ireland is engaging with the Contracting Authorities to help them develop an approach to tendering for these projects that will promote innovative solutions. Ensuring an effective tendering process will require careful planning and market research in advance of issuing a Request for Tender. Equally, each project will be unique and will require a customised call for tenders.

It is intended that the initial batch of projects will act as exemplars for an expansion of the Procuring Innovation Initiative in 2013. The NPS also assists Contracting Authorities in procurement techniques that highlight the need for specifications based on outputs, rather than specific products.

Action 3.54: Identify a number of key projects across Government that will provide sub-contracting and supply chain opportunities for SMEs through pre-qualification panels

Quarter 2 Commitment: Develop and agree framework for operation of sub-contracting on the basis of pre-registration. (EI/NPS)

Update: Complete.

Many large public projects tend to be awarded to big companies with the scale and experience to deliver major contracts. Very often these projects present opportunities to smaller companies to become sub-contractors for elements of the project because of their specialist skills, technologies or resources. Principal contractors can benefit from the availability of a panel of sub-contractors who can provide appropriate services locally.

An objective of the *Action Plan for Jobs* is to identify suitable projects across Government that are amenable to SMEs availing of sub-contracting opportunities and to develop a framework or methodology for the operation of sub-contracting panels in relation to those projects.

Enterprise Ireland has developed an initial framework for the operation of sub-contracting opportunities. Enterprise Ireland and the National Procurement Service have also agreed to look at the possibility of assembling panels of pre-registered SMEs for principal contractors as part of the eTenders system.

Additionally, the HSE has agreed to participate with Enterprise Ireland in a pilot project to test a practical approach of assembling a panel of pre-registered SMEs that could be used by principal contractors for sub-contract sub-supply opportunities.

4. Attracting Inward Entrepreneurial Start-Ups

Action 4.1: Enterprise Ireland and the IDA will establish a senior management team to drive effective collaboration on key priorities such as:

- Attracting inward entrepreneurs;
- Maximising procurement opportunities for Irish business with MNCs; and
- Coordinating a new faculty of leading edge companies to provide peer to peer learning to Irish companies.

In addition, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA will explore opportunities to further strengthen linkages including an ‘informal adoption’ arrangement between MNCs and SMEs.

Quarter 2/3 Commitment: Roll out piloted initiatives of collaboration. (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete.

In Quarter 2 the EI/IDA senior management team has focused on the development of a number of pilot initiatives which commenced roll-out in Quarter 2 and will continue in Quarter 3. Pilots being rolled out involve:

- EI/IDA company engagement model and shared itineraries in the Global Sourcing area.
- Joint initiatives including marketing and events for attraction of entrepreneurs and start ups to Ireland.
- Joint approaches to sectoral development.

The team will continue to work on identifying further areas of engagement as well as refining current approaches.

Action 4.5: Roll out targeted marketing campaigns in North America, UK, Europe and Australia.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Quarterly updates on progress against target. (EI)

Update: Complete.

Targeted marketing campaigns are well underway in North America, the UK and Europe. Marketing activity in Australia has already generated enquiries which are being added to the project pipeline as appropriate. Plans for a significant ramp-up in marketing in Australia will be finalised by mid-year and implemented in Quarters 3 and 4. During Quarter 2, Enterprise

Ireland has leveraged events in London, Boston, Louisiana, Cambridge (UK), Vilnius, San Francisco as well as events in Ireland attended by relevant overseas entrepreneurs or overseas Venture Capitalists to promote this message.

Since the last quarterly update, Liam Casey of PCH International was appointed as a Start-Up Ambassador for the Greater China region and Dr Arthur Rosenthal as Life Sciences Start-Up Ambassador for the US. A further Start-Up Ambassador announcement is expected early in Quarter 3.

Enterprise Ireland's overseas and other staff continue to use relevant events and PR opportunities etc., to promote Ireland as a location for inward entrepreneurial start ups. (See also update 3.2/4.1/5.11 in relation to EI/IDA joint activity).

Action 4.6: Increase by 50% the number of investments in Inward Entrepreneurial Start Up projects.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Mid-year review of performance and follow-up. (EI)

Update: Complete.

The target is to increase the number of such projects from 10 in 2011 to 15 in 2012. To date, 4 projects have been approved by Enterprise Ireland. On the basis of a review of the pipeline of projects on-hand, Enterprise Ireland expects that the 50% increase target will be met by year end. The level of initial enquiries continues to grow, as a result of the increased promotional activity which is supporting achievement of this objective.

Action 4.7: Put in place attractive immigration arrangements to facilitate entrepreneurs from outside the EEA in establishing businesses in Ireland through the Immigrant Investor Programme and the Start-up Entrepreneur Programme:

- The Immigrant Investor Programme will allow approved participants and their immediate family members to enter the State on multi-entry visas and to remain here for a defined period;
- The Start-up Entrepreneurship Programme will allow migrants with a good business idea in the innovation economy and funding of €75,000 to be given residency in the State for the purposes of developing their business.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Finalise investment bond arrangements with NTMA (DoJ/ INIS)

Update: Complete.

The key elements of the bonds (format, duration, interest rate, repayment time and method etc.) were agreed with the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) in advance of the scheme being opened for application in April. Detailed terms and conditions have since been drawn up by NTMA in consultation with INIS in preparation for any engagement with future successful applicants who opt for the bond route as their investment in Ireland.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Commence taking applications. (DoJ/ INIS)

Update: Complete.

Both the Immigrant Investor Programme and the Start-up Entrepreneur Programme are operational and have been open for applications since the middle of April. To date 5 applications have been received under the entrepreneur programme.

There has been a significant level of enquiries regarding the investor scheme from potential participants and their representatives.

The project evaluation committee has been constituted and has had a preliminary meeting. It will meet again in the coming weeks to assess the initial applications received and make recommendations accordingly. The Committee is chaired by the Department of Justice and Equality with representation from Government Departments and State Agencies.

5. Developing and Deepening the Impact of FDI

Action 5.6: Deliver the Diaspora ‘job finder’s fee’ scheme - *Succeed in Ireland*.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Regular reporting of enterprises identified, and actual jobs on the ground delivered. (IDA)

Update: Complete.

Since ‘Succeed in Ireland’ was launched in March there has been keen international interest which is reflected in upwards of 30,000 visits to the ConnectIreland website.

“Connectors” have submitted up to 240 company names and it is estimated that approximately 20 have potential for investment in Ireland over the next year. Project activities range from software to professional services and from engineering to business support. Employment potential is generally in the range of 10-50 people per project.

One project has already been announced - Intergeo Services is to establish its EMEA Headquarters in Carlow, with the potential for 30 skilled jobs.

Action 5.9: Utilise Global Irish Network as official advocates of new and expanded FDI investment in Ireland including introductory meetings, briefings and establishing a restricted website access portal on IDA Ireland website to provide communication and information to relevant Diaspora.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Establish a restricted website access portal on IDA Ireland website to provide communication and information to the Diaspora. (IDA)
- Regular communication of updated relevant economic and business information. (IDA)

Update: Complete.

A register of approximately 52 FDI advocates, made up of influential members of the Irish Diaspora worldwide has been set up. They will play a key role in facilitating high level access for the Government and Irish companies; spreading key messages through business connections and media markets; and undertaking specific project work.

IDA has developed a restricted access web portal on www.idaireland.com for the FDI advocates which provides relevant business and economic information. This web portal will be updated on a regular basis.

Action 5.10: Intensify focus on attracting sub-suppliers to existing multinational base to locate in Ireland.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Identify specific opportunities where supply chains could enhance the business ecosystem, in areas where there is an inadequate supply in the Irish market. (IDA/EI)

Update: Complete.

IDA Ireland working with Enterprise Ireland has identified a number of niche areas in the manufacturing and internationally traded sectors, which offer an opportunity to enhance the business ecosystem.

IDA Ireland is currently targeting opportunities in a number of these areas.

Action 5.11: Enterprise Ireland and the IDA will establish a senior management team to drive effective collaboration on key priorities such as:

- Attracting inward entrepreneurs;
- Maximising procurement opportunities for Irish business with MNCs; and
- Coordinating a new faculty of leading edge companies to provide peer to peer learning to Irish companies.

In addition, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA will explore opportunities to further strengthen linkages including an 'informal adoption' arrangement between MNCs and SMEs.

Quarter 2/3 Commitment: Roll out piloted initiatives of collaboration. (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete.

In Quarter 2 the EI/IDA senior management team has focused on the development of a number of pilot initiatives which commenced roll-out in Quarter 2 and will continue in Quarter 3. Pilots being rolled out involve:

- EI/IDA company engagement model and shared itineraries in the Global Sourcing area.
- Joint initiatives including marketing and events for attraction of entrepreneurs and start ups to Ireland.
- Joint approaches to sectoral development.

The team will continue to work on identifying further areas of engagement as well as refining current approaches.

6. Developing Employment Initiatives within the Community

Action 6.5: Develop a new sectoral strategy to promote employment, and support local enterprise by Local Government, to include measures in the area of business charges, local enterprise and business support arrangements, procurement support, local development and community based initiatives, the Green Economy and local government participation in employment support schemes. These measures will complement, and assist in the delivery at a local level, of other actions set out in this Action Plan.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Publish draft strategy for consultation. (D/ECLG/ Local Authorities/ DJEI)

Update: Complete.

On 29th June the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government launched the local government enterprise and jobs draft strategy '*Supporting Economic Recovery and Jobs – Locally.*'

The local authority sector is acutely aware of the need to assist in the response to the jobs crisis at local level, and assist and network with other agencies in the delivery of their responses to the crisis. The delivery of the *Action Plan for Jobs* Quarter 1 commitment to create a one-stop shop by integrating the local micro-enterprise support services currently undertaken by City and County Enterprise Boards with Local Authorities and the establishment of Local Enterprise Offices, will provide a strong platform for the Local Authority economic role and will significantly boost the ability of Local Government to play a lead role in business support locally.

The draft strategy includes measures in the areas specified in the *Action Plan for Jobs* and implementation of the strategy will commence in the autumn following a four week consultation.

7. Exploiting Sectoral Opportunities

Manufacturing

Action 7.1.1: The Government will articulate its clear commitment to manufacturing in Ireland and elaborate on the range of initiatives and supports that will be put in place to demonstrate this commitment.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete.

In a significant statement, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation set out the Government's commitment to manufacturing in Ireland and the importance of the sector to the Irish economy.

The Minister outlined a range of initiatives being taken to support the sector, including the establishment of the Manufacturing Development Forum (see Action 7.1.2).

A key objective under the Action Plan for Jobs is to develop a long term vision for the manufacturing sector by the end of 2012, and to put in place a strategic plan that will help realise this vision.

Action 7.1.2: Establish a Manufacturing Development Forum (MDF) to assist the Government in identifying the needs of manufacturing enterprises and to progress a transformation agenda in this area.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI / Forfás with EI / IDA / SFI)

Update: Complete.

The Manufacturing Development Forum has been established under the Chairmanship of Patrick Miskelly, Cadbury Ireland. The first meeting of the Forum was held on 29th June, and was attended by representatives from a broad range of manufacturing companies in different sectors, including biopharma, pharma, medical technologies, food, engineering and electronics. The key enterprise development agencies (Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Forfás) also attended.

The Terms of Reference for the Manufacturing Development Forum has been agreed and a programme of work has been identified.

Health/ LifeSciences

Action 7.2.1: Deliver a Health Innovation Hub to drive collaboration between the health system and commercial enterprises leading to the development and commercialisation of new healthcare technologies, products, services and start-ups emerging from within the health system and/or firms.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Set up Business Unit with reassigned personnel tasked with operationalising the Centre. (EI/ IDA/ SFI/ HSE)
- Establish a Demonstrator Project. (EI, IDA, SFI, HSE)

Update: Complete.

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Health jointly appointed a head of a Project Team to deliver a Demonstrator Project for the Healthcare Innovation Hub. The Team includes representatives of both Departments, the HSE, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland. The Team has delivered on the Quarter 2 commitment as follows:

It has been decided that the Demonstrator Project will be based in University College Cork (UCC) and the necessary physical space has been secured on the grounds of the University.

The Project Team undertook a process for the selection of individual innovative projects (to be put forward by companies) to participate in the Demonstrator first phase. Projects were reviewed by a sub-group comprising Enterprise Ireland, HSE, and the Chair of the Demonstrator Steering Group; the review was endorsed by the Department of Health.

Key personnel to staff the Demonstrator have also been identified, to act on an interim basis in advance of a selection procedure to engage staff on a contract/secondment basis.

Agri-food Production

Action 7.4.1: Promote 'co-opetition' projects within the food industry, encourage B2B business and facilitate mentoring by larger food companies of smaller companies.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Identify SMEs interested in co-opetition projects (target 10 projects). (Bord Bia supported by EI)

Update: Complete.

A number of SMEs interested in co-opetition projects have been identified. Four projects have been completed to date and a further 9 projects are in different stages of development. An example of projects under this initiative is the China Hub in Shanghai where Irish meat, pigmeat and seafood companies share facilities and structures to build and expand their business in China.

Bord Bia has launched a series of support programmes on sourcing, market development and logistics to facilitate additional companies adopting this approach.

Action 7.4.3: Attract graduate talent into marketing roles within the food industry in line with the targets set out in Food Harvest Milestones for the Bord Bia Marketing Fellowship, Alumnus and Food Graduate Marketing Programmes.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Recruit 25 Fellows and secure client assignments for 4th Marketing Fellowship cohort. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete.

25 Fellows have been recruited and 75 commercial assignments have been selected for delivery in 8 European and 6 international markets. The previous programme resulted in contracts valued at almost €8 million.

Action 7.4.4: Work closely with the industry to develop their plans to deal with the increasing supply of raw material projected in Food Harvest 2020 and support the development of increased scale and value added processing.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Continued development of Greenfield Dairy and expansion of BETTER Farm Programmes to allow for planned and sustainable increases in production. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete.

Phase 2 of the BETTER Farm Programme commenced in Quarter 2 and aims to increase the number of participating beef farms from 12 to 30. The BETTER Sheep Farm programme is also expanding; increasing from 6 to 10 participating sheep farms.

Preparations are underway for a new Greenfield dairy farm in the West of Ireland which will be linked with 2 expanding commercial dairy farms.

Action 7.4.11: Research, map and add to the food incubation space potentially available in industry and State agencies for use by existing and new food entrepreneurs.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Undertake review of incubation space available. (EI / Bord Bia)

Update: Complete.

A review of incubation space available has been undertaken including a number of specialised food centres which were built under the Enterprise Ireland supported Community Enterprise Centre scheme.

The space available is captured on a database and will be updated on an annual basis, outlining space which available across the country suitable for food manufacturing companies, particularly start-ups.

Action 7.4.12: Complete DAFM, Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia scoping exercise on the market potential for delivery of new food and nutritional products and models of service to older people.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Establish Taskforce. (DAFM)

Update: Complete.

A scoping taskforce involving the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia has been established to examine the market potential for delivery of new food and nutritional products and models of service to older people.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Identify gaps in Irish research capacity, scope pilot projects, examine trends in Ireland, Europe, Asia etc. (DAFM / Bord Bia/ EI)

Update: Complete.

A facilitated workshop took place on 12th June to raise awareness of the role of nutrition in ageing and to develop a small number of focused pilot projects to advance awareness and research capacity in this area.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Finalise scoping study. (DAFM / Bord Bia / EI)

Update: Complete.

The taskforce presented their analysis on market opportunities to the Food Harvest 2020 Implementation Committee, which agreed that the project should be brought to the next stage of development. Following a tender process, a consumer research project has been awarded and initiated.

Cloud Computing

Action 7.6.3: Deliver a Cloud Computing Technology Research Centre in order to support an industry-led research and innovation agenda in this area.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Undertake needs assessment and invite bids to host centre (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete.

A new Technology Centre in Cloud Computing has been established to carry out a research programme based on identified industry needs and agreed by the industry members of the Centre. A call to host the research centre was issued in May 2012.

Action 7.6.7: Develop a Cloud Computing Procurement Standard with industry experts through an NSAI Standards group.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (NSAI)

Update: Complete.

The SWiFT 10 Cloud Computing standard was launched on the 22nd of May. SWiFT 10 provides a practical guide encompassing all cloud delivery and deployment models and is intended for use by any company when considering their cloud adoption strategy.

Digital Games

Action 7.7.1: Establish a Clustering Development Team to support the implementation of actions called for in the Forfás Games Strategy including those below.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Establish governance arrangements for the cluster; appoint Chair and members. (DJEI / Forfás with Enterprise Agencies & industry)

Update: Complete.

The Forfás report “The Games Sector in Ireland: An Action Plan for Growth” states that employment in the games sector had increased five-fold to 2,500 since 2004 and estimates that employment in the sector could double by the end of 2014 if appropriate action is taken to support the sector in Ireland.

The report recommended the establishment of a Clustering Development Team to support the implementation of the actions called for in the report.

The Clustering Development Team has now been established under the Chair of Paul Breslin, Popcap Games. A Vice Chair and members of the group have also been appointed, drawn heavily from the electronic games industry. An early objective of the team is to agree Terms of Reference and a work programme for the coming months.

Action 7.7.6: Building on the work of the Next Generation Broadband Taskforce, we will agree advanced broadband targets and milestones for Ireland, identify the infrastructure deficits nationally and then develop and implement a plan to achieve these targets.

Quarter 2 Commitment: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Delayed.

The Report of the Broadband Taskforce was published in May and broadly identified the areas where investment in high speed broadband will occur over the next eight years, and the areas where infrastructure deficits are likely to arise. Publication of the Taskforce report was followed by a public consultation during May.

A National Broadband Plan is now being submitted for Government consideration. The plan, when published, will set targets for advanced broadband deployment and the measures that will be pursued to achieve these targets.

Construction

Action 7.12.4: Develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a national strategy for the construction sector to 2015 outlining the opportunities, challenges and actions needed to realise the potential of the sector, to retain expertise in Ireland and to continue to develop capabilities over coming years and to contribute to the development of a cluster development initiative for the sector.

Quarter 2 Commitment: Agree Terms of Reference with Consultative Group representing stakeholders. (Forfás / DJEI)

Update: Complete.

A Terms of Reference for the development of a national strategy for the construction sector to 2015 has been prepared and agreed with the Forfás Board at its meeting on 21st June 2012.

The Terms of Reference was developed based on an extensive stakeholder consultation process and it is intended that a consultative approach will continue to be taken throughout the strategy development process.

Action 7.13.1: Actions identified throughout the Action Plan will impact positively on the retail and wholesale sector, in particular our stated intention to:

Encourage all professionals (accounting, taxation, legal etc.) supplying the business sector and consumers to provide price quotations in advance.

Quarter 2 Commitments:

- Conduct market research and liaise with business representative groups (DJEI/ NCA/ Business representative groups)
- Compile and prioritise a list of professions where sourcing fees is currently an issue. (DJEI/ NCA /Business representative groups)
- Commence work with representative bodies with a goal to make standard fee lists available for routine services to both consumers and small businesses. (DJEI/ NCA/ Business representative groups)

Update: Complete.

Following consultation with business representative groups on the issues to be included in a questionnaire, the National Consumer Agency (NCA) engaged a professional market research company to undertake a market research project on professional fees in May 2012. A sample of 461 businesses was included in the survey.

The main finding of the survey was that a large number of small businesses do not request a quote in advance when dealing with professions.

Of those small businesses that do request quotations for professional fees in advance, the survey found a percentage experience some issues or problems getting a quote: 21% in the case of solicitors; 14% in relation to banking providers; 10% in the case of accountants/tax advisors; and 9% in the case of insurance providers.

Having conducted market research in accordance with the requirements of the Action Plan for Jobs, the NCA has written to the relevant representative business groups to inform them of the research findings and in particular the finding that a large number of small businesses do not seek quotes in advance when dealing with professions.

As regards solicitors (which the research found to be the profession from which small businesses had the highest level of difficulty in accessing quotes), the NCA has written seeking an engagement with the Law Society to explore initiatives which could be undertaken to improve transparency in the solicitor profession in terms of its accessibility by both consumers and SMEs. This builds on existing engagement between NCA and the Law Society on consumer-related issues.

Glossary

▪ Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	DAFM
▪ Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	DAHG
▪ Department of Children and Youth Affairs	DCYA
▪ Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources	DCENR
▪ Department of Defence	D\Defence
▪ Department of Education and Skills	DES
▪ Department of Environment, Community and Local Government	D\ECLG
▪ Department of Finance	DoF
▪ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	DFAT
▪ Department of Health	DoH
▪ Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	DJEI
▪ Department of Justice and Equality	DoJ
▪ Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	D\PER
▪ Department of Social Protection	DSP
▪ Department of the Taoiseach	D\Taoiseach
▪ Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	DTTS
▪ Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service	INIS
▪ National Procurement Service	NPS
▪ Office of Public Works	OPW
▪ Irish Research Council	IRC
▪ Higher Education Institutes	HEIs
▪ National Pension Reserve Fund	NPRF
▪ National Standards Authority of Ireland	NSAI
▪ National Treasury Management Agency	NTMA
▪ Public Research Organisations	PROs