

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2012



Third Progress Report

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Commentary

This is the third report of the Monitoring Committee established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the *Action Plan for Jobs 2012*. As with the previous two reports it outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the preceding quarter, Quarter 3 (Q3) of 2012, but for the first time includes an update on measures described in the Plan as “ongoing in 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 13,700 (-0.8%) in the second quarter of 2012. This follows on from a seasonally adjusted decrease in employment of 10,300 (-0.6%) in Q1 2012. The number of people currently in employment stands at 1,787,900.

Jobs continue to be lost in construction and domestic financial services, as well as in the public sector, with employment falling by 21,000 and 9,000 in the public and construction sectors respectively between March 2011 and June 2012. However, employment has started to grow in more sustainable sectors since March 2011, including tourism-related activities (+10,500) and ICT (+5,500). Employment in IDA-supported companies has increased by approximately 9,000 in net terms since the start of 2011, while employment in Enterprise Ireland supported companies increased in 2011 following a four-year period in which 30,000 jobs were lost. Exports by Enterprise Ireland supported companies reached their highest-ever level in 2011.

The *Action Plan for Jobs 2012* is the first instalment 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 third quarter of 2012, Departments and agencies were to deliver 67 measures relating to 57 of the Action Plan's 270 actions. 58 of the 67 of the measures due in Q3 of 2012 have been delivered on schedule, giving a completion rate of 87% for the Quarter.

In delivering 58 measures in the third quarter of 2012, the Government has, for example:

- Established new Technology Centres in Cloud Computing, Learning Technologies and Financial Services. These are collaborative entities established and led by industry, focused on research with a direct impact on industry. Action 1.4.
- Enacted legislation that will ensure procedurally-robust wage setting mechanisms. Action 1.12.
- Launched *Smart Futures*, a science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) careers partnership between ICT Ireland, the Irish Medical Devices Association, Engineer's Ireland (STEPS) and SFI/Discover Science and Engineering. Action 1.37.
- Launched the Microfinance Fund which has been open for business since October 1st 2012. The Fund will provide for loans of up to €25,000 for viable businesses with less than 10 employees who have had difficulty accessing credit from the banking sector. Up to €40 million in additional lending will come from the fund in the next five years. The scheme can be extended to provide an additional €50 million over the following five years. Action 2.3.
- Launched the first programme of *Management Works* in Dublin, where firms are focused on management team development. Additional programmes in Galway, Cork, Waterford, Clare and Dublin will commence in October. Action 3.19.
- Organised regional food showcases in the BMW region, South East and South West regions where over 120 enterprises are matched with potential buyers and producers in the locality and help stimulate the creation of local jobs. Action 7.4.1.

Nine measures outlined in the Plan for completion in Q3 have not been delivered on schedule. These are:

- Implement revised legislation to permit SFI to fund 'applied research' (revision to Industrial Development Act (SFI) 2003). Action 1.3.
- Place downward pressure on insurance costs and the cost of legal services via enactment of the Legal Services Bill. Action 1.16.
- Introduce a systematic approach to the national surveying of undergraduate and postgraduate students and employers to inform institutional and programme management and development. Action 1.38.

- Publish legislation to integrate the foreshore consent process under the Foreshores Acts 1933 with the existing on-land planning system. Action 1.47.
- Enact legislation to give effect to the new structure of employment rights institutions. Action 1.48.
- Publish legislation to improve the legal environment to set up and operate a business (Consolidated Companies Bill). Action 2.13.
- Assess applications and recommend allocations to the Minister under a new round of the Sports Capital Programme. Action 6.10.
- Make allocations under the new round of the Sports Capital Programme and inform successful and unsuccessful applicants. Action 6.10.
- Introduce a Voluntary Code of Conduct on Payments within the private sector, with the aim of reducing payments terms from the current average of 70 days. Action 7.13.2.

A further measure has not been delivered as set out in the Plan for Q3 but has been replaced with another job-supporting measure:

- Issue to persons who are over one year unemployed a certificate to present to employers of eligibility for Revenue Job Assist. Action 3.45.

The completion rate of 87% in Q3 follows on the 96% completion rate seen in Q1, and 94% in Q2. This deterioration in delivery is due in part to delays in the publication and progression of legislation in the last quarter. Whereas in the first two quarters of the year delayed actions were subsequently delivered within a relative short timeframe, this will not be possible to the same extent with legislative delays. This issue will therefore likely persist and impact on measures due in Q4 also.

All 160 measures that fell due in the first six-month period have now been delivered in full. This includes the five outstanding measures from the second quarter: 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); submit proposals for Government decision on a new national waste policy, (Action 1.22); 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); 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).

As noted above, this Third Progress Report for the first time includes an update on the 92 measures described in the Plan as “ongoing in 2012”. Although not specifically due in the last

quarter (or any specific Quarter), Departments and Agencies with responsibility for actions listed as “ongoing in 2012” have signalled progress on them to the Monitoring Committee for this report.

In progressing measures described in the *Action Plan for Jobs* as “ongoing in 2012”, already this year the Government has, for example:

- Placed downward pressure on commercial rents in respect of which NAMA has acquired the loan on the underlying property. Since the start of the year, NAMA has approved cumulative rent reductions through debtors/receivers of over €6 million. Action 1.24.
- Brought down the cost acquiring commercial property by reducing the Stamp Duty rate from 6% to 2% and the introduction of a Capital Gains Tax incentive for property purchased up to the end of 2013 and held for at least seven years. Action 1.25.
- Provided bonus points for students taking leaving certificate higher level mathematics from 2012. Action 1.36.
- Through its Discover Science and Engineering programme, promoted the study of the physical sciences to students. Action 1.37.
- Fostered greater alignment between the Further Education and Training sector and the labour market. Action 1.39.
- Invested over €1.5 billion of exchequer capital to ensure Ireland’s infrastructure can facilitate economic growth, including capital investment for direct enterprise support and development. Action 1.41.
- Secured 159 significant (over €500,000) investments by Enterprise Ireland assisted firms in a range of areas which are critical to company growth and job creation. Action 3.1.
- Undertaken ten major sector-specific Trade Missions and market evaluation Missions that reflect the priority markets identified in the Trade Strategy as well as firms’ interest and stage of development. Action 3.12.
- Assisted Irish companies in winning 540 significant brand new customers across almost 50 countries. Action 3.13.
- Cascaded Management Development learnings to a wider number of companies, with over 120 participant companies on significant management programmes, and over 460 on short-course management development programmes. Action 3.20.

- 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. Action 7.1.2.
- Implemented the Action Plan on ICT Skills to address the skills needs of ICT and related sectors, with currently more than 600 participants on the Level 8 ICT Skills Conversion programmes that have been rolling out since March 2012, and more than 1,300 people now due to graduate from ICT courses provided under the first phase of Springboard. Action 7.5.1.

One of the “ongoing in 2012” measures - marketing the Infrastructure Fund to Irish investors, Action 1.42 - is currently delayed.

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, linked to the implementation of measures in Quarters 1 and 2 aimed at enhancing the operating environment for firms, are now being seen. For example:

- In the first six months of this year, investments by 44 multinationals in Ireland were announced with associated jobs for Dublin, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Cork, Louth and Kildare. Action 5.1.
- In the first six months of the year, 53 new High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) companies were supported by Enterprise Ireland that together plan to create over 900 new jobs by the end of 2014. Both the number of investments and the number of jobs to be created are significantly up on the same period last year.
- Over 280 employers have been awarded Employer PRSI exemptions in respect of over 635 employees in the first six months of 2012. Action 1.13
- There have been tens of thousands of visits to the ConnectIreland website, under the Government’s *Succeed in Ireland* jobs finder’s fee scheme. “Connectors” have submitted 349 company names. 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. 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.
- More than 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 have graduated 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 been made available under Springboard 2012. Action 1.35.

- In May 2012 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 Allowance. Up to Q2 2012, 1,310 interns who completed their JobBridge placement progressed directly into employment on immediate completion of their internship. This represents 37% of all JobBridge finishers to-date and compares favourably with European averages in this area. In excess of 6,000 companies have participated in the scheme to date. Action 1.35.
- The successful buyer forum, Marketplace 2012, involving 176 Irish companies and 500 international buyers, has by end June achieved sales contracts of €5 million. The target is to exceed the sales contracts of €8 million and €11 million achieved in the two previous Marketplace events. Action 7.4.14.
- There continues to be a significant number of enquiries from potential applicants and their representatives for the Immigrant Investor and the Start-up Entrepreneur visa programmes. To date, one application for the Immigrant Investor Programme has been received as well as eleven applications for the Start-up Entrepreneur Programme. One application under the Immigrant Investor Programme has recently been approved, as have two applications under the Start-up Entrepreneur Programme on foot of recommendations from the Evaluation Committee. 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 the first six months of 2012 to the US, China, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, UK and Russia. Action 3.12.
- The National Procurement Service has an ongoing campaign to encourage registration by SMEs on the eTenders website. Since the start of the year, New Supplier Registrations on eTenders exceeded 18,000. 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.

Quarter 3 Measures

Quarter 3 Measures

1. Building Competitive Advantage

Action 1.3: Enact an applied research mandate for SFI linked to the priority areas and the new approach to funding research centres so that research is better aligned to the needs of users.

Quarter 3 Commitment: Implement revised legislation to permit SFI to fund 'applied research' (revision to Industrial Development Act (SFI) 2003). (DJEI)

Update: Delayed

Good progress has been achieved since spring 2012, with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) commencing drafting of the various Heads of the Bill (approximately 10 in total). The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has assisted the OPC in responding to various queries that have arisen.

The legislation to extend Science Foundation Ireland's remit is a high priority in the Government's legislative programme and publication of the Science Foundation Ireland Bill is now expected in Quarter 4 2012.

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).

Q3 Commitment: Award centres based on proposals. (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.

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 in 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.

Cloud Computing: Centre launched, host institution selection approved by Enterprise Ireland's Industrial Research and Commercialisation Committee (IRCC) in August 2012. Approved by Enterprise Ireland Board in September 2012.

Learning Technologies: Pilot centre now confirmed as a fully-fledged technology centre and officially launched in Croke Park in June 2012.

Financial Services: Centre launched, initial research projects approved.

Preparatory actions for Technology Centres linked to the priority areas (based on the Research Prioritisation Exercise) are well advanced.

Data Analytics: Initial research programme approved.

Pharmaceutical Production Centre: Centre launched, initial research programme underway.

Connected Health Technology Centre: Initial Research Programme in call for proposals evaluation phase.

Medical Devices Technology Centre: Initial Research Programme in DDN development phase.

Action 1.12: Enact legislation to reform wage setting mechanisms.

Q3 Commitment: Initiate new, more effective and secure procedures under the legislation for establishing wage setting mechanisms. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Act 2012 which will ensure procedurally-robust wage setting mechanisms (Registered Employment Agreements / Employment Regulation Orders) was signed by President on 24th July 2012.

Chairs of Labour Court and Labour Relations Commission were written to in late July in relation to the abolition of certain Joint Labour Committees (JLCs) and the development of separate Codes of Practice on Sunday Working and Benefits in the Nature of Pay in JLCs. Both parties have progressed these initiatives somewhat already.

In addition, the Labour Court has begun its consideration of the reviews of the remaining JLCs which are expected to get under way presently.

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

Q3 Commitments:

1. Ensure that the cost savings targets set out in the five year review (2010-2015) of allowable electricity network costs are met and that associated network investment commitments are delivered. This will be done as part of the Regulator's annual network tariffs determination under the provisions of the five year review. (CER / DCENR)
2. Ensure that the five year review (2012-2017) of gas network tariffs takes all necessary steps to bring operating, maintenance and capital costs for the gas network into line with relevant best international practice and benchmarks, to include scrutinising allowable costs and reflecting recent falls in costs in the economy. (CER)
3. Undertake a review of the peat public service obligation to reduce costs while ensuring security of supply and meeting any legal commitments. (DCENR)

Update:

1. Complete (Yr 2012/13)

In order to ensure that cost savings are delivered, the Commission for Energy Regulation requires the network companies to make submissions each year throughout the five year control period. These submissions should reflect changes which are required against the baseline set in the CER decision for the five year period and any under-recoveries, over-recoveries and savings made. A full explanation is required on all items which deviate from that which was forecast. The actual revenue to be recovered and the actual network tariffs for each individual year are then set by the CER, considering the submissions received.

This process has been completed for the 2012 – 2013 period. Again at the end of the five year period, a full review of all cost items is carried out. The revenue model works by allowing savings to be shared amongst the company and the customer – this provides an incentive to the company to deliver savings ahead of baseline targets set and therefore also delivers benefits for the customer.

2. Complete

The Commission for Energy Regulation has completed its five year review of gas networks considering both capital and operating costs, based on international benchmarking. The Commission decided at a meeting in early October 2012 to reduce the allowed operating and capital costs for Bord Gáis Networks based primarily on evidence from the benchmarking process.

3. Complete

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources has completed a review of the peat public service obligation and the conclusions are being considered by the Department.

Action 1.16: Place downward pressure on insurance costs and the cost of legal services via enactment of the Legal Services Bill.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (DoJ)

Update: Delayed

The Legal Services Regulation Bill has completed Second Stage in the Dáil and it is planned to commence Committee Stage during the Autumn session. This delay has been due to competing legislative demands under the EU/IMF Programme (notably the Personal Insolvency Bill) and other issues. Consequently, enactment of the Legal Services Regulation Bill is now anticipated for 2013.

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

Q3 Commitment (& ongoing thereafter): Implement Government decisions in relation to waste policy and services. (D\ECLG)

Update: On schedule

The Government's new waste management policy, 'A Resource Opportunity,' was launched on 25th July 2012. The policy stresses the environmental and economic benefits of better waste management, particularly waste prevention. The underpinning analysis shows that the continuation of the side-by-side competition model for household waste, under a significantly strengthened regulatory regime, is best placed to deliver a thriving and competitive waste sector with the associated benefits for employment. The new regulations will allow waste collection companies to continue to compete for business but they will have to adhere to new standards of service, incentivise their customers to adopt more sustainable behaviours and be more transparent about their charging structures.

The new policy sets out a number of key actions including: continuing the move away from landfill; the rollout of a domestic Brown Bin services; higher service standards for waste collection customers; placing responsibility on householders to prove they manage their waste in an environmentally acceptable manner; reducing red tape for industry; reviewing producer responsibility and a significant reduction in the number of Waste Planning Regions.

Action 1.27: Benchmark and develop actions to systematically reduce excessive key business costs or delays.

Q3 Commitment: Complete benchmark and develop actions to improve cost competitiveness for Government consideration. (Forfás)

Update: Complete

Based on the Action Plan objective, this report provides detailed costs profiles to assess the importance of various costs to 17 sectors of the economy. It assesses Ireland's cost performance vis-à-vis our key competitors across seven key cost categories (labour costs, property, utilities, transport, credit, professional services, and the general cost environment). As well as acknowledging the range of activities that are currently underway to improve cost competitiveness, it recommends a series of actions that would support further improvements in cost competitiveness.

Action 1.33: Examine the feasibility of introducing a new structured and non-judicial debt settlement and enforcement system to meet SME needs - "Examinership Light"

Q3 Commitments:

1. Analyse the legal and possible Constitutional issues involved. (DJEI)
2. Examine submissions received from stakeholders. (DJEI)
3. Consider outcome of consultation with Company Law Review Group. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Company Law Review Group (CLRG) established a Committee, made up of stakeholders, to examine the issues involved.

The CLRG includes representatives from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Revenue Commissioners, the Office of the Attorney General, the Office the Director of Corporate Enforcement, the Courts Service, IBEC, the Irish Banking Federation, ISME, ICTU, and SFA.

The CLRG met on 27th September to consider the report of that Committee and to adopt recommendations. Those recommendations have been sent to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation for consideration.

Action 1.37: Through the Discover Science and Engineering programme, promote the study of the physical sciences to students.

Q3 Commitment: Launch an enterprise-led partnership to support the skills common to both the education curriculum and business, so as to enrich students overall experience and to ensure better informed students and parents on careers and opportunities in STEM enterprises. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Smart Futures, a science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) careers partnership between ICT Ireland, the Irish Medical Devices Association, Engineer's Ireland (STEPS) and SFI/Discover Science and Engineering was launched by Minister for Research and Innovation on 17th September 2012.

Twenty eight indigenous and multinational ICT, medical device and energy companies including Microsoft, Ericsson, SAP, Cisco, Cook Medical, Abbot, Boston Scientific, ESB and Xilinx, are collaborating under Smart Futures to support students, parents and career guidance counsellors in raising awareness of, and promoting STEM career opportunities in Ireland.

Action 1.38: Improve linkages between higher education and enterprise.

Q3 Commitment: Introduce a systematic approach to the national surveying of undergraduate and postgraduate students and employers to inform institutional and programme management and development. (Pilot completed) (HEA)

Update: Delayed

The introduction of a national survey of higher education students and a national survey of employers is underway and is being led by the Higher Education Authority in cooperation with higher education institutions, student representatives and IBEC.

Working groups have been established for the development of each survey. The employer survey is underway and a report on the results will be available from IBEC in Quarter 4. Further developmental work is taking place on the student survey in Quarter 4 and measures to raise awareness of the survey among higher education institutions and students are also planned in advance of the roll out of a full scale national pilot in Quarter 1 2013.

Action 1.46: Rollout 100 Mbps broadband to 200 second level schools (planned for all second level schools over time).

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (DCENR/ DES/ HEAnet)

Update: Complete

Connections are in place for all 200 schools.

Action 1.47: Integrate the foreshore consent process under the Foreshores Acts 1933 with the existing on-land planning system.

Q3 Commitment: Publication of Bill. (D\ECLG)

Update: Delayed

Work on the general scheme of a Bill to modernise the foreshore consent system and integrate it within the planning system is well advanced and will be completed by the end of 2012. The aim is to arrange, subject to Government approval, for the drafting of the Bill as quickly as possible thereafter.

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

Q3 Commitments:

1. Complete review of the legal, procedural, human resource and policy implications with a view to publishing enabling legislation. (DJEI)
2. Enactment of legislation to give effect to the new structure. (DJEI)

Update:

1. Complete

Two public consultation processes have been completed and two policy papers published. The first - *Blueprint to Deliver a World Class Workplace Relations Service* - was published in April 2012 and the second – *Legislating for a World Class Workplace Relations Service* - was published in July 2012 and formed the basis of dialogue between the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. A significant amount of work has been completed on the legislative programme and a draft Scheme of Bill and Regulatory Impact Analysis were submitted to the Cabinet for its meeting on 24th July 2012. The General Scheme of Bill was approved by Government for priority drafting at this meeting.

A Consultation Paper, *Proposed Staffing of the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court*, was completed and circulated to all staff in August 2012. This Paper outlines the proposed organisational structure that will apply to the new two-tier structure and provides an indicative estimate of the staffing levels that will be required. The purpose of the paper is to stimulate discussion on what the appropriate staffing levels should be. It will be finalised following consultation with staff and their representatives.

2. Delayed

At this stage, it is clear that despite getting Cabinet approval in July for priority drafting of the Workplace Relations Bill, the target timescale of having the legislation enacted by Quarter 3 2012 cannot be achieved. Enactment of the Bill will necessitate amendments to approx. 22 Primary Acts, 12 specified parts or sections of Acts and 71 Statutory Instruments. A revised Draft Scheme of Bill and Schedule of amendments were submitted to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel on 5th September 2012.

The Minister is committed to enactment of the legislation as early as possible with a view to having the proposed new structures in place by early 2013; however, the timely achievement of this aim will largely depend on the priority to be afforded to drafting of the Bill by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel.

Action 1.49: Audit and review the multiplicity of licences required by businesses to assess the potential for discontinuing some licences and for amalgamating licences.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Undertake audit, consultations and analysis. (Forfás)
2. Report to Government. (Forfás)

Update: Complete

The work has reviewed 159 licences required to do business in key sectors of the economy; compiling detailed information on the issuer, regulator, legislative driver and numbers issued, as well as on the licensing and enforcement process, together with an assessment of the associated burden.

Consultations with affected business groups were undertaken. Recommendations are made on the potential for discontinuing or amalgamating licences, as well as associated institutional and procedural changes. Some of the proposed recommendations are sectoral in nature while others are overarching.

The report has been submitted by Forfás to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

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

Q3 Commitment: Launch new web portal. (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 with inspection and enforcement agencies. The portal was visited over 1,600 times during the first week following its launch.

Action 1.52: Ensure that all requirements for establishing businesses which are amenable to electronic compliance will be available on line.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Work with regulatory authorities to ensure as many as possible of those regulations with potential to be complied with online are placed online. (DJEI)
2. Launch information campaign. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

These commitments were delivered ahead of schedule in Quarter 2 2012.

All of the core regulatory requirements for establishing a business were identified and are set out in a table published on the businessregulation.ie portal.

Online compliance options are provided by both the Revenue Commissioners and the Companies Registration Office for their requirements which affect all businesses; the tools for online compliance have also been published on the Portal.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation organised a successful media launch of the businessregulation.ie portal on June 18th 2012. In tandem with the media drive, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has launched an on-going information campaign which is:

- Creating links with Government websites and online Agency tools;
- Encouraging County and City Enterprise Boards, Local Authorities and other Bodies to highlight the portal on their websites and in newsletters targeted at business;
- Arranging participation in relevant events targeting SMEs to raise awareness of the relevant regulatory requirements to small business owners and managers;
- The business representative bodies on the High Level Group on Business Regulation have been asked to inform their members of the businessregulation.ie portal.

The information campaign will continue throughout 2012 and into 2013, taking advantage of opportunities to publicise the portal, to attend business events, and to cooperate with a range of business regulation agencies to communicate these online facilities to business.

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.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Secure EIF approval for guarantee facility. (Microfinance Fund (DJEI))
2. Commence Lending. (Microfinance Fund (DJEI))

Update:

1. Complete

The European Investment Fund (EIF) can provide a loan guarantee facility to microcredit providers, to share their potential risk of losses through, for example, bad debts. This facility is quite separate from, and in addition to, the Government's commitment to establish a Microfinance Fund and invest €10 million in the scheme in 2012.

An application has been made to the EIF guarantee facility to support the Microfinance Fund. The EIF has carried out a due diligence process on the Microfinance Fund and no issue arose. As a formality, the proposal must be approved by the EIF at its next Board meeting.

2. Complete

The Microfinance Fund was launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on 27th September and has been open for business since 1st October 2012. The Fund will provide for loans of up to €25,000 for viable businesses with less than 10 employees who have had difficulty accessing credit from the banking sector.

Up to €40 million in additional lending will come from the fund in the next 5 years. The scheme can be extended to provide an additional €50 million over the following 5 years.

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.

Q3 Commitment: Publish Bill. (DJEI)

Update: Delayed

The Bill will be published in Quarter 4 2012. The headline commitment for this action is that "this Bill will be published in 2012" and this headline commitment will be met.

Pillar A of the Companies Bill, which comprised 952 sections (approximately two-thirds of the entire Bill) was published by Minister Bruton in May 2011. Drafting of Pillar B of the Bill (comprising the remaining sections of the Bill) was completed in Quarter of 2012, in accordance with the commitment for Quarter 2 for this item in the Action Plan for Jobs.

Drafting of the entire Bill (comprising approximately 1,400 sections) is therefore complete in substance.

However, in light of the level of detail inherent in a Bill of this size and complexity, the Department and the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), in conjunction with members of the Company Law Review Group, are working on refining technical aspects of the Bill before publication later in 2012.

Action 2.15: Having due regard to the Public Service Reform Plan, we will review the role of the Digital Hub Development Agency and the National Digital Research Centre with a view to building on their work in supporting digital start-up companies, as well as promoting an increase in on-line trading by small businesses.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

A review of the Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA) was completed in the context of the Government decision to merge the DHDA with Enterprise Ireland/IDA Ireland. Based on the findings of this review new proposals to secure the long-term future and growth of the DHDA are being brought forward.

A Strategic Review of the National Digital Research Centre (NDRC) has also been completed which was followed by a series of bilateral meetings between DCENR and various NDRC stakeholders. The Department is currently considering a number of different options in terms of the future activities and structure of the NDRC and hopes to finalise this in the coming weeks.

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.

Q2-Q3 Commitment: Roll out piloted initiatives of collaboration. (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete

In Quarter 3 the EI/IDA senior management team focused on the roll-out of pilot initiatives. Pilots being rolled out involve:

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

For example, the first joint event initiative aimed at attracting entrepreneurs and start-ups to Ireland was held at Disrupt San Francisco (a TechCrunch event), from September 8th – 12th. Joint preparations are underway for the 'Le Web' event to take place in Paris, in December.

The team will continue to work on identifying further areas of engagement including for action during 2013, 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.

Q3 Commitment: Roll-out programme. (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete

The pilot industry-led clustering programme is operational.

The closing date for applications was 18th September. Approximately 30 applications have been received from a wide variety of potential clusterings. These applications are currently being assessed with a view to final formal approval of successful projects in early November.

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.

Q3 Commitment: Quarterly updates against progress on programmes. (EI)

Update: Complete

As of end September:

- The number of Lean projects supported stood at 98.
- The number of participants on significant management development programmes stood at 124 – it is expected the 2012 target will be achieved.
- The number of participants on short-course management development programmes stood at 467 – it is expected the target will be achieved during 2012.

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.

Q2-Q3 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 and Mentoring 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. This will include an increased focus on cohorts from past programmes to embed the peer relationships developed.

- 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. Two sessions have been held with clients to date on the topic of “building and managing effective boards.” Enterprise Ireland will also run a number of functional capability fora, for example, fora aimed at ‘C’ Level executives from leading businesses (e.g. CEO Forum, CTO Seminar, CFO Seminar). The CFO forum (Finance4Growth) runs on a monthly basis. The new Strategic Marketing Forum for CEOs and heads of Sales & Marketing will commence in Quarter 4.
- As part of an independent evaluation of the Enterprise Ireland Mentor Network, the potential to offer or facilitate peer-to-peer learning in a structured format was assessed. Proposals to respond to this will be considered in Quarter 4.
- 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 3.9: Open a call for the Innovation Voucher scheme specifically focused on design and branding activity for SMEs, with Third Level Institutions as providers.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI/ EI)

Update: Complete

A general Innovation Voucher scheme call closed on September 30th. For this reason, the Innovation Voucher scheme call specifically focused on design activity for SMEs will be launched (via advertisement in the national media) in early October, with the call formally opening from 15th October to 4th November. The call dates have been chosen to derive maximum impact from the core Innovation Voucher programme and to allow sufficient client focus on the design call. Successful projects from the design call will be approved within the originally envisaged time frame.

Action 3.16: Develop and implement local market plans as provided for in the Strategy for Trade, Tourism and Investment for key high-growth regions; and through the Export Trade Council work to optimise the resources of embassies and agencies to deliver ambitious targets.

Q3 Commitment: Revise Strategy for High Growth Markets, obtain Agency Board approval. Include connection with EU Free Trade Agreements. Consideration by Export Trade Council. (DJEI/ Forfás)

Update: Complete

Detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis has been undertaken reviewing the performance and potential, including at a sectoral level, of a large number of economies, focusing on trade, investment, research and development, and tourism opportunities for increased economic linkages with Ireland.

A step-by-step methodology including statistical analysis and assessment of other qualitative factors has produced two groupings of countries:

- Priority 1 countries – those countries where Ireland has traditional trade and investment links (such as the UK, US and the EEA) as well as a limited number of specific high-growth markets.
- Other Priority countries –countries where there is potential to realise benefits from an economic partnership approach, some offering potential in the near term with others having a more medium term return.

The report has been approved by the Forfás Board and has been submitted to the Export Trade Council for consideration.

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.

Q3-Q4 Commitment: Implement and evaluate programme. (Skillnets)

Update: Complete

Skillnets has developed a management development network, branded as *ManagementWorks*, which offers a suite of programmes designed to enhance the management capability of SMEs. A central element of the initiative is the inclusion of a mentoring approach to assist, support and challenge owners and management teams of participating firms to apply the learning to their own situations.

Actions completed in Quarter 3 included the launch of the first programme of Management Works. 10 SME firms are participating in the first programme focused on management team

development which is being run in Dublin. Additional programmes in Galway, Cork, Waterford, Clare and Dublin will commence in October.

There is significant ongoing promotional activity to raise awareness of the *ManagementWorks* programme with SME candidate firms. Activity in Quarter 3 has included participating in the Small Firm Association's Better Business Awards (launched by An Taoiseach on 6th September) and speaking and exhibiting at a range of conferences and events nationally. This promotional activity will continue in October.

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

Q3 Commitments:

1. Hold training and information seminar for Management System Consultants. (NSAI)
2. Host seminar on requirements for EU product export and CE marking. (NSAI)

Update:

1. Complete

One training and information seminar has been held to date with a second scheduled for October.

2. Complete

The National Standards Authority of Ireland has highlighted the requirements for EU product export and CE marking in a number of publications and training sessions held to date and has organised a further information day on this, focused at SME business, in October.

Action 3.24: Develop an Irish expert group responsible for industry standards best practice and increase participation by Irish firms and researchers in relevant international standards expert groups.

Q3 Commitment: Establish a working group of independent industry experts in Lean, BPR, and 6 Sigma and link to the corresponding international groups developing ISO 13053 and other standards in this area. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

A working group has been put in place involving the National Standards Authority of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, and various industry experts. The group has met, scoped out its work, and will progress this over the coming months.

Action 3.28: Examine the feasibility of introducing a new structured and non-judicial debt settlement and enforcement system to meet SME needs - “Examinership Light”

Q3 Commitments:

1. Analyse the legal and possible Constitutional issues involved. (DJEI)
2. Examine submissions received from stakeholders. (DJEI)
3. Consider outcome of consultation with Company Law Review Group. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Company Law Review Group (CLRG) established a Committee, made up of stakeholders, to examine the issues involved.

The CLRG includes representatives from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Revenue Commissioners, the Office of the Attorney General, the Office the Director of Corporate Enforcement, the Courts Service, IBEC, the Irish Banking Federation, ISME, ICTU, and SFA.

The CLRG met on 27th September to consider the report of that Committee and to adopt recommendations. Those recommendations have been sent to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation for consideration.

Action 3.29: Design and implement a new Development Capital Scheme, aimed at addressing a funding gap for mid-sized, high-growth, indigenous companies with significant prospects for jobs and export growth.

This Scheme will support companies which would not generally fall within the focus of seed or venture capital funds, by leveraging further institutional capital. €50 million of State investment is expected to leverage up to an extra €100 million in private sector funding.

Q3 Commitment: Evaluation of Proposals. (EI)

Update: Complete

Evaluation of the Development Capital Scheme Proposals is underway since the 23rd July. This was followed by a round of provisional interviews with the team behind each expression of interest in August/September. Formal approval of successful proposals is on track for completion by year end.

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.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Pillar banks to produce reports which incorporate figures for sanctions and draw-downs by SMEs. (DoF/Credit Review Office)
2. 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 3.

Action 3.41: Review the equity investment landscape in Ireland with a view to introducing actionable steps (enterprise supports, tax, etc) to support equity investment in productive firms.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (Forfás/ DJEI/ DoF/ EI)

Update: Complete

The review adopted a life-cycle approach of the firm where it defines each stage, the types of equity sought and the nature of investors; assesses key trends in the availability of funds; reviews actions taken to date to support equity investment; and sets out actionable steps to support further equity investment in productive firms.

Recommended actions are focused on enabling firms to take on equity investments, encouraging potential investors to invest and the development of equity markets.

Action 3.45: Issue to persons who are over one year unemployed a certificate to present to employers of eligibility for Revenue Job Assist.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (DSP)

Update: Cancelled and replaced

When the Action Plan for Jobs 2012 was published it was intended that a certificate of eligibility for Revenue Job assist would be issued to persons who are over one year unemployed. In the intervening nine months, work has been undertaken to examine the technicalities and practicalities of such a scheme, and the possibility of enhancing State supports for the employment of persons currently on the Live Register more generally.

Consequently, the Department of Social Protection has decided that rather than make such a certificate available at this time, work will progress immediately to complete the review of supports available in this area with a view to more fundamental changes in the near-term.

Action 3.48: Examine the availability of affordable childcare for people on lower incomes to determine whether existing schemes could be expanded to support people to take up employment.

Q3 Commitment: Identify costs of expansion of childcare programmes. (DCYA/DSP)

Update: Complete

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs has given detailed consideration to the options and associated costs for expanding provision of affordable childcare through the Early Childhood Care and Education, the Childcare Education and Training Support, and the Community Childcare Subvention Programmes.

An initial outline of how the existing support schemes might be expanded or developed was presented to the Ministerial Steering Committee on Child and Family Incomes Supports earlier this summer. This has since been further developed and the findings will feed into the Quarter 4 action to review the potential of expanding these childcare and education support schemes.

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

Q3 Commitment: Announce details of the mechanism. (DPER/ NPS)

Update: Complete

The National Procurement Service (NPS) has recently established a collaborative Working Group, to identify any practical solutions to challenges within the SME sector in relation to public procurement. The NPS is confident that the work of this group will help to inform the continued delivery of best practice by public sector buyers through the public procurement process, and ensure openness and equality of opportunity to all suppliers, including the SME sector.

The Group has met on a number of occasions and has raised many issues relating to procurement, particularly, how these issues impact on SMEs. Resulting from these discussions the NPS issued 2 circulars in May 2012 to all buyers in, and suppliers to, the public service with the aim of improving practice in the procurement arena.

The circulars include a range of mechanisms specifically aimed at improving SME engagement with contracting authorities. The collaborative working Group is again scheduled to meet in October 2012.

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.

Q3 Commitment: Invite companies to pre-register for particular projects. (NPS/ EI/ relevant contracting authorities)

Update: Complete

To date in 2012 New Supplier Registrations on e-tenders amounted to 18,091 which allows suppliers to receive updates/alerts on specific projects of interest to them.

The NPS continues to work with Enterprise Ireland on ways to ensure that SMEs and contractors can get more ready access to upcoming procurement and job opportunities arising through public contracts. One such initiative is the pre advertising (through www.procurement.ie) of all forthcoming competitions before they appear on the e-tenders website. SMEs have continuously pointed out that early notification of forthcoming opportunities is important for them as it allows time for them to prepare submissions and organise collaborative arrangements. A specific example of this is the advance notice given to SMEs and other interested parties of the forthcoming business opportunities arising out of Ireland's 2013 EU Presidency.

The NPS is also working with Enterprise Ireland to determine the feasibility of developing an electronic panel of 'interested contractors' that could be created on www.etenders.gov.ie and made available to successful tenderers who may be seeking subcontractors or specialist partners.

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.

Q2- Q3 Commitment: Roll out piloted initiatives of collaboration. (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete

In Quarter 3 the EI/IDA senior management team focused on the roll-out of pilot initiatives. Pilots being rolled out involve:

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

For example, the first joint event initiative aimed at attracting entrepreneurs and start-ups to Ireland was held from September 8th – 12th. Joint preparations are underway for the 'Le Web' event to take place in Paris in December.

The team will continue to work on identifying further areas of engagement including for action during 2013, as well as refining current approaches.

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

Q3 Commitment: Quarterly updates on progress against target. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland is working collectively with IDA to communicate Ireland's strength as a location for starting a business. Both organisations are co-ordinated in their use of marketing collateral, and are involved in the organisation and participation in joint events overseas. During Quarter 3, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland jointly attended the TechCrunch event which took place from 8th - 12th September. Preparations are underway for the 'Le Web' event to take place in Paris, in December.

5. Developing and Deepening the Impact of FDI

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

Q3 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. “Connectors” have submitted 349 company names. 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.

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.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Introductory meeting and briefing to each individual signed up to the initiative. (IDA)
2. Regular communication of updated relevant economic and business information. (IDA)

Update: Complete

A register of approximately 52 Advocates, made up of influential members of the Irish Diaspora worldwide has been set up. The IDA website, specifically designed for the Advocates and providing relevant briefing, business and economic information, went live in September 2012, following compliance with third party advice regarding data protection.

This requires each Advocate to contact IDA directly to receive their password to access the site. The IDA is now arranging to have appropriate follow-up engagement with each Advocate.

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.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Work with industry associations and others to identify business opportunities in the supply area. (IDA/ EI/ External Stakeholders)
2. Pilot operational initiative focusing on niche areas identified. (IDA/ EI)

Update:

1. Complete

Engagements have been undertaken with the Irish Software Association, the Irish Medical Device Association, the American Chamber of Commerce and IBEC to explore initiatives to support building greater connections between Irish companies and multinationals. A number of projects are being discussed for 2013.

2. Complete

IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland continue to collaborate on the pilot project to win new supply contracts from multinational corporations. To date they have met with over 20 companies in this regard. One inward investment itinerary has been used as a test for the introduction of Irish sub-supply companies, and the visiting company found this to be very beneficial in their due diligence on site location.

On the basis of this successful itinerary, indigenous companies are now being included in inward itineraries for the Med Tech, engineering and ICT sectors.

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.

Q2-Q3 Commitment: Roll out piloted initiatives of collaboration. (EI/ IDA)

Update: Complete

In Quarter 3 the EI/IDA senior management team focused on the roll-out of pilot initiatives. Pilots being rolled out involve:

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

For example, the first joint event initiative aimed at attracting entrepreneurs and start-ups to Ireland was held from September 8th – 12th. Joint preparations are underway for the 'Le Web' event to take place in Paris in December.

The team will continue to work on identifying further areas of engagement including for action during 2013, 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.

Q3 Commitment: Finalise and implement Strategy. (D/EC&LG/ Local Authorities/ DJEI)

Update: Complete

Consultation with key stakeholders on the strategy closed at the end of July 2012. The submissions received fed into the development of the final strategy document which was published on 27th September 2012.

Action 6.7: Commission a report on the potential of social enterprise to create jobs, with a view to completion by end 2012. The report will identify the actions required, in funding, procurement, etc, by Government and other relevant bodies and agencies to create jobs in this sector. It will examine potential initiatives in this area (e.g. a Micro-Working Initiative) and will be prepared with particular reference to the European Commission's Social Business Initiative and associated funding.

Q3 Commitment: Consultation process, detailed research. (Forfás)

Update: Complete

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with the social enterprise sector in Ireland, and research has also been undertaken to assess the existing level and scope of activity in Ireland, the experiences of other countries, together with specific issues in the financing of social enterprises.

Social enterprise is a growing sector that can bring further job gains, including to those most distant from the labour market and across a range of skill-sets. Indirect jobs as well as induced employment also arise. Internationally, social enterprises often provide key supplements to public sector services, and the European Commission has placed the social economy and social innovation at the heart of its concerns under the Europe 2020 strategy.

Action 6.10: Deliver a new round of the Sports Capital Programme (SCP) in 2012.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Assess applications and recommend allocations to Minister. (DTTS)
2. Allocations made. Successful and unsuccessful applicants informed. (DTTS)

Update:

1. Delayed

The assessment process has commenced. In view of the unprecedented number of applications received, assessments are not expected to be completed and allocations are not expected to be recommended until Quarter 4.

2. Delayed

As above.

7. Exploiting Sectoral Opportunities

Health/ LifeSciences

Action 7.2.6: Prepare a detailed implementation plan for the development of a national biobanking structure.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (DoH)

Update: Complete

A sub-group of the Health Research Group (HRG) has prepared a plan for the development of a national biobanking structure which has been submitted to the HRG which is co-chaired by the Department of Health and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Green Economy

Action 7.3.1: Publish and implement a new Plan for the Development of the Green Economy, setting out the opportunities in the sector, the role that Government will play in working with enterprise to support the development of the Green Economy, and the structures that will be put in place to coordinate cross-Government action to accelerate growth.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Develop plan setting out policy framework in consultation with Stakeholders including enterprise, relevant Departments and Agencies. (DJEI/ D/EC&LG/ DCENR)
2. Publish plan including timelines for implementation and assigning responsibility for actions. (DJEI/ D/EC&LG/ DCENR)

Update: Complete

A Government Policy Statement on Developing the Green Economy was developed in consultation with Government Departments, Agencies and other stakeholders. It was approved for publication by Government on 2nd October 2012.

The Green Economy presents a major economic opportunity for employment creation in Ireland. Ireland has significant strengths and advantages which it can leverage to exploit business opportunities in sectors such as renewable energy, smart grids, sustainable food, tourism, energy efficient products and services, and others.

The Policy Statement, *Delivering our Green Potential*, sets out the enterprise opportunities in each sector, the actions the Government is taking to develop the Green Economy in each area and the structures which will be put in place to support the development of the Green Economy.

Action 7.3.11: Facilitate the development by Dublin City University of the vacant former Enterprise Ireland site in Glasnevin into an internationally-recognised “Innovation Campus”, involving a partnership of education and research institutions, enterprise and the semi-state sector. Its focus will be on research-active Cleantech firms.

Q3 Commitment: Draft, agree and sign lease between Enterprise Ireland and DCU including milestones and targets. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

Drafting has been completed and agreement in principle is in place (including milestones and targets), with formal signing of the lease to occur imminently, pending the conclusion of legal requirements.

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.

Q3 Commitment: Hold three Regional Food Showcases in 2012. (Bord Bia/ DAFM supported by EI)

Update: Complete

Three regional food showcases were organised by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Bord Bia in May (BMW region), June (SE regions) and October (SW region). Over 120 enterprises participated at these events which match potential buyers and producers in the locality and help stimulate the creation of local jobs.

Action 7.4.5: Drive the technology capability of the industry, and progress the establishment of further industry and third-level research collaborations in the food sector, taking into account the outcome of the National Research Prioritisation Exercise.

Q3 Commitments:

1. Progress the establishment of further industry-led research collaborations in the food sector. (EI)
2. Collaborate with Irish Dairy Board on development of 2 new branded milk based consumer products. (Teagasc)

Update:

1. Complete

The Industry led research programme for the Dairy Sector is progressing well with a clear industry interest in the establishment of a Technology Centre. A facilitator has been appointed to work with industry participants to develop a proposal for funding, against which significant progress is expected during 2012 with a detailed submission expected in early 2013.

Meetings have taken place between meat industry representatives, IBEC and Enterprise Ireland, regarding the Meat Food Technology Competency Centre. The next step is for the industry to come back with clarity regarding the focus for research.

2. Complete

The Irish Dairy Board and Teagasc have collaborated to establish a new Dairy Innovation Centre and are currently developing four new value added cheese products which will be commercialised and marketed internationally by Irish Dairy Board members.

Action 7.4.6: Review the Food for Health Ireland collaborative research centre and develop a plan for future support.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Food for Health Ireland collaborative research centre review is complete, and a plan is currently being developed in consultation with the industry. The Food for Health Ireland team is due to submit a proposal to Enterprise Ireland in Quarter 4 2012.

Action 7.4.7: Implement incentives and measures to improve skills, farm structure and scale set out in Budget 2012.

Q3 Commitment: Encourage take up of Budget 2012 provisions on farm partnerships by delivering action research and promotional activities. (DAFM/ Teagasc)

Update: Complete

The number of collaborative farming arrangements has increased by 204 over the past two years to a current total of 640 active partnerships. The ongoing interest in this area is demonstrated by the attendance of around 450 farmers at the collaborative farming workshops held to date in 2012.

Action 7.5.2: Invest in 100mbps broadband connectivity for second level schools as an enabler for eLearning and enhancing digital skills for school leavers

Q3 Commitment: Connect first 200 schools (planned for all second level schools over time). (DCENR/ DES/ HEAnet)

Update: Complete

Connections are in place for all 200 schools.

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.

Q3 Commitment: Award centres based on proposals. (EI / IDA)

Update: Complete

The Cloud computing centre has been launched with the host institution selection approved by Enterprise Ireland's Industrial Research and Commercialisation Committee (IRCC) in August 2012. It was subsequently approved by Enterprise Ireland Board in September 2012. The Cloud Computing Technology Centre is hosted by Dublin City University.

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.

Q3 Commitment: Prepare implementation agenda with specific actions and performance metrics. (Forfás with Enterprise Agencies and industry)

Update: Complete

Following its establishment in Quarter 2, the Digital Games Clustering Development Team (CDT) met for the first time on 25th July. A Chair and Vice Chair have been appointed and have begun to prepare an agenda for implementation of the games strategy, with specific actions for performance metrics.

The CDT will meet again in the coming weeks and in addition to addressing this challenge, members will consider how they can support the introduction of a pilot game development initiative for undergraduate and post Leaving Certificate Courses, as called for in Action 7.7.3, by Quarter 4 2012.

Education Services

Action 7.11.3: Strengthen promotion of the 'Education in Ireland' website (www.educationireland.ie) with priority market customisation.

Q3 Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

An update of the Education in Ireland website was complete in Quarter 3. This is focused on a broadening of the features of the website (including social media style elements to assist in promotion).

Enterprise Ireland is continuing to work in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and key stakeholders such as the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Fáilte Ireland, and the Department of Justice on the promotion of "Education in Ireland."

As set out in the 2010 International Education strategy, Enterprise Ireland is focusing its efforts on Tier 1 Priority markets which include India, China, US, Gulf States and Malaysia. Recently, Ireland has successfully partnered with Brazil on a science/research scholarship programme and announced 850 scholarships for Brazilian post grads to study in Ireland over the next 4 years.

Retail and Wholesale

Action 7.13.2: Implement the following recommendations of the Advisory Group for Small Business for retail:

Q3 Commitments:

1. Introduce a Voluntary Code of Conduct on Payments within the private sector, with the aim of reducing payments terms from the current average of 70 days. (Business Representative Groups)
2. Audit and review the multiplicity of licences required by businesses to assess the potential for discontinuing some licences and for amalgamating licences; this is aimed at reducing the cost burden of regulations. (Forfás)

Update:

1. Delayed

This measure is for delivery by the business sector, however, Minister Bruton and officials at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation have raised the issue with business representative bodies on a number of occasions. To date, there have been no substantive developments on the part of industry in relation to this action.

2. Complete

The work has reviewed 159 licences required to do business in key sectors of the economy; compiling detailed information on the issuer, regulator, legislative driver and numbers issued, as well as on the licensing and enforcement process, together with an assessment of the associated burden.

Consultations with affected business groups were undertaken. Recommendations are made on the potential for discontinuing or amalgamating licences, as well as associated institutional and procedural changes. Some of the proposed recommendations are sectoral in nature while others are overarching.

Ongoing 2012 Measures

Ongoing 2012 Measures

1. Building Competitive Advantage

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)

Ongoing Commitment: Undertake preparatory actions for other Technology Centres to be launched post-2012. (EI/ IDA)

Update: On schedule

Preparatory actions for Technology Centres linked to the priority areas (based on the Research Prioritisation Exercise) are well advanced.

Data Analytics: Initial research programme approved.

Pharmaceutical Production Centre: Centre launched, initial research programme underway.

Connected Health Technology Centre: Initial Research Programme in call for proposals evaluation phase.

Medical Devices Technology Centre: Initial Research Programme in Detailed Description of Needs development phase.

Action 1.14: While cognisant of security of supply and environmental goals, take a series of actions to manage energy costs: (Ensure that investment in energy (electricity and gas networks) infrastructure is as cost effective as possible, that any delays in rolling out these infrastructures are minimised, and that subsidies for energy generation are cost effective.)

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Continue to raise awareness and provide opportunities for companies to reduce energy use through the provision of advisory services and appropriate supports. (DCENR/ SEAI/ IDA/ EI/ Business Representative Organisations)
2. In developing plans for smart meters rollout, pay particular attention to the needs of SMEs. (DCENR/ CER)

Update:

1. On schedule

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) provides a range of supports to business with regard to reducing energy costs and procuring the most efficient equipment.

SEAI has published a report on energy use in the public sector which highlights best practice and sets out a roadmap for reducing energy usage in the public sector.

2. On schedule

The Commission for Energy Regulation announced the decision to proceed to Phase 2 of the Smart Metering Programme in July 2012 which is fully inclusive of the needs of SMEs.

Action 1.24: Place downward pressure on commercial rents in respect of which NAMA has acquired the loan on the underlying property

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Appoint an independent valuation of market rent where necessary. (DoF/ NAMA)
2. Encourage landlords of business premises to consider ameliorating rents that are in excess of the current prevailing market levels. (DoF/ NAMA)
3. Assess rent reduction applications. (DoF/ NAMA)
4. Deliver timely engagement following direct contact from a tenant who is not getting satisfaction in negotiations with his NAMA landlord. (DoF/ NAMA)

Update: On schedule

The National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) approves requests for rent easement or abatement from its debtors where a tenant demonstrates that the rent payable under a lease is in excess of current market levels and that the viability of a business is, as a consequence, threatened. As of end August 2012, NAMA had received 271 rent abatement applications through debtors/receivers: 206 had been approved, 4 were refused, 9 were non-NAMA or otherwise inapplicable and the remaining 52 were under review at that point.

Over 150 applications have been received since NAMA's Guidance Note on Upwards Only Commercial Leases was published last December. Since the start of the year, NAMA has approved cumulative rent reductions through debtors/receivers of over €6 million. NAMA proactively works through debtors/receivers to facilitate rent abatements where the contractual rent is in excess of prevailing market rates and where, as a consequence, the viability of tenant businesses is undermined. NAMA's Guidance Note on Upwards Only

Commercial Leases is available on its website, www.nama.ie. The Agency engages with industry representative bodies in the retail sector to promote understanding of the Guidance Note and its applicability.

Action 1.25: Bring down the cost acquiring commercial property by reducing the Stamp Duty rate from 6% to 2% and the introduction of a Capital Gains Tax incentive for property purchased up to the end of 2013 and held for at least seven years.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DoF)

Update: Complete

Budget 2012 reduced the rate of stamp duty that applies to commercial property from a top rate of 6% (on transfers exceeding €80,000) to a flat rate of 2%.

Budget 2012 also introduced relief from Capital Gains Tax for both residential and non-residential property purchased between 7 December 2011 and 31 December 2013. If a property is purchased within this period and is held for at least seven years, any gain attributable to that seven year holding period will be exempt from Capital Gains Tax.

While the number of property transactions subject to Stamp Duty from 1st January to 31st August 2012 is 10% up on the same period last year, from 30,293 in 2011 to 33,895 this year, a range of factors may be relevant and it is still too early to assess the impact of the Budget changes.

Action 1.26: Promote business supports to promote resource efficiency, energy efficiency and reduce cost, including energy audits, energy management training, mentoring and advice and the Accelerated Capital Allowances scheme which supports businesses in purchasing plant and machinery that are highly energy efficient.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DCENR/ SEAI/ EPA/ EI/ IDA)

Update: On schedule

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) provides a range of supports to SMEs and large industry with regard to reducing energy costs, implementing energy management systems and procuring the most efficient equipment.

Better Energy Workplaces continues to support sustainable upgrades to existing buildings, services and facilities in the public, commercial, industrial and community sectors. The programme aims to create energy efficiency exemplars in the wider business and public sectors.

Action 1.35: Respond to immediate shortages in the ICT sector.

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Improve retention rates on undergraduate ICT programmes including the promotion of alternative ICT related progression pathways for students. (DES)
2. Increase the mathematical proficiency of students at secondary level including further roll-out of Project Maths, professional development opportunities for teachers and the implementation of a new National Numeracy and Literacy Strategy. (DES)
3. Increase the number of students with good maths skills into ICT undergraduate programmes through a range of awareness initiatives that will complement the introduction of bonus points for maths from Sept 2012. (DES)

Update: On schedule

Implementation of the *ICT Action Plan - meeting the high-level skills needs of enterprise in Ireland* which was launched in January 2012 is underway.

There are currently more than 600 participants on the Level 8 ICT Skills Conversion programmes that have been rolled out since March 2012. Graduates of the programmes will be available from early 2013.

More than 1,300 people are now due to graduate 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 are now open for applications under Springboard 2012. Full details are available on www.springboardcourses.ie.

The high level Academic Industry Foresight Group, chaired by John Hennessy, Chair of the Higher Education Authority, and with strong high level industry membership, has been established and has met twice to date in 2012.

While it is too early to assess increased numbers on undergraduate ICT programmes, early indications from CAO application data are very promising. The number of students expressing a first preference for Science courses, including Computing, at honours degree level (Level 8) increased by 18.5% this year and by a total of 63.5% over the five year period from 2008 to 2012. It is expected that this will feed through into increased enrolments in September 2012.

Measures to improve the mathematical proficiency of second level students continue to be progressed as part of the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategy that was launched in July 2011.

Project Maths continues to be implemented. The first mainstream examinations were for this year's Leaving Certificate students, and the first group of students presenting for the Junior Certificate will be in 2013.

The introduction of Project Maths has been accompanied by a dedicated national programme of professional development for all maths teachers and this will continue to run until at least 2013.

The Project Maths Development Team (PMDT) has provided extensive support to teachers. This is complemented by local facilitators who also offer evening courses to enhance and support the content in the workshops given by the PMDT. Additional support is also provided by the National Centre for Excellence in Science, and Maths Teaching and Learning, which is based in the University of Limerick.

The National Centre for Excellence has also been awarded a contract to provide a postgraduate course for post primary teachers who are currently not qualified in Mathematics. The course started this autumn and will be available for the next three years.

To encourage more students to take Higher Level mathematics for their Leaving Certificate, 25 bonus CAO points are available for all candidates who score Grade D3 or above from the academic year 2011/2012 on. Higher education institutions have collectively agreed to operate this bonus points scheme for Higher Level Maths for a four-year trial period from 2012 to 2015 inclusive, with a review in 2014.

Action 1.36: Incentivise greater participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and highlight areas of skills shortages

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Provide bonus points for students taking leaving certificate higher level mathematics from 2012. (HEIs)
2. Disseminate the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs on future trends and vacancies to schools and guidance counsellors, appropriate websites (e.g. Qualifax, Careers Portal, Career Directions) and through the media. (EGFSN/ Forfás/ DES/ Education and Training Providers)

Update:

1. Complete

To encourage more students to take Higher Level mathematics for their Leaving Certificate, 25 bonus CAO points are available for all candidates who score Grade D3 or above from the academic year 2011/2012 on. Higher education institutions have collectively agreed to operate this bonus points scheme for Higher Level Maths for a four-year trial period from 2012 to 2015 inclusive, with a review in 2014.

2. On schedule

The following publications by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs which include current and future trends and vacancies in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) are available from www.skillsireland.ie and have been circulated to over 3,000 EGFSN subscribers including guidance counsellors and the key parent associations:

- An Overview of Vacancies which examines over 100,000 vacancies in 2011 and highlights those most frequent in the areas of ICT, engineering, production and manufacturing (February, 2012)
- The EGFSN Statement of Activity 2011 summarises the findings of research on the high level ICT skills needs of foreign-owned and indigenous companies. It also highlights the STEM based sectors (the green economy, ICT, pharma, medical devices, food/beverage) in the Guidance document for the SpringBoard 2012 call (March, 2012)
- Key Skills for Enterprises to Trade Internationally highlights employment opportunities in the ICT and International Services sectors and ecommerce skills for international selling and makes recommendations regarding conversion programmes in these areas (June, 2012)
- The National Skills Bulletin identifies skills shortages in certain STEM occupations (July, 2012)

Press releases are issued with each EGFSN publication and interviews have been undertaken with Technology Ireland and the Sunday Business Post.

Summaries of the EGFSN reports are included on www.careersportal.ie and www.qualifax.ie which are used by guidance counsellors, students and jobseekers.

- Following discussions with Careersportal in February, it was agreed that the EGFSN would provide inputs as appropriate during the year to their monthly newsletter issued to the guidance community.
- Following discussions with National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) in February, the NQAI have included articles on the Qualifax website which include brief outlines of EGFSN's report.
- The EGFSN also provides inputs to the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) bi-monthly newsletters which are sent to 2nd level schools.
- Updated occupational data based on EGFSN work is available on the FÁS Careers Directions website.

- Forfás met with the Association of Higher Education Career Services (AHCES) in June to discuss how the EGFSN might best get its messages to the 3rd level guidance community. Opportunities are being explored to address their management committee and biannual conference and links with www.GradIreland.com.

Opportunities for presenting the EGFSN messages are constantly sought and to date have included the issue of Maths & Skills for Creativity at the IPPN Education Policy Symposium (January), Pobal conference on addressing unemployment (April), and the Tolka Area Partnership (June).

Action 1.37: Through its Discover Science and Engineering programme, promote the study of the physical sciences to students.

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Engage early second level students (12,000) through its Discover Sensors programme which supports inquiry-based learning in Junior Certificate Science. (SFI)
2. Communicate the variety of career opportunities to older second level students, teachers and parents by coordinating, in addition to working on an ongoing basis with CareersPortal.ie: (1.37 c)
 - a. First Online Careers Fair, January 2012
 - b. Careers focus in Science Week (115,000) participants, November 2012
(SFI)
3. Focus other programmes to more fully engage young people with the physical sciences e.g. Discover Primary Science and Maths (2,960 schools and 4,800 teachers). Also highlight the careers potential arising from a STEM education e.g. through Science Week Ireland 2012 (120,000 participants), which will have a strong technology theme. (SFI)

Update:

1. On schedule

Discover Sensors is a pilot programme designed by Discover Science and Engineering (DSE) to test inquiry-based STEM teaching and learning at junior cycle. Approximately 30 schools are involved in the pilot, which is now entering its fourth year (junior cycle), involving almost 200 teachers and approximately 3,000 students. The pilot exercise aims to gather evidence/experience regarding formative assessment methods (including ePortfolio solutions), to support the Department of Education and Skills and its agencies in the revision of the Junior Certificate curriculum with respect to STEM.

2. On schedule

The first online *Smart Futures* Careers Fair was successfully completed in Quarter 1. It promoted opportunities in the tech industry in Ireland to students, parents, teachers and guidance counsellors, through the coordinated efforts of Discover Science and Engineering, ICT Ireland, Engineers Ireland and 13 industry partners, such as Microsoft, Ericsson, SAP, Cisco and smaller indigenous companies.

The campaign ran over a 12 week period, and comprise of a nationwide secondary schools competition and online career sessions where students talked to experts in the areas of programming, software development and cloud computing.

Science Week will be held from the 12th to the 16th of November under the theme “Everyday Experimenting.” It will be delivered via major regional partners – festivals in five locations via major regional partners. It will involve over 500 events nationally via 100-plus partner organisations (universities/ Institutes of Technology/ libraries/ schools/ clubs/ corporates). It is estimated that there will be 115,000 participants and will have a strong careers focus.

3. On schedule

The Discover Primary Science and Maths programme is fully operational:

- 6,390 Teachers registered across 2,970 schools (91% of all primary schools).
- 35 Discover Centres with accredited science programmes.
- 420 schools annually receive the Award of Science & Maths Excellence.
- 500 teachers receive training annually.
- 200 pre-service teachers receive training annually.
- Discover Primary Science and Maths website - 400,000 page views; 75,000 visits of which 47,000 unique visitors (annually)

Two key career awareness events delivered to date in 2012 - Online careers fair January 2012 and Engineers Week February 2012.

Action 1.38: Improve linkages between higher education and enterprise

Ongoing Commitment: Introduce of a new system of strategic dialogue to align funding of higher education institutions to performance in the achievement of national objectives for system development and priorities in relation to skills development. (HEA)

Update: On schedule

A new system of strategic dialogue that will align funding of higher education institutions to performance in the achievement of national objectives for system development and priorities in relation to skills development commenced in 2012 and will be fully rolled out in the coming years.

Action 1.39: Foster greater alignment between the Further Education and Training sector and the labour market.

Ongoing Commitment: Review of further education and training options so that employment prospects for participants are improved and enhance capacity to respond to specific sector or occupational skills needs (and provide the transferable skills that enhance employability).

On statutory establishment, SOLAS and other agencies under the DES (e.g. Higher Education Authority, Skillnets) will roll out a new approach through better targeting of services appropriate to the profile of the unemployed and the needs of the labour market, based on a shared analysis of the available data in relation to the profile of unemployed people, including Live Register, Quarterly National Household Survey and Department of Social Protection profiling data. (DES/ SOLAS)

Update: On schedule

The Action Plan for Jobs 2012 reflects a number of new approaches that are being taken by the Department of Education and Skills to address the skills needs of key sectors of the economy, including ICT, biopharma, medical devices, financial services, and green technologies. These initiatives have been developed in close collaboration with industry representatives and with the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. Over the coming months further roll-out and evaluation of these approaches will be taking place with input from all stakeholders. This process will inform decisions in relation to activities in 2013 which can be reflected in next year's Action Plan.

The Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in FÁS are planning to add significant new databases to the National Skills Database this autumn. The purpose of these databases is to enable further, more specific analyses to be undertaken on where the new job opportunities are in the Irish economy.

Action 1.41: Invest €3.9 billion of exchequer capital in 2012 to ensure Ireland's infrastructure can facilitate economic growth, including €514 million in capital investment for direct enterprise support and development.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DPER/ DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Net capital expenditure at the end of August 2012 amounted to €1,572 million, which is €120 million (7.1%) behind the profile of €1,692 million. This represents 43.2% of the total net capital estimate (€3,635 million) for the year, which means that €2,063 million remains to be spent. It is anticipated that expenditure will return to profile by year end.

In relation to the €514 million capital investment for direct enterprise support and development, expenditure by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation was 17.7% behind profile at end August, mostly due to IDA grants to industry and the Microfinance Loan Fund being behind profile.

Action 1.42: Ensure NewERA works with the State and private sectors to develop and implement proposals for commercial investment in line with Programme for Government commitments in energy, water and broadband.

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Review the business plans of Commercial Semi-State Companies:

- Approval of key projects
- Assistance with development of new Water utility
- Liaison with NPRF/SIF
- Identification of potential investors and implementation of marketing programme

(NewERA)

2. Market the Infrastructure Fund to Irish and international investors in conjunction with Irish Life and Australia's AMP Capital. Identify potential infrastructure transactions – in particular working with NewERA and DPER.

Identify SME focused funding needs:

- Identification of experienced fund managers for SME focused funds

Launch SME focused funds:

- Debt
- Equity restructuring

(NPRF/ Strategic Investment Fund)

Update:

1. On schedule

The reviews of business plans of the Commercial Semi-State Companies under the remit of NewERA are on schedule. Investment in the electricity and gas networks (both distribution and transmission) is continuing by ESB and Bord Gáis Energy respectively.

The East West Interconnector, which is a 500MW electricity link between the electricity grids of Ireland and Britain, has been developed by EirGrid and is operational, on budget and on time, as of September 2012. Renewable projects (primarily wind farms) continue to be developed with approval of material renewable projects expected in Quarter 4 2012/Quarter 1 2013. Projects in the energy efficiency, export of renewable energy, water infrastructure and bio-energy sectors are also currently under review.

Following the decision to establish Irish Water within Bord Gáis Energy, NewERA is working with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Bord Gáis Energy, the Commission for Energy Regulation, and the National Pensions Reserve Fund to ensure that the establishment and regulation of Irish Water is conducive to Irish Water being in a position to attract debt funding to finance its operations and to carry out its functions to the required standard of corporate governance.

2. Delayed in relation to marketing to Irish Pension Funds

Marketing is ongoing with many international funds initially marketed to over the first half of the year. Positive news is that one investor from the Middle East has indicated a willingness to make a relatively small commitment, subject to completion of final due diligence.

The key issues for potential investors are (i) eurozone instability, and (ii) lack of visibility of infrastructure asset sales in Ireland. Many investors consider that the €3 billion commitment by the Government in relation to asset sales will not be met by the announced transactions (which furthermore contain only a small element of infrastructure). A key issue to attract international capital is to give confidence that assets will be available for purchase by investors. However, the macro perception of Ireland is very positive.

Marketing to Irish pension funds is delayed as the funds (i) consider sovereign annuities possibilities and (ii) had sought clarity on the introduction of a pension levy offset incentive to invest in PPP projects.

The National Treasury Management Agency is seeking to develop a number of SME-related funds in which the National Pension Reserve Fund would be a cornerstone minority investor:

- 2 SME equity funds – one for restructuring / growth capital and one turnaround fund
- 2 SME credit funds – one focusing on the mid market with loans of €5 million to €50 million and one focusing on lower end less than €5 million.

In each case the SME fund would have third-party capital and a third-party manager. The objective is to announce initiatives in Quarter 4 2012. It is hoped that the two equity funds and the larger credit fund will be able to be announced in October; the timing on the smaller SME credit fund is more uncertain at this point.

An intensive marketing campaign is currently being devised, to take place post the SME funds' respective launches, targeting both domestic and international funds, particularly in North America and Europe. This marketing initiative will be presenting the full suite of investment opportunities under the SIF, including infrastructure.

Action 1.43: Develop a Strategic Investment Fund with a commitment of €250 million from the NPRF to a new Irish infrastructure investment fund which is seeking up to €1 billion from institutional investors in Ireland and overseas. The Fund will invest in infrastructure assets in Ireland, including assets designated for disposal by the Government and commercial State enterprises and also new infrastructure projects.

Ongoing Commitment: Develop ongoing contacts with international sovereign wealth funds and potential investors in funds to be launched under SIF umbrella. (NPRF/ Strategic Investment Fund)

Update: On schedule

The wider Strategic Investment Fund initiative requires formalisation of the new National Pension Reserve Fund mandate, in respect of which work is ongoing. Development of contacts with international sovereign wealth funds and potential investors is ongoing as part of the Infrastructure and SME initiatives outlined above (Action 1.42). When the mandate legislation is clarified this can be put on a more formal footing.

Action 1.44: Ensure that transport infrastructure supports enterprise development and sustainable job creation by the targeted upgrading of specific road and public transport infrastructure where such projects are clearly demonstrated as critical to economic development through improving competitiveness and market access.

Ongoing Commitment: Target funding. (DTTS/ DPER)

Update: On schedule

Within available and reduced resources, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has recently prioritised two road projects for funding at the request of IDA Ireland and the

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to facilitate investment by FDI companies in Cork and Dun Laoghaire.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has also liaised with IDA Ireland and Fáilte Ireland on the transport projects which would support their investment and/or marketing programmes over the next few years especially in the context of any additional resources for capital investment becoming available. Both agencies have identified their priorities.

For Fáilte Ireland, a key priority is road projects on the route of the proposed Wild Atlantic Way (WAW). Four pilot road projects on the WAW which are designed to take tourism needs into account are currently with An Bord Pleanála.

In relation to IDA Ireland's priorities for national roads, continued efforts are being made to reach financial close on the N7 Newlands Cross / N11 Arklow Rathnew Public Private Partnership (PPP). In addition, the Government Infrastructure stimulus announcement of 17th July which outlined a range of non exchequer funding sources for infrastructure indicated a commitment to support the negotiation of PPPs for three road priorities - N17/18 Gort to Tuam, the N11 Gorey- Enniscorthy and the N25 New Ross bypass.

The Luas Broombridge Railway Order was approved by An Bord Pleanála on 30th July and is now operative, as the 8-week period allowing for submission of judicial review applications has ended without any such application. An updated business plan for the project is currently being prepared by the Railway Procurement Authority. This will be reviewed by the National Transport Authority who will submit the revised plan with their recommendation in late October. Subject to satisfactory outcome of the business plan review, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport would expect to be in a position in early November to inform his colleagues that he is ready to give the final go ahead for the project.

Action 1.50: Deliver the potential for reduction in administrative burdens in national regulatory regimes across the following Departments: Social Protection, Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, Public Expenditure & Reform, Transport, Tourism & Sport, Health, Environment, Community & Local Government, Agriculture, Food & Marine, and the Offices of the Revenue Commissioners to meet the overall 25% target.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI/ Government)

Update: On schedule

A project to measure the administrative burden imposed by regulations under the responsibility of seven Departments and Revenue is underway and is being carried out in two phases or clusters.

- Cluster A consists of Revenue and the Departments of Social Protection and Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
- Cluster B consists of the Departments of the Environment, Health, Transport, Agriculture and Public Expenditure and Reform.

Following completion of its measurement exercise, each participating Department must then plan how it will achieve the remaining reductions necessary to reach the target and report to Government with its Simplification Plan.

Revenue's report on its administrative burden reductions, which have reached the 25% target, has been published on its website. The Department of Social Protection intends to publish its report shortly. The remaining participating Departments are expected to report by end 2012.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has already achieved a 24.5% reduction in the areas of Company Law, Employment Law and Health and Safety Law. This has been achieved, in particular, due to the modernisation work of the Companies Registration Office and the Health and Safety Authority.

The Central Statistics Office has achieved a 30% reduction in measured burdens, significantly beyond the target.

2. Supporting Indigenous Start-Ups

Action 2.6: Deliver support to 95 new High Potential Start Ups including an increase of 50% in the number of overseas entrepreneurs supported, using the International Start-Ups fund as a key tool, and an increase of 40% in the number of new HPSUs arising as spin-outs from research.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI/ EI)

Update: On schedule

In the first six months of the year, 53 new high potential start-up companies were supported by Enterprise Ireland that together plan to create 911 new jobs by the end of 2014. Both the number of investments and the number of jobs to be created are significantly up on the same period last year (755 jobs and 42 companies). These companies come from a wide range of sectors including the innovative sectors that the Government is targeting for growth such as financial services, ICT, digital games, pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

To end of September 2012, Enterprise Ireland has provided support to a total of 80 HPSUs. The delivery of 95 HPSUs for 2012 will remain a challenge but is a deliverable target. Building the pipeline for 2013 will be equally challenging during the second half of 2012. Based on current pipelines and resource availability, Enterprise Ireland expects that 12 overseas HPSU projects will be converted by year end.

The spinout HPSUs pipeline is strong, with conversion on track for delivery of target (to end September, 10 against a target of 14).

Action 2.9: Run a total of four calls of the Competitive Start Fund in 2012 and target the support of 60 projects during the year.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: On schedule

The Competitive Start Fund provides young companies in the ICT and industrial sectors with the critical early-stage funding to test the market for their products and services and progress their business plans for the global marketplace.

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation announced the fourth and final open call for applications to the fund for 2012, which was launched on Wednesday 26th September 2012, with advertisements in national press during the call. Fifteen companies are expected to benefit under this round of funding, under which a total of €750,000 is available. This will bring to 60 the number of early stage projects approved in 2012 under the Competitive

Start Fund. The closing date for applicants was Wednesday 10th October and this call is open to start-ups from both ICT and Industrial sectors including sub-sectors such as Internet, Games, Apps, Mobile, SaaS, Cloud Computing, Enterprise Software, Lifesciences, Cleantech and Industrial Products.

Action 2.10: Run an accelerated growth programme for HPSUs to help them develop the management skills necessary to achieve rapid international growth.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: On schedule

The Internet Growth Acceleration Programme (iGAP) is an intensive management development programme aimed exclusively at Internet, SaaS and Games based companies. The programme has been developed by Enterprise Ireland in partnership with the Internet Growth Alliance and is delivered by Select Strategies.

Over a period of six months, iGAP equips key promoters with the practical tools needed to formulate aggressive international growth plans and scale their businesses. The latest round of the iGAP Programme commenced on the 27th September 2012.

3. Assisting Indigenous Businesses to Grow

Action 3.1: Secure 200 significant (over €500,000) investments by EI-assisted firms during 2012 in a range of areas which are critical to company growth and job creation

Ongoing Commitment: Work with client companies to identify and pursue significant investment opportunities. (EI)

Update: On schedule

To end-September 2012, Enterprise Ireland has secured 159 significant (over €500,000) investments by Enterprise Ireland assisted firms during 2012 in a range of areas which are critical to company growth and job creation. On the basis of an assessment of project pipelines, it is expected that the annual target will be met during 2012.

Action 3.3: Building on commitments in the second Global Irish Economic Forum:

- Develop a Mentoring Programme involving top business leaders from Ireland and internationally, to act as mentors to businesses.
- Develop linkages between firms.
- Engage the Diaspora to support potential and existing exporters.
- Examine the adoption of SMEs by multi-nationals.
- Explore the leveraging of input or advice by experienced executives who have established successful businesses to companies in Ireland.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI/ DJEI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland has reached out to all Global Irish Network (GIN) members and formed a new international Global Ireland Contacts (GIC) programme that is now delivering one to one engagements for clients with GIN members. There are currently over 110 GIN members in the Global Irish Contacts programme working with Irish companies.

The Global Irish Contacts programme now forms Enterprise Ireland's most important direct interaction with the GIN. A detailed process has been developed for engaging with the GIC/GIN across the organisation to maximise its benefit for client companies. Enterprise Ireland also has on-going engagement with the GIN and the wider Diaspora across a range of activities which benefit clients. Communication of successful outcomes, through Enterprise Ireland and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade channels, will assist in the build out of the network. The pilot of this new programme is well advanced and on schedule. The GIC programme became fully operational in Quarter 3.

Action 3.7: Raise awareness, particularly among SMEs, of the importance of process improvement to reduce the cost of poor quality, increase productivity, competitiveness and sustainability and create more jobs, via public seminars and other activity.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (NSAI)

Update: On schedule

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) has trained its ISO 9001 auditors in LEAN/ Operational Excellence methods and placed a high emphasis during 2012 on assisting client companies to fundamentally improve processes and reduce the cost of poor quality. This is supported by encouraging training and continuous improvement through the relaunched NSAI Excellence Through People scheme which has the potential to significantly improve productivity and competitiveness.

The members of the NSAI Quality Management Consultative Committee for standardization have created a body called Quality Ireland. As a result, a LinkedIn group called “Quality Ireland” has been created to encourage a proactive approach to quality. This now has over 80 members and a very active discussion forum. A formal launch of this initiative to SME and other business is planned for October and already regional chapters of the Quality Ireland body are being actively considered for 2013 to help enhance Ireland’s reputation as a quality focused business location.

Action 3.8: Support the micro and small business sector in developing an online presence via specific training supports, grants for ICT hardware and software, and funding research and innovation activity suitable to the needs of businesses in that sector.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (CEBs)

Update: On schedule

The County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) provide Priming and Business Development Grants and a range of “soft supports” (business advice, training programmes and one-to-one mentoring) to eligible micro-enterprises. They recognise that innovation is a specific business need and can also provide micro-enterprise Feasibility/Innovation Grants where appropriate.

An integral part of starting up and/or developing a business is in the area of information technology, and CEB supports also provide encouragement and support for micro-enterprises in embracing and utilising appropriate technology and online business tools.

To date in 2012, CEB locally-arranged training includes topics such as: ‘ICT Essentials for SMEs,’ ‘Social Media for Your Business,’ ‘Blogging Effectively for Your Business,’ ‘E-

Marketing,' 'Digital Marketing Strategy and Website Analytics,' and 'Getting Irish Business Online' training (as part of the CEB engagement with the Google initiative, whereby entrepreneurs are assisted to avail of a free easy-to-update website, free domain name registration for the first year, ongoing tips and education, etc).

Action 3.12: Roll out a schedule of sector-specific Trade Missions and market evaluation Missions that reflect the priority markets identified in the Trade Strategy as well as firms' interest and stage of development, aiming for at least 15 Ministerial-led Missions.

Ongoing Commitment: Carry out Missions. (DJEI/ DFAT/ EI/ DTTS/ Tourism Ireland)

Update: On schedule

To end September, ten major Ministerial missions have taken place and Trade Missions led by Government Ministers will take place to all BRIC markets in 2012. It is expected that by year end, the target of 15 Missions set out in the Action Plan for Jobs will have been exceeded.

Quarter 3 missions included one to France led by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and one to China, led by the Minister for Health. Eight further trade missions are planned for Quarter 3 to India, the UK, Brazil, Italy, Japan, Canada, South Africa and Malaysia/Vietnam.

A number of events with a trade component (e.g. the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government's China visit, and the Tánaiste's visit to Malaysia) are additional to this list.

Action 3.13: Through the support of the international office network and high growth markets team, assist companies in their drive to secure new business overseas, and support the securing of 750 new buyers.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: On schedule

As well as assisting Irish companies win new business with existing customers, Enterprise Ireland has, in the year to date, assisted Irish companies in winning (to end-September) 540 significant brand new customers across almost 50 countries. While the annual target is challenging, particularly in the context of Enterprise Ireland's resourcing challenges in overseas markets, a significant push is being made during the last quarter to support its achievement.

Action 3.15: Attract over 600 buyers to Ireland to engage with indigenous companies on international business opportunities.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: On schedule

To date, Enterprise Ireland has arranged for over 584 international buyers to travel to Ireland to meet Irish companies.

In September this year, senior executives from America's largest retail chains were in Dublin with Enterprise Ireland to view Irish consumer products with particular potential for large-scale distribution in the American retail market. Between them, these US retail chains have 11,000 stores and sales valued at \$182 billion per year.

The US delegation hosted by Enterprise Ireland included the presidents and vice presidents of major US retail chains Walgreens/Duane Reade, Ahold, HEB and Kroger. The delegation met with 17 leading Irish consumer products companies and the products on show included baby care, household, healthcare and tourism products as well as Nualight's innovative retail lighting products.

The visit represented tremendous potential for Irish companies to break into the top retail chains in the United States and significantly boost their international sales.

Action 3.20: Cascade Management Development learnings to a wider number of companies – including through support for approximately 250 Managers to participate on significant management development programmes and support over 700 managers to participate on shorter development programmes

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: On schedule

As of end September:

- The number of Lean projects supported stood at 98.
- The number of participants on significant management development programmes stood at 124 – it is expected the 2012 target will be achieved.
- The number of participants on short-course management development programmes stood at 467 – it is expected the target will be achieved during 2012.

Action 3.32: Develop the mandate of the new Strategic Investment Fund for targeted investment to enterprise via equity and debt funding.

Ongoing Commitment: Market the Infrastructure Fund to Irish and international investors in conjunction with Irish Life and Australia's AMP Capital. Identify potential infrastructure transactions – in particular working with NewERA and DPER.

Identify SME focused funding needs:

- Identification of experienced fund managers for SME focused funds

Launch SME focused funds:

- Debt
- Equity restructuring

(DoF/NPRF/ Strategic Investment Fund)

Update: Delayed (in relation to marketing to Irish Pension Funds)

Marketing is ongoing with many international funds initially marketed to over the first half of the year. Positive news is that one investor from the Middle East has indicated a willingness to make a relatively small commitment, subject to completion of final due diligence.

The key issues for potential investors are (i) eurozone instability, and (ii) lack of visibility of infrastructure asset sales in Ireland. Many investors consider that the €3 billion commitment by the Government in relation to asset sales will not be met by the announced transactions (which furthermore contain only a small element of infrastructure). A key issue to attract international capital is to give confidence that assets will be available for purchase by investors. However, the macro perception of Ireland is very positive.

Marketing to Irish pension funds is delayed as the funds (i) consider sovereign annuities possibilities and (ii) had sought clarity on the introduction of a pension levy offset incentive to invest in PPP projects.

The National Treasury Management Agency is seeking to develop a number of SME-related funds in which the National Pension Reserve Fund would be a cornerstone minority investor:

- 2 SME equity funds – one for restructuring / growth capital and one turnaround fund
- 2 SME credit funds – one focusing on the mid market with loans of €5 million to €50 million and one focusing on lower end less than €5 million.

In each case the SME fund would have third-party capital and a third-party manager. The objective is to announce initiatives in Quarter 4 2012. It is hoped that the two equity funds and the larger credit fund will be able to be announced in October; the timing on the smaller SME credit fund is more uncertain at this point.

An intensive marketing campaign is currently being devised, to take place post the SME funds' respective launches, targeting both domestic and international funds, particularly in North America and Europe. This marketing initiative will be presenting the full suite of investment opportunities under the SIF, including infrastructure.

Action 3.33: Work with the banking sector both on one-to-one firm issues and to assist them in a cultural shift in lending practices towards sectors that are critical to economic growth. Develop better protocols with banks to enhance sectoral expertise within the banks and the range of lending products to meet exporter needs and tourism providers.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DoF/ Credit Review Office/ DJEI/ EI)

Update: On schedule

Both pillar banks have a strong relationship with Enterprise Ireland and, in addition to regular bilateral meetings, staff have been seconded from Enterprise Ireland into the banks in order to educate bank staff to assess credit applications from firms in the export sector. Furthermore, both parties regularly combine resources at domestic and international trade shows.

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.

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Pillar banks to provide the Department of Finance and CRO with a lending plan outlining in detail how they will achieve the €3.5 billion lending target for SMEs. (DoF/ Credit Review Office)
2. The data contained in these reports to be reviewed and analysed by the Department of Finance and the CRO, with a sharper focus on the "new money" element, to ensure that the pillar banks are compliant with the terms of the Government recapitalisation as it relates to the provision of credit for SMEs. (DoF/ Credit Review Office/ DJEI)
3. The Economic Management Council to meet with the pillar banks to discuss a range of issues in relation to SME business including the availability of credit to this important sector. (Economic Management Council)

Update:

1.-2. On schedule

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 3. Both pillar banks have met with the Credit Review Office and the Department of Finance to discuss progress in relation to their lending targets for 2012. The Credit Review Office published their latest quarterly report in early October outlining their assessment of the banks' performance in this regard.

In addition, the Department of Finance published the SME Lending Demand survey in July. The survey, which included 1,505 companies, shows among other things 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. The full survey and findings are available on the Department of Finance website.

3. On schedule

The Government has been working closely with the Irish banks to ensure that the banking sector supports economic recovery. The members of the Economic Management Council have met with the banks twice this year, and it is anticipated that the members of the Economic Management Council will meet with the banks again later in the year.

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 on the data illustrating economic activity in the SME sector.

Action 3.37: Work with banks and small business representative organisations to help SMEs improve the quality of loan application.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (Central Bank / Credit Review Office)

Update: On schedule

The Credit Review Office and the Irish Banking Federation have undertaken work to improve loan application documents and processes.

Working with the Credit Review Office, AIB and Bank of Ireland have developed a standard application form which requires the same basic information. Ulster Bank and KBC Bank have also agreed to adopt the same application form.

In addition, the Irish Banking Federation and the four accountancy institutes represented by the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies - Ireland have developed the Business

Plan Guidance template and help sheet. Launched in September 2012, the Business Plan Guidance is designed to assist SMEs and microenterprises in developing and presenting a robust business plan and cash flow forecast as a key part of an application for credit.

A key feature of the Business Plan Guidance is that it facilitates the use of a common approach, framework and language. Its adoption and promotion by accountants, business advisors, State agencies such as the City and County Enterprise Boards, Enterprise Ireland and Microfinance Ireland as well as business representative organisations will support SMEs in improving the quality of loan applications.

Action 3.38: Arrange that banks formally notify clients who have been refused loans of the right to an internal review by the bank and an appeal to the Credit Review Office.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (Central Bank)

Update: Complete

In 2009, the Central Bank issued a code of conduct for lenders in respect of how they deal with SME customers. The Central Bank undertook a review of the code last year (in consultation with the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and the European Central Bank) and they introduced the revised SME code from January 2012. The review focused mainly on SMEs in financial difficulty.

The Code requires lenders to set out in writing why it has refused credit to a new customer. Lenders must also have an internal appeals process in place, where a SME Customer is in difficulty, on decisions regarding a new repayment arrangement. This process must include information on the Credit Review Office where applicable, e.g. for AIB and Bank of Ireland customers.

Action 3.39: Work with the banks to ensure that sufficient training and development procedures are in place to enable staff to make more informed lending decisions, in addition to monitoring refusal rates, internal appeals and appeals.

Ongoing Commitment: Work closely on an ongoing basis with the pillar banks, in particular in the context of quarterly meetings, to ensure that expertise in the bank is developed in line with the terms of the Government recapitalisation as it relates to the provision of credit for SMEs, as well as ensuring robust internal review systems are in place. (DoF / Credit Review Office / DJEI)

Update: On schedule

As part of their quarterly reports to the Department of Finance under the recapitalization agreement, the pillar banks provide details of their training schemes for staff. Both banks are committed to upskilling their staff in terms of assessing credit applications and have introduced training schemes to meet these requirements. The banks also provide the Department with figures on their refusal rates as well as their figures for internal appeals on a monthly basis. Separately, the Institute of Bankers has devised a specialist programme for bank staff specifically aimed at credit officers assessing credit applications from SMEs.

Action 3.40: Assess the Credit Review Office to ensure SMEs are getting the support on bank lending they require.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DoF/ DJEI)

Update: On schedule

On 31st August, last the Department of Finance placed a Request for Tenders on the “etenders” website inviting consultancy firms to tender in order to undertake an assessment of the Credit Review Office. The successful bidder, Grant Thornton, has commenced work on the project and a full report will be submitted to the Department in early November.

Action 3.43: Promote the Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme for business expansion and ensure the objectives of the Scheme are being achieved and assess if any amendments are required.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DoF / DJEI)

Update: On schedule

The Revenue Commissioners provide detailed information on the Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme on their website. They are also engaging with business representative bodies and relevant Departments in relation to promoting the take up of employment and investment-related supports.

The Revenue Commissioners are also engaged in an exercise to update their communications material on tax reliefs and incentives for enterprise, including the Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has produced a detailed leaflet with information on financial supports for business, including the Employment and Investment

Incentive Scheme, and is engaging with the business representative associations to ensure wide communication of the information. The leaflet is available on the Department's newly redesigned website www.enterprise.gov.ie.

The implementation and impact of the Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme will be reviewed to ensure the objectives of the Scheme are being achieved and assess if any amendments are required.

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.

Ongoing 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: On schedule.

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 annually 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 3.51: Assign advisers, mentors, and Business Accelerators with specific public sector knowledge to advise and helps firms win more sales from procurement. Local Authorities will also assist and communicate with local businesses to maximise their participation in the procurement process and will improve the Local Authority procurement database (LA Quotes) to make it more user-friendly for SMEs. In parallel, through Enterprise Ireland and Local Authorities, highlight to major contracting authorities the supply opportunities from indigenous businesses, and particularly SMEs.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI/ Local Authorities)

Update: On schedule

A panel of 18 advisors have been identified with specific public sector knowledge. On the basis of client needs, companies are being assigned assistance and advice to support their efforts to gain additional traction through the procurement process. This support is in addition to the one-to-one engagement undertaken by Enterprise Ireland's public procurement team.

Leveraging the knowledge gained and contacts made with individual Contracting Authorities, the team now advise on individual public sector value propositions and undertake focused introductory meetings for clients. Approximately 120 such client/buyer introductory meetings have been held. Additionally, in the last twelve months 697 clients have participated in 19 knowledge and capability events organised by the Public Procurement team.

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.

Ongoing 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: On schedule

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

Each of the Contracting Authorities referenced above has identified practical projects that are suitable for the Procuring Innovation Initiative. Since the last update, work has begun with the emerging Irish water utility to identify suitable practical projects at an early stage.

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 National Procurement Service also assists Contracting Authorities in procurement techniques that highlight the need for specifications based on outputs, rather than specific products.

4. Attracting Inward Entrepreneurial Start-Ups

Action 4.2: Promote availability of a €10 million fund and target support of overseas entrepreneurs. Investor-ready projects will typically seek between €100,000 and €500,000 investment, or greater depending on the nature of the project.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI/ EI)

Update: On schedule

Late last year Enterprise Ireland launched a dedicated €10 million International Start-Up Fund to target investor-ready overseas entrepreneurs to start their business in Ireland. Administered by Enterprise Ireland, the fund is open to company promoters anywhere in the world, but is targeted particularly at the Irish Diaspora, international expatriates, the 'New Diaspora' (people from overseas who have previously worked or studied in Ireland), as well as serial and mobile entrepreneurs.

In addition to the new Start-up Entrepreneur Programme visa initiative announced recently by the Minister for Justice and Equality, Alan Shatter TD, this makes Ireland a highly attractive location to start and grow an international business.

Enterprise Ireland continues to very actively promote the €10 million fund through a variety of approaches including:

- **Events:** In September, for example, Enterprise Ireland and IDA jointly hosted a dinner for leading players in the IT world during TechCrunch Disrupt, a major IT/start up conference in San Francisco. The Agencies also had a joint stand at the same event.
- **Use of high profile Irish individuals as Start-up Ambassadors:** We currently have four such ambassadors and expect to announce a fifth shortly.
- **Ongoing leveraging of selected day-to-day opportunities by Enterprise Ireland staff,** such as referencing it in appropriate interviews, speeches and meetings.
- **Collaboration with Start-up Accelerators:** In September, HealthXL, a new start-up accelerator which is backed by high profile companies such as IBM and Glaxo Smith Kline, announced their intention to locate in Dublin. This follows almost a year of negotiations between Enterprise Ireland and the various parties involved. It will attract leading start-up companies from across the globe to spend 3 months in Dublin. The fact that such major players chose Ireland as the location for their first such project enhances Ireland's image as a start-up location. Their stay in Dublin will give the participants an understanding of the benefits Ireland has to offer them and give EI the opportunity to encourage selected participants to apply for the fund.
- **Ongoing use of social media and the various Irish networks.**

- PR approaches to Journalists: In Quarter 3, Enterprise Ireland appointed PR firms in the US and UK to further promote the fund to the media in these markets. Enterprise Ireland has already secured favourable coverage in The Sunday Telegraph and Real Business. This resulted in further coverage in the Irish media (Irish independent).
- Enterprise Ireland conducted a pilot direct marketing campaign in Quarter 2 and the early part of Quarter 3 to encourage alumni of start-up accelerators across the world to consider Ireland as a location.

Action 4.3: Appoint new International Start Up Ambassadors and consider new ways to involve the private sector, including Diaspora, in developing champions to extend knowledge of Ireland’s unique offering in this area.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DJEI/ EI)

Update: On schedule

On 5th July 2012, Enterprise-Ireland announced the appointment of Dr. Arthur Rosenthal as its Life Sciences Start-up Ambassador for the US, as part of its strategy to promote Ireland’s offering and encourage overseas entrepreneurs to locate start-up businesses in Ireland. This follows on from earlier appointments of Start-Up Ambassadors for key markets in the UK, China and Middle East.

Stimulating the flow of new start-ups and supporting their growth are fundamental building blocks in Enterprise Ireland’s strategy for economic growth and job creation. Availability of venture capital and seed funding as well as an excellent ecosystem for start-ups, which includes mentoring, start-up incubators, export support, training and networking are some of the key benefits that will be highlighted to potential entrepreneurs in the US.

Action 4.4: Work collectively to communicate Ireland’s strength as a location for starting a business, and support the development of a campaign by the Irish Diaspora to encourage entrepreneurial start-ups in Ireland.

Ongoing Commitment: Work collectively to communicate Ireland’s strength as a location for starting a business. (DJEI/ EI/ IDA/ DFAT/ Global Irish Economic Forum)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland is working collectively with IDA Ireland to communicate Ireland’s strength as a location for starting a business. Both organisations are co-ordinated in their use of marketing collateral, and are involved in the organisation and participation in joint events overseas. During Quarter 3, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland jointly attended the TechCrunch event which took place 8th - 12th September. Preparations are underway for the ‘Le Web’ event, to take place in Paris in December.

5. Developing and Deepening the Impact of FDI

Action 5.3: Achieve €500 million in R&D investment approvals to have a total annual R&D spend by multinationals here of €1.7 billion by 2014.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: On schedule

Data on this action will not be available until year end.

6. Developing Employment Initiatives within the Community

Action 6.1: The organisation of workshops and initiatives at regional/local level to identify ways to stimulate domestic demand and galvanise community action, building on successful models (e.g. Buy local, Buy Irish, Local Heroes, Getting Irish Business Online). The Government will assist in implementing ideas generated, where appropriate.

Ongoing Commitment: Organise and host workshops. (Chambers / Retail representatives / Local Authorities / Industry champions)

Update: On schedule

There are a number of ongoing initiatives and events at the regional/local level focused on stimulating domestic demand, promoting consumer confidence and encouraging community action in this regard. A comprehensive update on these will be provided in the Action Plan for Jobs 2012 Quarter 4 Progress Report.

Action 6.2: The organisation of Jobs Fairs around the country, to bring together local businesses and jobseekers to highlight available jobs and match them with jobseekers.

Ongoing Commitment: Organise and host first series of Jobs Fairs. (Chambers/ local employers/ local enterprise supports/ DSP/ HEIs/ Enterprise Agencies)

Update: On schedule

A series of Jobs Fairs and events have been held in locations around the country to date with further events scheduled to year end. A detailed update on these will be provided in the Action Plan for Jobs 2012 Quarter 4 Progress Report.

Action 6.3: Initiatives by companies committed to Corporate Social Responsibility, particularly in the provision of employment opportunities to more marginalised groups in the community.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (Business in the Community Ireland, Chambers Ireland)

Update: On schedule

There are a number of ongoing initiatives led by the private sector and business representative organisations to promote and support Corporate Social Responsibility. An overview of these initiatives will be included in the Action Plan for Jobs 2012 Quarter 4 Progress Report.

Action 6.6: Align community-based endeavour with local government with a view to improving delivery of services to citizens at local level, achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness and enhancing the role of Local Authorities in the delivery of local and community development programmes and functions. The supports for business from both the Local and Community Development sector and local government will be re-configured to bring about maximum coherence at local level.

Ongoing Commitment: Implement the key recommendations of the report of the Department's Alignment Steering Group through ongoing engagement with Local Government, Local Development Companies and other stakeholders, and through monitoring and evaluating the relevant Programmes. (D\ECLG / Local Authorities)

Update: On schedule

The final report of the Local Government/Local Development Alignment Steering Group was presented to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government in March 2012. It is anticipated that the report, and the Steering Group's proposals, will be considered by Government together with the Minister's broader proposals for the reform and development of local government in early autumn 2012. In anticipation of Government approval, an implementation plan is being developed, with preparatory work already underway in respect of some of the recommendations. Recommendations will be implemented on a phased basis over the period 2012 to end 2014.

Action 6.9: Continue to support job creation in rural communities through the Rural Development Programme, concentrating primarily on the provision of direct support for the generation and development of enterprise ideas and initiatives and the provision of support for initiatives that facilitate the development of sustainable rural communities.

Ongoing Commitment: Ensure that the Programme continues to focus on enterprise generation and development in rural communities. (D\ECLG/ Local Action Groups)

Update: On schedule

The Rural Development Programme continues to provide access to substantial financial resources to rural communities all over Ireland including funding for activities aimed at increasing economic activity and stimulating job creation. The rate of aid for such enterprise activities was increased from 50% to 75% in recognition of the difficulties promoters may experience in accessing credit for match financing purposes. Currently, project activity under the enterprise measures of the Programme stands at over €75 million, of which €54 million are firm project commitments. Of these commitments, almost €29 million has been paid to enterprise projects since the start of project development in 2009.

7. Exploiting Sectoral Opportunities

Manufacturing

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.

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

Update: On schedule

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 (e.g. biopharma, pharma, medical technologies, food, engineering and electronics). The key enterprise development agencies (Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Forfás) also attended.

The Terms of Reference for the Manufacturing Development Forum has been agreed and a programme of work has been identified. The work of the Forum is being progressed - a workshop was held in late August over two days, which will feed into the next Forum meeting, planned for October.

Health/ LifeSciences

Action 7.2.3: Support the development of Ireland as a Global Centre of Excellence for the Medical Device industry by providing a local high-quality, wide-scope, responsive CE mark certification service.

Ongoing Commitment: Support the enterprise development agencies and the medical profession in developing a full service support infrastructure in Ireland for medical device manufacturers and designers. (NSAI)

Update: On schedule

Activity in Medical Device CE marking has continued at pace in Quarter 3 with new products and certificate renewals from both international and Irish companies across a wide spectrum of medical areas. The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) has won the confidence of a number of large international medical device corporations with divisions in Ireland to start certifying a large portion of their global product demand which encourages such companies to strengthen their R&D presence in Ireland.

The NSAI strategy of offering a strong technical guidance service to smaller indigenous companies has continued too with a business support engineer based in Galway (the centre for the industry in Ireland) being added. In 2013, NSAI plans to open a small Medical Device Certification and information office in Galway to further strengthen the advantage they can offer Irish based companies in reducing time to market and achieving international penetration with their medical device products.

During Quarter 3, a further element of this strategy was added in that NSAI is actively encouraging the larger medical device companies in Ireland to have their engineers engage through NSAI with international standardisation work in their field. One large Irish based US corporation now has over 10 engineers in such committees and confirms that this has gained the Irish team considerable standing and respect within the corporation. It will strengthen the argument for new corporate projects to be won by the Irish location.

The Green Economy

Action 7.3.3: Support the development of new products in the Green Economy and identify markets for these products. (in the context of the green economy Action Plan)

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI / IDA)

Update: On schedule

IDA is supporting the development of new green products and services through the R&D support process in its interaction with its clients. A good example is the development of new products and services from companies such as IBM via its Smarter Cities Technology Centre in Dublin and United Technologies Corporation's new Energy and Security Research Centre in Cork.

Action 7.3.4: Target FDI opportunities in the green economy including the manufacturing, assembly and testing of products/solutions in renewable energy, smart grids, water management and wastewater treatment and electric vehicles (in the context of the green economy Action Plan).

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: On schedule

Ireland has a strong value proposition in specific clean tech sectors, by virtue of its resources e.g. wind energy (both on and offshore) and leverage existing strengths in areas such as ICT, Software, sensors etc. Examples would be smart grid and smarter city/smarter building related technologies.

Sectors such as water management, wastewater treatment and electric vehicles are by their nature not very mobile, so while IDA is always opportunistic, these sectors present less FDI potential in general. The best prospects are in manufacture, assembly and test in the wind sector and in smart grid/smart city related sectors.

A key determinant of FDI success in the green economy will be the speed and scale of deployment of wind energy in Ireland, both to achieve the 2020 renewable energy targets and to become a major energy exporter. Large scale deployment projects would significantly increase the rationale for multinational companies to locate manufacturing, assembly, R&D and international services activities in Ireland.

Action 7.3.6: Seek to attract a new range of “green” related financial products and services to Ireland. (in the context of the green economy Action Plan)

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: On schedule

Green financial services refer to capital markets, investment banking activities and related advisory services which support the development, finance and promotion of a low carbon economy.

The Government’s Strategy for Ireland’s International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) 2011 – 2016 commits to developing Ireland as a centre of excellence in green finance, creating a Green IFSC initiative built on an enabling tax, legislative, regulatory and compliance framework. Recent Finance Acts introduced a number of taxation measures to support the Green IFSC. A Green IFSC Steering Group works under the aegis of the IFSC Steering Group.

IDA Ireland is working to attract green financial services to Ireland. Ireland is already rapidly growing a world-class green management hub. Green assets under management in Ireland doubled in the last year and tripled in the past four. Ireland now manages or services more than \$10 billion in green assets:

- An IDA executive will join the "Green IFSC" Steering Committee;
- IDA has appointed an executive to undertake an audit of Ireland's green finance capabilities and to develop a specific value proposition for green financial services. The proposition will be developed in partnership with industry and relevant subject matter experts as appropriate;
- IDA will market this proposition internationally if the proposition is credible and sufficiently robust as to generate interest in the investor community.

In addition, the industry sector is directly working to attract new green financial service to the IFSC complex.

Action 7.3.7: Support clustering and other industry-led initiatives to increase collaboration between and among Irish companies and multinationals, including sub-supply to the offshore energy industry, support for research agendas in aspects of the green economy and support for convergence opportunities in niche areas such as water and wastewater treatment and energy management. (in the context of the green economy Action Plan)

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI/ IDA/ SEAI)

Update: On schedule

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and its agencies provide support and encouragement to a number of existing Green Clusters through involvement, advice and/or input into projects (e.g. The Green Way, SmartBay, Smart Cities).

Enterprise Ireland has launched a new pilot clustering programme and approximately 30 applications have been received from a wide variety of potential clusterings. These applications are currently being assessed with a view to final formal approval of successful projects in early November.

IDA is actively leveraging the capabilities of indigenous CleanTech companies, as well as Irish research bodies and educational institutions with initiatives in the CleanTech/green space, to attract high quality FDI from the leading global CleanTech multinationals.

Action 7.3.10: Develop niche markets in Green tourism and food, by developing and promoting standards such as the Green Hospitality Award and other initiatives. (in the context of the green economy Action Plan)

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DAFM/ DTTS/ Fáilte Ireland/ EI)

Update: On schedule

Several agencies offer assistance on good environmental practice and “green tourism” to tourism and hospitality businesses.

Fáilte Ireland has developed an environmental guide for tourism businesses outlining the supports currently available, from tips and advice, assessment and training, to eco-label certification, marketing and communications.

Many businesses have already taken steps towards improving environmental performance, ranging from simple steps such as reducing energy consumption to becoming fully accredited eco-tourism businesses.

There are various eco-labels/accreditation/certification programmes available to sustainable and eco-tourism businesses that wish to attain formal recognition and associated marketing benefit. There are five main labels operating in Ireland:

- Green Hospitality Award and Eco-label run by the Environmental Protection Agency
- EU Flower label, administered here by the National Standards Authority of Ireland
- Green Tourism Business Scheme, run by Green Business UK
- Sustainable Tourism Environment Programme, run by Sustainable Travel International
- Ecotourism Ireland label, run by Ecotourism Ireland Ltd.

With regard to promoting green tourism, the DiscoverIreland.ie website has a section dedicated to “Green Holidays in Ireland” where providers listed have a recognised third party eco-certification and have taken steps towards a greener future, including reducing their energy and water consumption, improving their waste management and ensuring they source fresh seasonal produce from local suppliers. It includes information on environmentally friendly accommodation (“Stay Green”), activities and attractions (“Play Green”), food and drink (“Taste Green”) and travel (“Go Green”), as well as a “Green TV” section, with videos showcasing a sample of some of Ireland’s eco-friendly offerings.

Tourism Ireland’s global advertising campaign - Jump into Ireland - which was launched in January to promote the country overseas over the next three years also emphasises Ireland’s offering in relation to eco and experiential tourism. Tourism Ireland also supports Irish based tourism and hospitality businesses to promote and develop their “green” market offering through training and workshops and attendance at international tourism conventions.

Agri-food Production

Action 7.4.2: Ensure completion of industry projects awarded aid under the Dairy, Beef and Sheepmeat Funds and ensure the implementation of a range of additional major company expansion projects approved over the last 24 months.

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Work with meat sector to progress 13 projects during 2012 and 2013. (EI)
2. Implement range of major company expansion projects already approved. (EI)

Update: On Schedule

Progress is being made towards the completion of a number of projects during 2012 and 2013. Some time extension requests have been made by participating companies which are currently under consideration by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Enterprise Ireland is working with client companies on a range of major company expansions. Examples of projects officially announced during 2012 include:

- Dawn Meats officially opened its new purpose-built, state of the art, beef processing facility in Carroll's Cross, Co. Waterford in May of this year. Dawn Meats invested €14.5 million in the facility, which was also supported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, through Enterprise Ireland. 65 new jobs have been created by the investment in the new beef processing facility, as well as over 100 construction jobs which were created during the construction phase. The new jobs mean that Dawn Meats now employs over 1,400 people in Ireland.
- Danone Baby Nutrition, the manufacturer and distributor of specialised infant and toddler milks, announced in June that it is investing €20 million in its Wexford manufacturing facility to meet growing demand for its products across the European market. This investment will create approximately 45 new jobs at the Wexford plant and builds on the €50 million that has been invested in the company's other Irish based manufacturing facility in Macroom, Co. Cork since December 2010. As with the Macroom investment, the €20 million investment in Wexford is supported by the Irish Government through Enterprise Ireland.

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

Ongoing Commitment: Teagasc to construct three Customer Units linked to Moorepark facility by 2014. (Teagasc)

Update: On schedule

Planning permission for the three Customer Units linked to Moorepark facility was granted in November 2011. Negotiations are ongoing on the lease of the first Unit.

Action 7.4.16: Ensure continued industry participation in the implementation and review of the strategic research agendas (SRA) for food and primary agriculture - Food Research Ireland and Stimulating Sustainable Agricultural Production through Research and Innovation (SSAPRI)

Ongoing Commitment: Continued operation of DAFMs research groups. (DAFM)

Update: On schedule

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is leading a working group under the Prioritisation Action Group to develop Action Plans for two of areas identified through the National Research Prioritisation Exercise; Sustainable Food Production & Processing and Food for Health. Industry has been consulted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and

the Marine and Forfás on this issue. In addition, industry and the private sector are represented on the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Research Committee which undertakes 3rd stage evaluation of applications under Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine research calls.

ICT Hardware and Software

Action 7.5.1: Implement the Action Plan on ICT Skills to address the skills needs of ICT and related sectors.

Ongoing Commitments:

1. Pursue upskilling and conversion actions to increase the domestic supply of high-level skills over the period 2012-2014 including maximising the uptake of Springboard ICT programmes, Job-bridge National Internship Programme, and introducing a Higher Diploma Level 8 Conversion Programme. (DES)
2. Pursue actions to improve retention rates on undergraduate ICT programmes. This includes the promotion of alternative ICT related progression pathways for students. (DES)
3. Pursue actions to increase the mathematical proficiency of students at secondary level including further roll-out of Project Maths, professional development opportunities for teachers and the implementation of a new National Numeracy and Literacy Strategy. (DES)
4. Pursue actions to ensure that higher education programmes in ICT are aligned to changing needs including the establishment of a high level ICT Foresight Group to strengthen further the dialogue between key industry and HEI decision makers. (DES)
5. Pursue actions to increase the number of students with good maths skills into ICT undergraduate programmes through a range of awareness initiatives that will complement the introduction of bonus points for maths from Sept 2012. (DES)

Update: On schedule

Implementation of the *ICT Action Plan - meeting the high-level skills needs of enterprise in Ireland* which was launched in January 2012 is underway.

There are currently more than 600 participants on the Level 8 ICT Skills Conversion programmes that have been rolled out since March 2012. Graduates of the programmes will be available from early 2013.

More than 1,300 people are now due to graduate 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 are now open for applications under Springboard 2012. Full details are available on www.springboardcourses.ie.

The high level Academic Industry Foresight Group, chaired by John Hennessy, Chair of the Higher Education Authority, and with strong high level industry membership, has been established and has met twice to date in 2012.

While it is too early to assess increased numbers on undergraduate ICT programmes, early indications from CAO application data are very promising. The number of students expressing a first preference for Science courses, including Computing, at honours degree level (Level 8) increased by 18.5% this year and by a total of 63.5% over the five year period from 2008 to 2012. It is expected that this will feed through into increased enrolments in September 2012.

Measures to improve the mathematical proficiency of second level students continue to be progressed as part of the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategy that was launched in July 2011.

Project Maths continues to be implemented. The first mainstream examinations were for this year's Leaving Certificate students, and the first group of students presenting for the Junior Certificate will be in 2013.

The introduction of Project Maths has been accompanied by a dedicated national programme of professional development for all maths teachers and this will continue until at least 2013.

The Project Maths Development Team (PMDT) has provided extensive support to teachers. This is complemented by local facilitators who also offer evening courses to enhance and support the content in the workshops given by the PMDT. Additional support is also provided by the National Centre for Excellence in Science and Maths Teaching and Learning which is based in the University of Limerick.

The National Centre for Excellence has also been awarded a contract to provide a postgraduate course for post primary teachers who are currently not qualified in Mathematics. The course will start in autumn and will be available for the next three years.

To encourage more students to take Higher Level mathematics for their Leaving Certificate, 25 bonus CAO points are available for all candidates who score Grade D3 or above from the academic year 2011/2012. Higher Education institutions have collectively agreed to operate this bonus points scheme for Higher Level Maths for a four-year trial period from 2012 to 2015 inclusive, with a review in 2014.

Action 7.5.2: Invest in 100mbps broadband connectivity for second level schools as an enabler for eLearning and enhancing digital skills for school leavers

Ongoing Commitment (to end 2014): Roll out programme to connect all schools by end 2014. (DCENR/ DES/ HEAnet)

Update: Complete

Connections are in place for 200 schools and plans are underway to ensure all second level schools are connected by the end of 2014.

Action 7.5.6: Support industry-led clustering initiatives around existing key sectors notably Finance, Telecommunications and e-Learning as well as emerging clusters in Security and Games and support companies in implementation of “new software economy” business models focussed on Cloud Computing, Software as a Service (SaaS), Internet and Social Media Applications including Games.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI/ IDA/ SFI/ DHDA)

Update: On schedule

A pilot industry-led clustering programme is operational.

The closing date for applications was 18th September. Approximately 30 applications have been received from a wide variety of potential clusterings around key sectors. These applications are currently being assessed with a view to final formal approval of successful projects in early November.

Key on-going contributions by Science Foundation Ireland supported research groups that are directly relevant to these sectors include: Future Internet – new models and technologies; cybersecurity; high performance computing, including for distributed games; and financial mathematics. All these areas are tracked on a continuing basis in regard to key performance indicators.

Science Foundation Ireland also provides support to the Irish Centre for High-end Computing (ICHEC) which carries out research projects for companies in the games sector. ICHEC has been designated as a CUDA (Compute Unified Device Architecture) Research Centre, one of a small number worldwide, which carries out training and industrial-strength software engineering on GPGPU (General Purpose Graphical Processor Unit) hardware from NVIDIA Inc.

Tourism

Action 7.8.4: Maintain the offer to abolish the remaining Air Travel Tax of €3 subject to acceptable commitments from the carriers to additional inbound flights.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DoF/ DTTS)

Update: Ongoing

The Programme for Government includes a commitment to abolish the air travel tax as part of a deal with airlines to restore lost routes.

The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport has engaged with the airlines in relation to the re-opening of closed routes. In July 2011, following such discussions, the Minister advised the Government that the response from the airlines was disappointing and that the ATT should be retained.

The Minister indicated, however, that the offer to abolish the tax would remain on the table and that the Department would continue to monitor the capacity being made available by the airlines.

Action 7.8.6: Advance promotion and preparations for “The Gathering 2013” - a year long programme of events, festivals and gatherings driven by arts, sports, business and community groups and supported by the Tourism Agencies.

Ongoing Commitment: Promote Gathering 2013 internationally. (Tourism Ireland)

Update: On schedule

The Gathering 2013 was launched internationally as part of the St. Patrick’s Day festivities. The main overseas marketing campaign is now underway in all source markets.

International Financial Services

Action 7.9.1: Support the implementation of the Strategy for the International Financial Services in Ireland as adopted by the Government.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (Cross Department/ Cross Agency)

Update: On schedule

The Government's Strategy for the development of Ireland’s International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) 2011 – 2016 was launched in July last year. The IFSC Clearing House Group actively monitors progress on implementation of the Strategy. Since its launch both the

public and private sectors have been actively involved in executing the Strategy across a broad front and considerable progress has been made, including:

- Significant progress on initiatives such as Green Finance and Islamic Finance (see update for action 7.9.8 below).
- Notable investment wins by IDA Ireland including Northern Trust, MasterCard, Paypal, HedgeServ, ICBC Leasing and CIMB Principal Islamic.
- A Technology Centre in Financial Services has been launched with initial research projects approved.
- Amongst a range of related initiatives, Enterprise Ireland is promoting the Payments Ireland initiative to brand Ireland as a centre of competence for Payments companies
- In addition to a series of initiatives to ensure the availability of an appropriately skilled work force for the financial services sector in Ireland (such as Finuas), Financial Services Ireland has recently launched the FSI Career Start Programme. This one-year training programme offers participants the opportunity to gain new skills in the area of international financial services while providing an in-depth knowledge of the industry. FSI CareerStart is funded by Springboard, an initiative funded through the Department of Education and Skills to provide education and training opportunities to support unemployed people.

Action 7.9.6: IDA will work with stakeholders (both public and private) across the system on a number of strategic initiatives that can create new employment opportunities in the medium term. These are as follows:

1. Clearing and Settlement / Post Trade Services; Green Finance; Islamic Finance;
2. Progress the recent joint venture announced between IDA Ireland and the Irish Funds Industry Association (IFIA) whereby IDA's overseas office network and staff will be used more proactively to market Ireland as a funds domicile and servicing centre with IFIA providing training and a network of subject matter experts to support IDA's marketing work;
3. Further develop the relationship with IFSC Ireland in terms of marketing and promotion of Ireland as a jurisdiction for high quality international financial services activities.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: On schedule

1. These items are progressing on an on-going basis:

- Preliminary research is being undertaken to identify investment opportunities in the area of Clearing and Settlement and post Trade Services;
- See action 7.3.6 in respect of Green Finance;
- An executive has been assigned responsibility for Islamic Finance (IF) and IDA has prepared a draft value proposition and is preparing to "stress test" this with companies active in the IF space before proceeding to design an overseas marketing programme. A small IDA team travelled on a marketing mission to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore in mid-September to meet with Islamic Finance investors, the Malaysian Securities Commission and Central Bank and to present at the Global Islamic Finance Forum.

2. The joint venture with the Funds industry is in place and being operated. A training seminar has been completed between the Irish Funds Industry Association (IFIA) and IDA executives. IDA Ireland has had its first bilateral meeting with the new CEO of IFIA to discuss the joint venture and other issues of mutual interest. An overseas marketing programme targeting fund managers is being constructed for implementation before year-end.

An overseas marketing programme targeting fund managers and especially Hedge Funds is being constructed for implementation in October

3. The partnership with IFSC Ireland is working effectively and joint overseas marketing programmes have been completed in the year-to-date in New York, Boston and Frankfurt. A further programme is planned for London in November.

Action 7.9.7: Promote Ireland as International Centre of Excellence in Payments, and continue development of the Financial Services Technology Centre focusing on Governance, Risk and Compliance

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI/ IDA)

Update: On schedule

Technology Centres are collaborative entities established and led by industry. They are focused on research with a direct impact on industry.

A Technology Centre in Financial Services has been launched with initial research projects approved. IDA has appointed an executive to focus on the Banking and Payments area and a

new value proposition and list of target companies has been circulated to relevant overseas offices and marketing executives. Work to progress the Technology Centre is ongoing.

Enterprise Ireland is also working on additional initiatives including a focus on networking events and group seminars for the remainder of 2012. Enterprise Ireland is promoting the Payments Ireland initiative to brand Ireland as a centre of competence for Payments companies and will support further penetration of emerging markets by participating in key sector specific trade missions including the South African mission in October.

Action 7.9.8: Promote Ireland as an intellectual property jurisdiction in relation to the International Financial Services sector.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: On schedule

IDA executives draw attention to the benefits that Ireland offers for Financial Services Intellectual Property (IP). This is especially the case in relation to the development and commercialisation of IP through Research and Development activity. An increasing number of Financial Services companies are undertaking R&D and technology development work in Ireland, which can generate IP.

A multi million euro R&D investment in the financial services space will be announced by year-end.

Action 7.9.9: Provide support to Irish HEIs to commercialise research projects in International Financial Services.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: On schedule

The aim of the Commercialisation Fund Programme is to improve the competitiveness of the Irish economy through the creation of technology based start-up companies and the transfer of innovative technologies developed in Higher Education Institutes and Research Performing Organisations to industry in Ireland.

In 2012, the programme is funding the development of innovative technologies at all stages of the commercial pipeline to the point where the technologies can be commercialised as new products, services and companies.

Commercialisation Fund Support is available for projects that address a gap or need in the market by developing innovative technologies that will ideally be ready for licensing to Irish

industry or may form the basis of a new start-up in 2-5 years. This support is open for researchers seeking to commercialise projects in the International Financial Services space, and Enterprise Ireland expects a number of projects (2-3) to progress during the year. Additionally, the establishment of the major technology centre (see update 1.4) will have an impact on this agenda.

Action 7.9.10: Increase the number of High Potential Start-Up projects including projects from overseas entrepreneurs.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: On schedule

In 2011, 6 Financial Services HPSUs were approved while the current forecast for Financial Services HPSUs in 2012 suggests at least 6 will be supported, 2 are overseas entrepreneur financial services projects. In recent years, the profile of start-ups has changed from (almost exclusively) Funds Management companies to a more diverse range of start-ups including insurance intermediaries, leasing exchanges, payments and funds platforms.

Business Process Outsourcing/ Shared Services

Action 7.10.5: In line with the Programme for Government, identify further potential non-core activities suitable for external service delivery which could in turn offer opportunities for Irish based BPOs.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (All Government Departments) (PER)

Update: On schedule

Following Government agreement in July 2012 on a range of actions to achieve a focused and integrated approach to external service delivery, an initiative has commenced to identify non-core activities to test the potential of external service delivery to increase efficiency and to enhance focus on essential activities.

A shortlist of potential projects for priority implementation is being prepared and detailed benefits-driven, external service delivery plans are being developed for the four major sectors of health, education, justice and local government. It has been agreed by Government that all proposed new services across the public service will be first tested regarding suitability for external service delivery before any approval to deliver the service internally will be granted.

A Commercial Delivery Manager, experienced in public service reform in Australia, has been

appointed to lead and coordinate this work and a dialogue with industry has been established to explore how the private sector can contribute to new forms of service delivery.

Action 7.10.6: Work with networks and associations (e.g. Shared Services Forum, CCMA) to support the development of the sector to ensure leading edge best practice is disseminated and that new emerging trends are identified to maximise and sustain employment.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (IDA/ EI)

Update: On schedule

The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector continues to be an important target for IDA investment. The scale and growth of global companies such as Arvato Bertelsmann, Capita and Accenture in Ireland, demonstrate the importance of BPO, not only as an employment intensive sector, but also as a critical part of the ecosystem that makes Ireland attractive for further multinational investment.

IDA continues to work with relevant industry bodies such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the IDA Shared Services Forum and the Contact Centre Management Association (CCMA) to support their efforts to promote the development of global business services in Ireland. Examples of IDA's contribution include:

- Speaking at ACCA Shared Services Forum events on global business services
- Hosting the IDA Shared Services Forum, developing new agenda themes (e.g. export compliance) and providing extensive administrative services
- Working with the CCMA to support its ongoing research into best practice in contact centre management

IDA is monitoring the ongoing evolution of global business services to ensure that Ireland continues to play a leading role in its development across a range of industry sectors. The Global Business Services team is working with IDA clients, industry partners and colleagues in the operations divisions to ensure that emerging trends are identified and shared with all industry stakeholders.

Acknowledging the potential for opportunities in the BPO sector and in emerging areas such as cloud services support, the next wave of digital services, health services/support to the elderly, etc. Enterprise Ireland is working with relevant networks and associations to support the development of the sector. Enterprise Ireland has also run joint events with bodies, including the CCMA, to highlight opportunities to client companies and potential procurers.

Action 7.11.2: Establish a Statutory Code of Practice & Quality Mark (to be awarded to educational institutions that meet certain criteria) to provide the basis for quality assurance of education services provided to international students.

Ongoing Commitment: Prepare for rollout of international education quality mark in 2013. (DES/ QQAAI)

Update: On schedule

Under the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, the Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority of Ireland (QQAAI) will be responsible for developing a Code of Practice for providing education to international learners.

The Code will be based on strong requirements around academic quality and will cover such issues as the treatment of fees and support services for international students. Providers of programmes for international learners that have agreed their quality assurance and access, transfer and progression procedures with the Authority will be able to apply for an 'International Education Mark' based on their compliance with the Code of Practice. Ongoing compliance with the Code of Practice will be monitored by the Authority.

The Code of Practice and International Education Mark are core elements of *Investing in Global Relationships*, Ireland's International Education Strategy. They will be important supports in enhancing the international reputation of our education system, and they will play a key role in assuring international learners of a high quality educational experience in Ireland.

Developing the Code of Practice and the International Quality Mark will be a priority for the QQAAI following its formal establishment.

Action 7.11.7: Work with the relevant institutions/providers to increase their capability and potential to attract international students.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (EI/ HEA/ Fáilte Ireland)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland is tasked with the internationalisation of the Higher Education Sector in non-EU markets. This incorporates in excess of 50 clients including Universities, Institutes of Technology and Private Colleges. The Strategy is targeting an increase in student numbers by over 50% to 2015. This is a priority sector for Enterprise Ireland and accounted for €276 million in exports in 2011.

A particular opportunity is focusing on priority markets, which currently include the US, China, India, Gulf States, Malaysia and Brazil, and to profile Ireland's unique educational offer under the brand of "Education in Ireland."

Enterprise Ireland will continue to work in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and with key stakeholders such as the National Qualification Authority of Ireland Fáiilte Ireland, the Higher Education Authority, and the Department of Justice on the Internationalisation Agenda.

Among the initiatives are:

- Implementing a one-to-one development agenda with higher education institutes who are committed to the Internationalisation agenda
- Appointment of education consultants to accelerate growth in priority markets
- Market based activities in priority markets such as trade visits/missions, education fairs in priority markets etc.
- Marketing and PR campaigns (on and off-line) to profile Ireland as a destination for international education
- Launching the new student-centric website for Education in Ireland.

Construction

Action 7.12.1: Bring down the cost of acquiring commercial property by reducing the Stamp Duty rate from 6% to 2% and the introduction of a Capital Gains Tax incentive for property purchased up to the end of 2013 and held for at least seven years.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DoF)

Update: Complete

Budget 2012 reduced the rate of stamp duty that applies to commercial property from a top rate of 6% (on transfers exceeding €80,000) to a flat rate of 2%.

Budget 2012 also introduced relief from Capital Gains Tax for both residential and non-residential property purchased between 7th December 2011 and 31st December 2013. If a property is purchased within this period and is held for at least seven years, any gain attributable to that seven year holding period will be exempt from Capital Gains Tax.

While the number of property transactions subject to Stamp Duty from 1 January to 31 August 2012 is 10% up on the same period last year, from 30,293 in 2011 to 33,895 this year, a range of factors may be relevant and it is still too early to assess the impact of the Budget changes.

Action 7.12.6: Ensure that labour activation programmes continue to be aimed at enhancing the employability of the unemployed, reskilling, upskilling and keeping redundant workers/unemployed persons close to the labour market and are tailored specific to the needs of this cohort of unemployed.

Ongoing Commitment: The “Pathways to Work” approach will ensure regular and ongoing engagement with everyone on the Live Register to provide opportunities for work, education and training. (DES/ DSP)

Update: On schedule

The Department of Education and Skills has responsibility to ensure that unemployed individuals have access to timely, quality education and training programmes. These programmes will provide opportunities for the unemployed to learn new skills and to develop existing skills and ultimately to enhance their employability for future job opportunities.

The Pathways to Work Activation Policy provides for new governance structures to be put in place to provide enhanced monitoring and reporting arrangements on the establishment of the National Employment and Entitlement Services (NEES) and of SOLAS, the new Further Education and Training Authority.

The establishment of SOLAS will ensure the provision of 21st century high-quality further education and training programmes for the unemployed.

At a strategic level, an agreed and structured consultation process will be established between NEES and SOLAS, as well as other stakeholders including the Higher Education Authority and the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, in relation to the development and delivery of education and training programmes to meet the needs of those on the Live Register as well as national skills needs.

Action 7.12.7: Ensure that HEIs and other providers meet emerging and future skills needs of enterprise within the Green economy relevant to construction.

Ongoing Commitment: To be undertaken in context of new system of strategic dialogue to align funding of higher education institutions to performance in the achievement of national objectives for system development and priorities in relation to skills development. (DES)

Update: On schedule

The green economy was one of the key sectoral areas identified by Forfás in guidance documentation issued with the call for proposals to provide courses as part of the

Springboard 2012 programme. Almost 700 places are available on 31 different courses relevant to the skills needs of the green economy under Springboard 2012. Full course details are available on the Springboard website.

In the system overall, a new system of strategic dialogue to align funding of Higher Education institutions to performance in the achievement of national objectives for system development and priorities in relation to skills development commenced in 2012 and will be fully rolled out in the coming years.

Action 7.12.8: Continue to support 4,500 jobs in the green energy economy, through retrofit grants programmes and other energy efficiency initiatives.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: On schedule

€76 million has been allocated to Better Energy in 2012 which is administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). The programme budget is constantly monitored to re-direct funding to those areas of continuing strong demand (e.g. Warmer Homes and Workplaces). This will support job retention in the retrofitting sector and related areas of economic activity.

Continuation of support for energy efficiency to both residential and business sectors will depend on adequate budget resources being made available.

Retail and Wholesale

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:

Ongoing Commitment:

1. Support initiatives at regional/local level to identify ways to stimulate domestic demand and follow-up on ideas generated (e.g. Buy Local, Farmers Markets). (DJEI)
2. Measures addressing access to finance e.g. assess the Credit Review Office to ensure SMEs are getting the support they need on bank lending. (DoF)
3. Support management development networks and mentors for SMEs through Skillnets. (DES/ Skillnets)
4. Actions to manage energy costs e.g. ensure that subsidies for energy generation are cost effective and that enterprises are encouraged and enabled to improve energy efficiency. (DCENR/ SEAI/ DJEI/ Enterprise Agencies)

Update:

1. On schedule

There are a large number of on-going initiatives and events at regional and local levels focused on stimulating domestic demand, promoting consumer confidence and encouraging people to support local businesses.

The Department has met with retail representative groups as well as representatives of local business such as Chambers Ireland, SFA and ISME to discuss ways of continuing to promote and grow local business as well as creating jobs. The Department will continue to meet with representatives of the retail sector with a view to identifying successful models that could be promoted on a national level.

2. On schedule

A series of measures are underway to address issues regarding access to finance for enterprise. These include the launch of the Microfinance Fund in September 2012 (Action 2.3), assessment of the the Credit Review Office to ensure SMEs are getting the support they need on bank lending (Action 3.40), launch of the Development Capital Scheme (Action 3.29) and work with banks and small business representatives to help SMEs improve the quality of loan application (Action 3.37).

3. On schedule

Skillnets has developed a management development network, branded as *ManagementWorks*, which offers a suite of programmes designed to enhance the management capability of SMEs. A central element of the initiative is the inclusion of a mentoring approach to assist, support and challenge the owners and management teams of the participating firms to apply the learning to their own situations.

Actions completed in Quarter 3 included the launch of the first programme of Management Works. 10 SME firms are participating in the first programme focused on management team development which is being run in Dublin. Additional programmes in Galway, Cork, Waterford, Clare and Dublin will commence in October.

There is significant ongoing promotional activity to raise awareness of the *ManagementWorks* programme with SME candidate firms. Activity in Quarter 3 has included participating in the Small Firm Association's Better Business Awards (launched by An Taoiseach on 6th September) and speaking and exhibiting at a range of conferences and events nationally. This promotional activity will continue in October.

4. On schedule

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) provides a range of supports to SMEs and large industry with regard to reducing energy costs, implementing energy management systems and procuring the most efficient equipment.

The Better Energy Workplaces programme managed by SEAI supports sustainable upgrades to existing buildings, services and facilities in the public, commercial, industrial and community sectors. The programme aims to create energy efficiency exemplars in the wider business and public sectors.

Action 7.13.4: Promote greater adoption of ICTs to promote competitiveness, enhance productivity and increase innovation capacity across client companies in the retail sector, particularly in the context of accessing international markets.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (Enterprise Agencies)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland's Going Global Fund is a demand-led fund for applicants, including those in the retail sector, who have successfully established businesses in Ireland, and wish to explore opportunities to internationalise their business as a route to growth. In this fund there are supports for eligible applicants to develop plans to expand their current service/product offers for overseas markets, and examine possibilities for web-enabling its service offer for export markets.

However, as in Action 7.13.5, there have been no applications to date for funding from the retail sector. However, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has been in discussion with representatives from the Retail Sector to establish how the use of ICT can be increased, in particular to increase the number of businesses trading online.

Action 7.13.5: Support retail firms seeking to internationalise through Enterprise Ireland's Going Global and First Flight programmes.

Ongoing Commitment: Continue to support internationalising, eligible firms under Going Global. (EI)

Update: On schedule

Enterprise Ireland holds open Going Global Fund calls throughout the year. It is not anticipated that there will be a very significant flow of projects in the retail area, however certain aspects of a retail operation's business may be eligible should companies wish to pursue. To date, there have been no applications for funding in this space. Enterprise Ireland's Potential Exporters Division (launched during 2012), provides an easy to access website outlining the key issues faced by companies in exploring internationalisation – this is available to all companies operating in any sectors.

Action 7.13.8: Provide funding from the Workplace Basic Education Fund for up-skilling workers in these sectors.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DES / SOLAS)

Update: On schedule

The 2012 allocation for the Workplace Basic Education Fund is €2.5 million and County Dublin VEC co-ordinates its delivery. Approximately 25% of fund activity relates to those who work in the retail/wholesale sector.

Arts, Culture and Creative Enterprise

Action 7.14.2: Through Culture Ireland, maximise the business opportunities abroad for cultural and artistic businesses and enterprises by promoting Irish artists world-wide and showcasing our strengths in culture and creativity.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DAHG/ IDA)

Update: On schedule

Culture Ireland is supporting Irish artists to present work at strategic international festivals, venues and showcases, building touring networks and contacts for presenting Irish artists and companies' events. Culture Ireland is managing a range of Irish art form showcases at key arts markets including the Venice Biennale (at which Grafton Architects won the Silver Lion in August 2012) and the Edinburgh Festivals (where Irish artist Camille O'Sullivan won the Herald Angel award in August 2012).

Such events have attracted considerable positive international media coverage and in a number of cases bookings for future international events for Irish artists have been secured; enhancing international careers of Irish artists with resulting impacts on cultural tourism, trade and investment.

Action 7.14.3: Through Culture Ireland, undertake joint marketing activities with the enterprise development agencies to build 'brand Ireland' in this sector.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DAHG/ Enterprise Agencies)

Update: On schedule

Culture Ireland worked with a number of key State agencies to deliver an Irish arts programme as part of the Cultural Olympiad during London 2012. Work is ongoing with F.ounders and state agencies including Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Bord Bia on the Dublin Web Summit event on 18th and 19th October and Culture Ireland will present a

showcase of Irish music at the 2012 F.ounders event and a “Best of Irish Music” CD for distribution to attendees.

Culture Ireland worked closely with the Irish Consulate General in Scotland on the visit by Minister Deenihan to Edinburgh to attend the annual Culture Ireland showcase at the Edinburgh Festival and to attend the inaugural Edinburgh International Culture Summit, and with the Embassy in Berlin to showcase Irish dance and build contacts at the Tanzmesse biennial dance platform in Dusseldorf.

Work has commenced with tourism interests on cross promotion of The Gathering 2013, with Culture Ireland requiring that all Irish artists being supported, encourage participation in this initiative in 2013.

Action 7.14.4: Leverage the potential for language and roots tourism, working with Tourism Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland, Foras na Gaeilge and relevant partners.

Ongoing Commitment: As per headline action. (DAHG/ Tourism Ireland/ National Archives of Ireland/ Foras na Gaeilge and relevant partners)

Update: On schedule

The Irish language and roots sector shows great potential for creating additional employment in light of the growing interest in that area. For instance, theatre companies such as Fíbín, Graffiti, Branar, Axis and Mouth on Fire have travelled recently to China, Japan, Africa, Europe and the USA. There is also potential to develop international workshops from Forás na Gaeilge’s ongoing work in supporting both the visual and the written arts. In addition, there may be further potential for language tourism if current schemes such as the Gaeltacht summer camps scheme could be promoted and expanded.

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