

FIRST PROGRESS REPORT FOR

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS

2018



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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Commentary

This is the first report of 2018 to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the Action Plan for Jobs 2018. It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the first half (H1) of 2018.

The Government published the seventh in its multi-annual Action Plan for Jobs series in March this year. The Action Plan for Jobs 2018, which contains 55 actions and 105 measures to be implemented in 2018 by Government Departments and by agencies under the remit of these Departments, will build on the progress made since 2012 to improve supports for job-creating businesses and remove the barriers to employment creation across the economy.

These actions are additional to the over 2,800 actions already implemented under Action Plan for Jobs 2012-2017, cumulatively, and reported on in previous progress reports (see www.dbei.gov.ie).

The latest official statistics on employment and unemployment in Ireland (CSO LFS Quarter 1 2018) show that total employment increased by 62,100 in the year to the first quarter of 2018, bringing total employment to 2,220,500. There was an increase in full time employment of 72,000 and decrease in part-time employment of 9,900.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for June 2018 was 5.1%, down from a revised rate of 5.2% in May 2018 and down from 6.6% in June 2017.

Over the period since the launch of the Action Plan for Jobs in Q1 2012, over 357,000 jobs have been created in the Irish economy.

Measures due in H1 2018

In the first half of 2018, Departments and agencies were to deliver 30 measures under the Action Plan. 22 measures were completed. The remaining eight measures are underway but have been delayed, giving a completion rate of 73%.

Measures not delivered as planned in H1

As stated above, eight of the H1 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

Action 11	Explore alternative sources of finance
H1 Measure: Assist EIB to become more visible in the Irish market and increase their corporate loan deals	
Responsible body: DBEI	
Status: Delayed	
Update: Work on this action is ongoing. DBEI and its agencies are working closely with EIB to support them in increasing their activity in the Irish market, and in increasing their pipeline of potential deals. Continuing progress is prioritised for delivery in H2.	

Action 17	Publish a National Policy on Social Enterprise and deliver a range of supporting measures for the sector to promote job creation, encourage entrepreneurship and deliver social and community benefits
H1 Measure: Publish National Policy on Social Enterprise	
Responsible body: DRCD	
Status: Delayed	
Update: The Department of Rural and Community Development is currently preparing a new National Policy on Social Enterprise. To prepare for the policy formulation process, the Department has been working with the Social Finance Foundation over the last number of months to conduct research that will support the development of the new policy. A comprehensive consultation process with the sector, involving regional consultation workshops and an online survey, were carried out as part of the research. The Department also intends to consult further with stakeholders in the coming weeks to discuss the finalisation of the policy which will be published in the coming months.	

Action 20	Strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector in each region
H1 Measure: Publish and begin implementing a new Tourism Action Plan for the period 2018 - 2020 in line with the Government's Tourism Policy Statement, including actions to review targets for overseas visitors and revenue out to 2025 as well as actions aimed at addressing challenges such as Brexit, seasonality and regionality	
Responsible body: DTTAS/Fáilte Ireland/Tourism Ireland	
Status: Delayed	
Update: Work is currently underway in drafting the next Tourism Action Plan for the period 2018-2020. Workshops involving Tourism Leadership Group members and some key industry stakeholders were held in May and June 2018. Further workshops are scheduled over the summer with a view to finalising the actions that will be included in the plan which is now due to be finalised and published in the autumn. This measure is delayed due to the scope of the consultation process being widened.	

Action 20	Strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector in each region
H1 Measure: Publish a strategy to underpin the future development and funding of Greenways and announce a new funding call for Greenways proposals	
Responsible body: DTTAS	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: The Strategy was published and the funding call for Greenway proposals was announced on 20 July. The current budget available to the Department for the period 2018 to 2021 is almost €56m. It is intended that funding will be awarded late in 2018 for drawdown between 2019 and 2021. This is to provide local authorities with as much time as possible to progress the planning of their Greenway proposals.</p> <p>Greenways create sustainable new employment opportunities for the communities in which they are located in addition to providing opportunities for the expansion of existing businesses. The Waterford Greenway, which was part funded by DTTAS, officially opened in March 2017. Since opening, the village of Kilmacthomas, which stands at the half-way point between Waterford and Dungarvan has been transformed. Significant employment growth in the town is directly attributable to the Greenway and shows the effect that Greenways can have on our regional towns.</p>	

Action 25	Increase the focus of activation efforts on groups outside the labour force
H1 Measure: Review the range of income supports (including in-work supports) for people with disabilities to ensure payments are aligned between schemes and, if appropriate, amend the payment structure to ensure that it supports a return to work for people who wish to do so	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: This measure is underway. The principal focus of actions under this measure has been to meet the Government's commitment to consult with people with disabilities and their families in relation to Recommendations #9 and #10 of the Make Work Pay report. These address introducing the principle of early engagement for illness and disability payments (#10) (and particularly for young person's going onto Disability Allowance – #9b) as well as structural changes to the Disability Allowance and Domiciliary Care Allowance payments to facilitate this (#9a). Other actions include the introduction of a new scheme (Ability) aimed at providing employment 'preactivation' supports for young persons with disability.</p> <p>Given the complex issues involved, as part of the review, a consultation process has been organised with a professional facilitator in three phases. Phase 1 (Q3 2017) was mainly concerned with establishing a focus group of disability representatives and experts to co-design a consultation process and the relevant consultation documents. Phase 2 (Q1&2-2018) was a national consultation involving an online questionnaire and four regional events as well as a call for submissions. Phase 3 (Q2-2018) involves collating and interpreting the results of the national consultation and reconvening the stakeholders forum. The Stakeholder Focus Group met twice in May and June to agree the findings of the consultative process. The report documenting the results of the consultation is being finalised and will then be presented to Minister and Minister of State with a view to deciding on next steps.</p>	

Action 25	Increase the focus of activation efforts on groups outside the labour force
H1 Measure: Develop online ready-reckoner tools for people on disability and lone parent payments to assess the net benefits of returning to work	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: This measure is substantially complete.</p> <p>The Make Work Pay Report highlighted the need to communicate the potential monetary benefit of work for persons with disabilities and recommended “Develop a basic ready reckoner to enable people with disabilities to calculate the likely net monetary value of taking up or going back to work. This would cover basic tax and welfare entitlements, and indicate whether the person would be eligible on income grounds for a Medical Card.” (Recommendation #13)</p> <p>The Ready Reckoner for the disability payments has been launched. See links:</p> <p>https://www.mywelfare.ie/benefitofwork/disabilityandillnesspayments#resultPage</p> <p>http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Benefit-of-Work-Estimator.aspx</p> <p>Work on developing a Ready Reckoner for lone parent payments is ongoing and will build on the experience gained in the disability model. It is planned to commence main development stage in the coming weeks.</p>	

Action 26	Introduce a new work experience programme targeted at young jobseekers who face barriers to entry into the labour market
H1 Measure: Launch the Youth Employment Support Scheme	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: The Youth Employment Support Scheme, or YESS, was announced in Budget 2018. Work on the details of the scheme is at an advanced stage.</p>	

Action 29	Complete the independent review of the National Training Fund
H1 Measure: Complete the Review	
Responsible body: DES	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: The comprehensive review of the National Training Fund is near completion and the final report is expected to be published before end of August 2018.</p> <p>There were some delays in completing the full stakeholder engagement process, which was a vital component of this review.</p>	

H1 Measures

Preparing for Brexit

National Preparedness and Intensified Supports

Action 3	Engage directly with companies to increase response to Brexit challenges
H1 Measure: Roll out new EI competitiveness offer to complement existing supports	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: To drive the competitiveness agenda amongst its client companies Enterprise Ireland has developed new Competitiveness supports. These include Enterprise Ireland's new Operational Excellence Fund which has a fund of €20m; Market Discovery Fund (launched February 2018) (For additional detail see Action 5 below) and the Agile Innovation Fund (launched November 2017) (For additional detail see action 52 below).</p> <p>Operational Excellence supports activities which enable a transformative step change within the company, with projects built around an identifiable business innovation project. The offer provides grant support across multiple expenditure categories that address a client's needs across all aspects of their value chain and business operations; from supply chain management, internal business and production operations, and through to transport logistics and distribution networks.</p> <p>This integrated grant programme, with a single application and assessment process, is intended to incentivise companies to address their operational challenges in a holistic and comprehensive manner.</p>	

Action 3	Engage directly with companies to increase response to Brexit challenges
H1 Measure: Roll out a series of roadshows and other awareness-raising activities to maximise enterprise engagement at a regional level	
Responsible body: EI with LEOs and other relevant bodies	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: In 2018 as part of Enterprise Ireland's ongoing #PrepareforBrexit campaign, Enterprise Ireland organised five Prepare for Brexit clinics across the country. These clinics involved the cooperation of both the SBCI and relevant LEOs, with one clinic also supported by Údarás na Gaeltachta.</p> <p>The Brexit Advisory clinics provide access to subject matter experts and one-to-one support, and are designed to encourage companies to take concrete actions in preparing for Brexit. The events provide a platform for robust discussion, information sharing and practical advice around the key issues facing Irish companies.</p> <p>In January 2018, Enterprise Ireland also launched its latest support called The Brexit: Act On Initiative. This programme is designed to increase a client's awareness and prepare an action plan for Brexit around three main areas: Financial and Currency Management, Strategic Sourcing and Customs, and Transport and Logistics. To complement the Advisory Clinics, it is delivered with the client in a one-to-one format with advice sourced from a panel of independent consultants who are expert in these areas.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland's Brexit Strategic Marketing Review (SMR) Workshops, launched in 2017, are run throughout the regions of Ireland.</p>	

Intensifying and Diversifying Trade

Action 5	Launch new EI Market Discovery Fund, a combined suite of grant and in-market measures, to support enterprises in identifying and developing market diversification opportunities
H1 Measure: Launch the Fund	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: Enterprise Ireland's Market Discovery Fund was launched on 1 February 2018 and has been supported by a media campaign since March. The Fund aims to incentivise companies to research viable and sustainable market entry strategies in new geographic markets. It provides support towards internal and external costs incurred when researching new markets for products and services. Support can be provided over an 18 month period from project start date to project end date.</p> <p>Support for Market Discovery Fund applies when eligible companies are either looking at a new geographic market for an existing product/service or an existing geographic market for a new product/service. A company can apply for support for Market Discovery Fund more than once provided each application considers a new market for an existing product or existing market for a new product.</p>	

Improving Access to Finance

Action 8	Launch the €300 million Brexit Loan Scheme to address short-term working capital needs
H1 Measure: Launch the €300 million Brexit Loan Scheme	
Responsible body: DBEI, DAFM and SBCI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The Brexit Loan Scheme was launched on 28 March 2018. DBEI will monitor the uptake of this scheme.</p>	

Stimulating Regional Development Further

Realising our Regional Enterprise Potential

Action 15	Launch and roll out the Second Call of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund
H1 Measure: Monitor and support the implementation of the 21 projects approved through Call 1 of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund 2017	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The successful projects were selected, from over 75 applications, through a stringent evaluation process based on criteria which included impacts and value for money, collaboration and participation, viability and sustainability, building regional strengths and significance for innovation.</p> <p>Over €14m was approved for projects in the southern region, over €11m for projects in the eastern and midlands region and over €5m was approved for the northern and western region, subject to</p>	

grant conditions.

The successful projects include an exciting range of projects which will develop strong entrepreneurial or innovation ecosystems, encourage clustering activities between similar businesses, or develop specific sectors where there is the potential for competitive advantage.

During 2018 Enterprise Ireland has been finalising the legal agreements and working with the successful applicants to agree meaningful and measurable targets that will support the implementation of the 21 projects approved under the 2017 call of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (Call 1).

Action 15 Launch and roll out the Second Call of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund

H1 Measure: Launch and roll out Call 2 of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund

Responsible body: EI

Status: Complete

Update: Minister for Business, Enterprise, and Innovation launched the second call of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) on 16 April 2018. The call opened for applications on 16 April and closed at 3pm on 28 June 2018.

Tourism

Action 20 Strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector in each region

H1 Measure: Launch a dedicated campaign to boost rural tourism on Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way by encouraging short breaks from Great Britain outside the peak holiday period. The proposed initiative will build on existing air access to Cork, Kerry, Ireland West Airport – Knock, and Donegal airports

Responsible body: Fáilte Ireland/Tourism Ireland

Status: Complete

Update: In January 2018, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland launched the 'Wonders of the Wild Atlantic Way' campaign, a new €1.8 million marketing initiative, specially designed to boost tourist numbers from Britain to the Wild Atlantic Way.

A €1.35 million marketing campaign in Britain by Tourism Ireland is being complemented by a Fáilte Ireland €500,000 programme to support businesses along the Wild Atlantic Way to position themselves to benefit from the campaign, as well as to boost marketing campaigns in Northern Ireland.

The 'Wonders of the Wild Atlantic Way' campaign is being rolled out by Tourism Ireland in Britain in two phases: phase one was rolled out in February and March 2018 and phase two will happen in September and October. The campaign aims to entice British holidaymakers to visit the Wild Atlantic Way during the off-season months. It highlights ease of direct access from six British gateway cities to Cork, Kerry, Shannon, Knock, Donegal and City of Derry airports.

CSO figures show that the number of overseas visitors from Great Britain, over the five month period from January to May 2018 has increased by 2.4% compared to same five month period in 2017.

Broadband

Action 22	Increase digital footprint via the National Broadband Plan to over 77% of premises by 2018
H1 Measure: Publish a progress review of the actions contained in the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Report for 2017 and recommend further actions to be delivered in 2018	
Responsible body: DRCD, DCCAE	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce was established in July 2016 to identify solutions to broadband and mobile phone coverage deficits and to investigate how better services could be provided to consumers prior to full rollout of National Broadband Plan. The Taskforce published its final report in December 2016, which set out 40 actions aimed at addressing the issues it identified.</p> <p>An Implementation Group was established in early 2017 to oversee the timely implementation of all the actions of the Taskforce's report. On 21 February 2018, this Group published a review of progress made during 2017. The 2017 Review also contains the 2018 Work Programme for the Implementation Group. In total, there are 34 actions for delivery in 2018. Progress updates are published on the DRCD website on a quarterly basis. All progress reports, along with the 2017 review, are available at: http://drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/rural-development/mobile-phone-and-broadband-taskforce/.</p>	

Participation, Employment, and Meeting Skills Needs

Removing Barriers and Maximising Participation

Action 24	Increase awareness among employers of the portfolio of labour activation services and supports in order to maximise take up
H1 Measure: Develop and implement an Employer Relations Communication Strategy	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: A Communications Strategy for Employer Relations has been produced and implementation is underway with a working group established to progress this. A JobsIreland information campaign, one of the deliverables of the Strategy, has been initiated with Staff Information and Awareness Workshops taking place across the country. JobsIreland and EURES social media accounts have been actively used to engage with jobseekers, employers and to promote Department's services and supports available to jobseekers and employers.</p>	

Action 25	Increase the focus of activation efforts on groups outside the labour force
H1 Measure: Increase earnings disregards on welfare payments for lone parents from €110 to €130 per week to further facilitate transition to work for this group	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: Income disregards for lone parents in receipt of OFP (youngest child under 7) and JST (youngest child 7-14) were increased in Budget 2018 (operative from 26 March) to €130 per week, at an estimated cost of €6.5m in 2018 and €8.4m in a full year. The effect of this will be to increase the</p>	

amount of money that a lone parent can receive from employment without it reducing their social welfare payment, thus enhancing the incentive to take up employment or to increase hours worked.

Action 25 Increase the focus of activation efforts on groups outside the labour force

H1 Measure: Pilot whole-of-family engagement with jobseekers' payment claimants and their adult dependants

Responsible body: DEASP

Status: Complete

Update: Two pilots to engage with jobless households have commenced, focusing on Qualified Adults (QAs) with older children.

Communication with the QA is made via the primary claimant by Intreo Case Officers where the claimant is in the Intreo activation process. A standalone application will be developed to record and report on these engagements. . A further three pilots will follow.

Skills Needs for Enterprise

Action 31 Roll out Skills for Growth

H1 Measure: Roll out of Spotlight on Skills workshops to support companies to identify skills gaps and develop company skills plans

Responsible body: EI

Status: Complete

Update: As part of its involvement in the Skills for Growth Initiative (DES) Enterprise Ireland has been running a series of Spotlight on Skills tailored workshops. These workshops, designed specifically to meet the needs of Irish companies seeking to grow their businesses, are delivered in collaboration with the Irish Management Institute and are a practical means to allow Enterprise Ireland and LEO client companies to strategically consider the skills they need for business growth.

Enterprise Ireland, with the support of the Regional Enterprise Ireland offices and the Regional Skills Managers, has run eight Spotlight on Skills workshops across the country in 2018. Four workshops were held in 2017.

To end June 2018, 114 companies have participated. These companies employ over 14,406 people. A further six workshops are scheduled to take place during Q3 and Q4 2018.

Migration to Help Fill Ireland's Skills Gaps

Action 36 Ensure the Employment Permits System remains aligned with Labour Market needs

H1 Measure: Review the economic migration policies underpinning the employment permit regime to ensure that it is supportive of emerging labour market needs

Responsible body: DBEI

Status: Complete

Update: Review has been completed. Report is due to be submitted to the Minister for Business, Enterprise, and Innovation in July.

Boosting Productivity, Competitiveness and Innovation

Increasing Productivity and Capturing Opportunities

Action 38	Develop Sectoral Strategies for EI's client base
H1 Measure: Develop Enterprise Ireland's strategy for the Construction Sector	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: Enterprise Ireland has developed and is implementing its Construction sector strategy (2017- 2020).</p> <p>Irish Advantage in Construction: Enterprise Ireland, as part of its Construction Sector Strategy, has been focused on leveraging the Irish Advantage in Construction.</p> <p>In April 2018 as part of Enterprise Ireland's Asia Pacific Week Enterprise Ireland's Construction Sector Team with the support of its Singapore and Australia (Sydney) offices undertook a number of linked events bringing together Market experts and international Buyers with Enterprise Ireland client Construction companies. The events focused on raising awareness of emerging opportunities in the construction and related sectors in Singapore and Australia.</p> <p>A workshop on the UK construction market was held by Enterprise Ireland on 30 April 2018. The focus of the workshop was on current market demand and prospects, with customs and logistics issues covered in relation to pending changes arising from Brexit.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland's Construction Strategy has identified North America & Canada as developmental growth markets for both construction products and services. Increased focus by clients on these markets is delivering dividends.</p>	

Action 38	Develop Sectoral Strategies for EI's client base
H1 Measure: Develop Enterprise Ireland's strategy for Lifesciences	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The Board of Enterprise Ireland approved its new strategy for the Lifesciences sector. This strategy supports the implementation of Enterprise Ireland's 2017- 2020 Corporate and Eurozone strategies.</p>	

Action 39	Roll out Workplace Innovation Toolkit
H1 Measure: Roll out the Workplace Innovation toolkit (the toolkit provides an online questionnaire designed to facilitate self-evaluation of the organisation's capacity to be an innovative workplace; it also signposts resources and supports to enhance performance in terms of employee engagement, training, innovation, productivity)	
Responsible body: DBEI with WRC/EI/IDA/NSAI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The Workplace Innovation toolkit was rolled-out on 23 May 2018, and launched by Minister for Business, Enterprise, and Innovation.</p>	

The Workplace Innovation Toolkit is a practical approach to help companies and their workforces to identify where there is scope to improve their business and work practices; become more resilient and sustainable; enhance skills; and help maintain and create employment. This diagnostic toolkit will signpost companies to the relevant supports to help them improve and grow their businesses.

Action 41 Establish Ireland as a leader in the digital economy

H1 Measure: Agree, in consultation with stakeholders, a framework for the development of a high level National Digital Strategy, to provide a coherent vision across sectoral policies to position Ireland to maximise economic and societal benefits from digitalisation

Responsible body: D/Taoiseach/DCCAIE/DBEI, OGCI and other relevant Departments

Status: Complete

Update: An Interdepartmental Group has been established to progress the development of a new National Digital Strategy. A framework for its development has been completed, which reflects preliminary stakeholder consultations with civic society, enterprise representatives, industry, education providers and academia. This framework went to Government on the 18 July. As we progress beyond a framework to the detailed development of the new Strategy, more exhaustive stakeholder consultation will take place. The final Strategy will provide for a national narrative to understand the impacts of digital technology on Ireland and help all groups to assess how they can make the most of continuous digital transformation.

Research, Development, and Innovation for Smart Growth

Action 50 Commence implementation of the new cycle of Research Prioritisation for the period 2018-2023

H1 Measure: Commence implementation of the new cycle

Responsible body: DBEI

Status: Complete

Update: The revised Research Priority Areas for 2018 to 2023, with which the majority of competitively awarded public R&D funding will be aligned, were agreed by Government and launched in March 2018.

The objectives of Research Prioritisation are to create research activities of critical mass in areas of importance to Ireland; to efficiently extract maximum value from our national research investment; and to take research to market faster than in other jurisdictions. The revised themes and areas now include new opportunities such as Robotics; Artificial Intelligence, Augmented and Virtual Reality; Health and Well-being; Smart and Sustainable Food Production and Processing; Decarbonising the Energy System; Sustainable Living; and Advanced and Smart Manufacturing.

SFI has implemented the new cycle into all new calls launched since the completion of the refresh exercise.

Action 51	Meet the needs of industry in terms of research and innovation skills
H1 Measure: Develop and launch a new TechStart/GradStart programme for SMEs	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: on 17 May 2018 Enterprise Ireland launched its new GradStart Programme to support companies to continue to grow and compete internationally. The programme supports companies with ambitious growth plans to employ up to three graduates on a rolling basis for a 2-year contract duration for each graduate.</p> <p>This GradStart initiative, which supports the recruitment and retention of graduates, aims to assist eligible indigenous companies to scale and grow their businesses through the introduction of graduate talent to deliver clearly defined projects.</p> <p>In-company mentors will be identified to support the graduates, and the companies will provide the infrastructure to support the graduates for the duration of their employment, both in terms of their development and in the completion of their project.</p> <p>GradStart is currently being promoted directly to those companies attending Enterprise Ireland's Spotlight on Skills workshops and through Enterprise Ireland's Development Advisors. Promotion to graduates is being undertaken via careers officers in Universities and the Institutes of Technology. A full promotional campaign is scheduled to launch in H2.</p>	

Action 52	Provide and promote enhanced supports for companies to engage in and increase Research Development and Innovation (RD&I)
H1 Measure: Drive the increased take up of EI In-Company RD&I Toolkit which includes funding for Business Innovation, Design and Intellectual Property protection	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: In 2018 Enterprise Ireland has worked to drive an increase in the number of companies undertaking research, development and Innovation projects. To this end Enterprise Ireland streamlined its existing in-Company RD&I Toolkit and strengthened the offer with the inclusion of the new Agile Innovation Fund, Business Innovation funding, and more recently its Intellectual Property Strategy Development support.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland has highlighted its enhanced supports through the launch of a national campaign to promote innovation, which has been complemented by regional events to familiarise its clients with the new offers. 5 regional Agile Innovation Supports Events have taken place in H1.</p> <p>A new pilot Intellectual Property Strategy Offer was launched in Quarter 2. Again, support is available at two levels;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •IP Start - a grant to cover a portion of the cost of employing an IP advisor for a short period (up to 4 months). •IP Plus Grant - a grant to cover a portion of the costs of a medium-term consultancy assignment (up to 18 months). <p>There has been significant interest in this Offer with a number of applications received to date.</p>	

Action 52	Provide and promote enhanced supports for companies to engage in and increase Research Development and Innovation (RD&I)
H1 Measure: Launch a national campaign to promote Enterprise Ireland’s Agile Innovation offer	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: From April to June 2018 Enterprise Ireland ran a national media campaign to promote its Agile Innovation offer.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland’s Agile Innovation Fund, launched in November 2017, was introduced to help companies to respond more quickly to market opportunities and challenges, including those posed by Brexit. Responding to the export challenges and opportunities presented to companies, the new fund is designed to help companies develop new products, processes and services for new market opportunities, enabling exporters to respond quickly and maximise export performance.</p> <p>Through its fast-track approval and a streamlined online application process, Agile funding allows for a very simple and fast process from application to approval, benefiting companies in sectors with rapid design cycles to maintain their technology position.</p> <p>The fund is part of Enterprise Ireland’s wider Innovation Offer, which includes funding and supports for collaborative research, increasing the innovation capability of companies and funding for large R&D projects.</p>	

Action 55	Promote and facilitate access for companies to economically valuable satellite data via the EI supported national satellite data archive - enabled through ESA and EU Copernicus Programme
H1 Measure: Promote and facilitate access	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The national space data hub and access platform, SPÉir, (Satellite Platform for Éire), went live in June 2018. SPÉir forms the basis of the national data mining and pre-processing capability applied to Sentinel/ Copernicus data sets and services as well as freely available complimentary data globally.</p> <p>The Copernicus data sets are available on a free and open basis for research and development purposes. The introduction of SPÉir will allow for users, primarily in Ireland, to discover, merge and analyse large volumes of data as a basis of developing user applications and traded services offers primarily to institutional markets.</p> <p>SPÉir will provide Ireland with a basis for driving AI development activities – deep learning, parallel processing, automated processing etc.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland also resources both the Irish Delegation to the European Space Agency and EU Space Programmes – Copernicus, Galileo and H2020 – and is charged with maximising impact from the State’s investment in space. To this end Enterprise Ireland has negotiated agreements between Ireland, the European Space Agency and the European Commission, and separately with NUI Galway to establish a national space data repository in the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC), which is a national body under the aegis of the National University of Ireland, Galway.</p>	

Ongoing Measures

Preparing for Brexit

National Preparedness and Intensified Supports

Action 1	Undertake Adaptive Contingency Planning
Ongoing Measure: Departments and agencies to undertake extensive work and outreach (including with stakeholder organisations) in developing an adaptive whole-of-Government contingency plan	
Responsible body: DFAT, with relevant Departments and agencies	
Status: On Schedule	
<p>Update: This measure has been repositioned as an ongoing measure to take account of ongoing developments in this area. Between January and April of this year, Government Departments and Agencies have engaged in over 350 high level and stakeholder engagements. These engagements have informed the Governments overall contingency planning.</p> <p>Contingency planning for a no-deal or worst-case outcome, bringing together the detailed work being undertaken by individual Ministers and their Departments on issues within their policy remit, is ongoing as it must reflect developments as they occur. Its focus is on the immediate economic, regulatory, and operational challenges which would result from such an outcome. It assumes a trading relationship based on the default WTO rules, but also examines the possible effects on many other areas of concern.</p> <p>This work is therefore providing baseline scenarios for the impact of Brexit across all sectors, which can then be adapted as appropriate in light of developments in the EU-UK negotiations, including in regard to transition arrangements and the future relationship. This approach is also enabling the modelling of potential responses under different scenarios.</p>	

Action 1	Undertake Adaptive Contingency Planning
Ongoing Measure: Taking account of developments in the EU-UK negotiations, Government will publish a new comprehensive paper on its approach to the next phase of the negotiations and its up-to-date assessment of the economic and sectoral challenges posed by Brexit and the responses to these challenges	
Responsible body: DFAT, with relevant Departments and agencies	
Status: On Schedule	
<p>Update: This measure has been repositioned as an ongoing measure to take account of ongoing developments in this area. In total 40 reports analyzing the effects and challenges of Brexit across a broad range of sectors and in some cases setting out responses have been published to date by Government Departments. All these reports are available on a dedicated Brexit webpage on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website.</p> <p>The Government's analysis and assessment of the economic and sectoral challenges posed by Brexit and the response to these challenges is ongoing and dependent on state of play in negotiations. The Government will continue to keep stakeholders and the public updated on these developments.</p>	

Intensifying and Diversifying Trade

Action 6	Drive increase in exports to the euro-zone and key growth regions
Ongoing Measure: Implement EI Eurozone strategy	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: On Schedule	
<p>Update: Launched in 2017 Enterprise Ireland’s Eurozone Strategy 2017-2020 is a key element of the Enterprise Ireland 4 year corporate strategy. The successful execution of the Eurozone strategy will deliver a stronger, more diversified indigenous business sector with an expanded Eurozone footprint, making an even stronger contribution to jobs and economic growth in Ireland.</p> <p>To achieve this success Enterprise Ireland is encouraging companies who have limited exports to the Eurozone to expand their reach and enter Eurozone markets. In tandem, Enterprise Ireland is also working with its client companies who already have substantial exports into the Eurozone to deepen their presence and scale their exports into the region.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland has been encouraging more clients to enter the Eurozone through its #GlobalAmbition campaign, and its market awareness events and similarly promoting greater awareness of Irish innovation capabilities amongst Eurozone buyers to encourage them to source from Ireland through the ‘Irish Advantage’ digital campaign.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland client companies exports to the Eurozone grew to €4.61bn in 2017 a year on year increase of 9%.</p> <p>Working with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, and partners across Government, Enterprise Ireland has substantially increased the level of resources in the Eurozone, as well as supports available to client companies including market access grants, business innovation funding, market opportunity reviews, management development programmes and access to trade missions/market study visits.</p>	

Action 6	Drive increase in exports to the euro-zone and key growth regions
Ongoing Measure: Roll out EI’s #Irish Advantage export promotion campaign	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: On Schedule	
<p>Update: Enterprise Ireland, through its #GlobalAmbition campaign, has been encouraging its client companies to enter the Eurozone. The campaign showcases companies who are achieving success in the Eurozone and advising on how to enter the Eurozone through market guides, information, sector workshops and insights. The campaign focuses on key Enterprise Ireland supports: an Agile Innovation sub-campaign launched in 2017, with Market Diversification and Competitiveness-themed sub-campaigns launching in Q1 and Q2 2018. An ongoing Prepare for Brexit campaign continues to encourage clients to apply for additional supports and funding in response to market changes.</p> <p>The international Irish Advantage digital campaign complements the domestic Global ambition campaign, by targeting buyers in the Eurozone and other key markets to stimulate awareness of Irish innovation capabilities and encourage them to source from Ireland. The campaign focuses on sectors in which opportunities for Irish exporters are particularly strong. Medtech and high-tech construction lead generation campaigns launched in 2017, with data centre construction, fintech and medtech supply chain sub-campaigns launching in Q1 and Q2 2018.</p>	

Action 7	Assist agri-food and drinks companies exporting to the UK to expand alternative markets
Ongoing Measure: Expand Bord Bia programme of market diversification initiatives aimed at helping the agri-food sector to address the market challenges arising from Brexit, including market prioritisation, more resources for promotion and support in UK and international markets, and strengthened strategic marketing processes	
Responsible body: Bord Bia	
Status: On Schedule	
<p>Update: Bord Bia’s market prioritisation study continues with summary reports completed for 15 markets for each of meat, dairy, prepared consumer foods, beverages and seafood. These reports provide a 15-20 page summary on each market exploring market trends, the competitive set, distribution and import structures and a more detailed analysis of potential opportunities for Irish exports. A deep dive analysis is underway for five selected markets for meat and dairy with other categories to follow over the coming months. The focus of these deep dives is to undertake substantial analysis of market dynamics on the ground and to commence identification of key importers. The deep dive for meat is completed with dairy and seafood to follow in July. The shape of the deep dive analysis for prepared consumer foods and beverages is currently being agreed with industry.</p> <p>Considerable focus has been placed on maintaining strategic relationships with key buyers in the UK with ongoing engagement taking place at a senior level with key retail and foodservice customers. Most recently Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine undertook a series of high level meetings with five key customers in the UK to reassure them of Ireland’s commitment to the UK market and to engage on ways to work together to help further strengthen our relationships.</p> <p>In terms of market diversification Bord Bia’s recent Marketplace International 2018 event attracted more than 540 buyers to Ireland to meet with 185 Irish food and drink companies through a series of bespoke itineraries and a ‘speed dating’ event in the RDS which saw almost 5,000 meetings take place over the course of one day. Over half of the buyers at Marketplace came from emerging markets.</p> <p>Bord Bia has continued to build its route to market way, by putting in place building blocks for a single client service process to help client companies get to market in a more efficient and timely fashion. Significant focus has been put on developing a robust commercial strategy process, that will build client companies marketing capability. This has included the delivery of internal and client workshops, a pilot project with 1:1 support for client companies to develop their own commercial marketing strategies using the new ‘Plan to Grow’ process, and the continued development of a new online platform to house all of the content, tools and support material.</p>	

Action 7	Assist agri-food and drinks companies exporting to the UK to expand alternative markets
Ongoing Measure: Bord Bia to maintain support for Marketplace 2018 and broaden focus on emerging markets and to deliver 50% of buyers from non-EU markets	
Responsible body: Bord Bia	
Status: On Schedule	
<p>Update: Over 57% of overseas buyers participating at Marketplace International 2018 were from international markets. Overall, Marketplace International 2018 attracted over 540 buyers from 52</p>	

markets worldwide with bespoke itineraries and an event in the RDS which saw almost 5,000 meetings take place with 185 food and drink companies. Of the 52 markets represented, 19 markets were new to the event, demonstrating the increased market reach of the diversification strategy of Bord Bia. The new participating markets included Austria, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Switzerland and Ukraine.

Improving Access to Finance

Action 10 Consider other sources of finance for SMEs impacted by Brexit

Ongoing Measure: Engage with the European Commission on the approval process on all Brexit-related State Aid issues

Responsible body: DBEI

Status: On Schedule

Update: A technical working group on State Aid was established in November 2017, which meets each month. In between these meetings, there has been engagement on specific issues to continue to progress matters.

Stimulating Regional Development Further

Strengthening the Rural Economy

Action 16 Support future economic development and job creation in rural Ireland through the Action Plan for Rural Development

Ongoing Measure: Support future economic development through the Action Plan for Rural Development

Responsible body: DRCD

Status: On Schedule

Update: The second Progress Report on the Action Plan for Rural Development was published on 4 May 2018, and is available at <https://drcd.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/APRD-Second-Progress-Report-Final-PDF.pdf>

Of the 270 actions reported on, 254 have been completed or are substantially advanced, representing a delivery rate of 93%. A small number of actions (16) due for delivery in 2017 were delayed, these will continue to be monitored with a view to their completion as soon as possible.

Action 17 Publish a National Policy on Social Enterprise and deliver a range of supporting measures for the sector to promote job creation, encourage entrepreneurship and deliver social and community benefits.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver measures to support Social Enterprise

Responsible body: DRCD, Pobal

Status: On Schedule

Update: The Department of Rural and Community Development is currently preparing a new National Policy on Social Enterprise. To prepare for the policy formulation process, the Department

has been working with the Social Finance Foundation over the last number of months to conduct research that will support the development of the new policy. A comprehensive consultation process with the sector, involving regional consultation workshops and an online survey, were carried out as part of the research. The Department also intends to consult further with stakeholders in the coming weeks to discuss the finalisation of the policy which will be published in the coming months.

Action 18	Continue to develop and implement a range of programmes to support rural economic development including, amongst others: LEADER, Town and Village Renewal Scheme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme
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Ongoing Measure: Continue to develop and implement a range of programmes to support rural economic development

Responsible body: DRCD

Status: On Schedule

Update: The Department is continuing to develop and implement LEADER, Town and Village Renewal Scheme and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme in 2018.

1,104 LEADER projects have been approved to date in 2018 for funding in excess of €32m.

The 2018 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme was launched in June with an allocation of €12 million for the development and maintenance of outdoor amenities such as greenways, blueways and cycleways. In April the 2018 Town and Village Renewal Scheme was launched with a funding allocation of €15m. The 2018 Scheme will again focus on supporting projects which demonstrate strong economic impacts for the nominated town/village. The closing date for applications to be submitted to DRCD under the 2018 scheme was 30 June 2018.

Agri-Food

Action 19	Support new business ventures in the agri-food sector
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Ongoing Measure: Support food start-ups through initiatives with retailers, including the Food Academy Advance with Musgraves Supervalu and Taste Buds programme with Tesco

Responsible body: DAFM

Status: On Schedule

Update: Bord Bia's retail services support small and medium Irish food and drink businesses that need support in growing their brand and building their supply network. Building on work to date with Musgraves and Tesco these services have now expanded to include the Lidl Kick Start Supplier Development Programme. In total over 60 Food and drink suppliers are expected to take part in these programmes in 2018 with their products placed in more than 300 stores across the country. Bord Bia continues to work with these retailers to identify potential export opportunities.

Action 19	Support new business ventures in the agri-food sector
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Ongoing Measure: Undertake commercial projects proposals, with the participation of relevant Government agencies to deliver knowledge transfer on Ireland's Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI)

Responsible body: DAFM, SFSI

Status: On Schedule

Update: Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI) has developed a pipeline of projects internationally, for training and consultancy services, based on Ireland's expertise in sustainable agriculture and food. Projects in development include those funded directly by governments overseas and by international funding agencies including the European Commission and UN agencies. SFSI is also co-operating with Irish Aid on a number of activities.

Projects delivered to date include food safety training (Saudi Arabia 2015-2017), a series of assignments with Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the UN to expose Southern and Eastern European countries to Ireland's agri-food systems and a food SME project in Saudi Arabia (2018).

Broadband

Action 22 Increase digital footprint via the National Broadband Plan to over 77% of premises by 2018

Ongoing Measure: Intensively manage the NBP procurement process to engage the bidder to roll out the State intervention network

Responsible body: DCCAE

Status: On Schedule

Update: The NBP procurement process is now in its final stages. Officials from the Department continue to intensively manage the process to engage a bidder to roll out the State intervention network.

Commercial investment in high speed broadband also continues, including eir's deployment of high speed broadband to 300,000 premises in line with its obligations under an April 2017 Commitment Agreement with the Minister for CCAE.

Action 22 Increase digital footprint via the National Broadband Plan to over 77% of premises by 2018

Ongoing Measure: Continue to work with local authorities to plan for, and facilitate early access to, high-speed broadband to rural communities by identifying and addressing barriers in advance of the rollout of the National Broadband Plan, and through the rollout of Strategic Community Access Hubs across Ireland

Responsible body: DRCD, LAs

Status: On Schedule

Update: An Implementation Group was established in early 2017 to oversee the timely implementation of all the actions of the Taskforce's report. On 21 February 2018, this Group published a review of progress made during 2017. The 2017 Review also contains the 2018 Work Programme for the Implementation Group. In total, there are 34 actions for delivery in 2018. Progress updates are published on the DRCD website on a quarterly basis. All progress reports, along with the 2017 review, are available at: <http://drcd.gov.ie/about/rural/rural-development/mobile-phone-and-broadband-taskforce/>

Participation, Employment, and Meeting Skills Needs

Removing Barriers and Maximising Participation

Action 23	Implement the Pathways to Work Strategy
Ongoing Measure: Implement the Strategy	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: On Schedule	
Update: The PtW Strategy is being implemented. Quarterly status reports are published on the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection website.	

Action 25	Increase the focus of activation efforts on groups outside the labour force
Ongoing Measure: Expand the use of Intreo Centres as a gateway to engage with people with disabilities and increase the number of Intreo staff trained in the provision of employment supports to people with disability	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: On Schedule	
<p>Update: Intreo provides a professional employment service which is carried out by appropriately trained Case Officers and can include advice and information on income supports, training and development opportunities, employment support, career guidance services and job placements.</p> <p>This is a personalised supportive collaborative service tailored to meet the individual circumstances of the client. People with a disability can avail of this service on a voluntary basis by contacting their local Intreo Centre.</p> <p>The Department has supported Intreo Case Officers in completing an education programme with the National College of Ireland, QQI Level 8 Certificate in Employability Services, since November 2016. The programme covers skills and knowledge development around engaging with and supporting clients, including people with disabilities. It also includes the range of Departmental employment supports and interventions, in addition to further education and training opportunities and accessing same. To date 100 Officers have participated in this programme.</p> <p>The Department's learning and development strategy involves the development, with NCI, of a range of accredited programmes, which will be made available to Intreo staff.</p>	

Skills Needs for Enterprise

Action 31	Roll out Skills for Growth
Ongoing Measure: Promote the use of a new skills audit tool by providing one on one assistance from a Regional Skills Forum Manager and assist the development of skills plans with a view to developing appropriate targeted responses by the Education and Training System	
Responsible body: Regional Skills Fora/DES	
Status: On Schedule	
Update: Audits of skills needs within individual enterprises is carried out by the Regional Skills Forum Managers in each of the nine regions as part of the Skills for Growth project. The Department of Education and Skills is currently considering the inclusion of new partners in the project in order to maximise the potential of the audit tool.	

Boosting Productivity, Competitiveness and Innovation

Enhancing the Business Environment and Competitiveness

Action 42	The National Competitiveness Council's priority issues for sustainable competitiveness over the short to medium term will be brought to Government. Individual Government departments will respond and bring forward proposals as appropriate to enhance compet
Ongoing Measure: Ensure prioritised NCC recommendations and actions to address them are advanced through the Cabinet Committee process	
Responsible body: D/Taoiseach, DBEI, all Departments	
Status: On Schedule	
Update: The NCC Costs of Doing Business Report (regarding priority issues for sustainable competitiveness over the short to medium term) was considered at SOG A in April and was noted by Cabinet on 29 May 2018. The Report was published on 1 June 2018.	

Action 44	Implement the recommendations of the Cost of Insurance Working Group
Ongoing Measure: Implement the recommendations of the Working Group, both on motor insurance and employer and public liability cover	
Responsible body: DoF	
Status: On Schedule	
Update: The relevant Government Departments and Agencies are continuing to implement the recommendations of the Report on the Cost of Motor Insurance, in parallel with the implementation of the recommendations of the Report on the Cost of Employer and Public Liability Insurance, which was published in January 2018. The recommendations in the Action Plan of each of the primary reports have detailed timelines for implementation. There is a commitment that the Working Group will prepare quarterly updates on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations from both Reports and five such updates have been published on the Department's website. The fifth such update was published in May 2018 and shows that of the 57 separate deadlines set across the two Reports up to the end of Q1 2018, 48 have been met. Substantial work has also been undertaken in respect of the nine incomplete Action Points, the nine Action Points which are classified as "ongoing", and the remaining Action Points with later deadlines. The sixth quarterly update is expected to be published around the end of July 2018 and will focus in particular on the 14 actions – seven from each of the primary Reports – due for completion in Q2 2018.	

Glossary of Terms

AIRO	All Ireland Research Observatory	DSM	Digital Single Market
APJ	Action Plan for Jobs	D/Taoiseach	Department of the Taoiseach
BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara	DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
BTWFD	Back to Work Family Dividend	ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
CCSP	Community Childcare Subvention Plus	EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
CEDRA	Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas	EI	Enterprise Ireland
daa	Dublin Airport Authority	EIB	European Investment Bank
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	ERC	European Research Council
DBEI	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation	ETB	Education and Training Board
DCCAIE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment	EU	European Union
DCCoI	Design and Craft Council of Ireland	FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht	FET	Further Education and Training
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	FLAGS	Fisheries Local Action Groups
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	GNP	Gross National Product
DES	Department of Education and Skills	H	Half Year
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
DoF	Department of Finance	HEA	Higher Education Authority
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	HEI	Higher Education Institution
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality	HIHI	Health Innovation Hub Ireland
DoD	Department of Defence	HPSU	High Potential Start-Ups
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	HSA	Health and Safety Authority
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development	ICT	Information and Communication Technology
		IDA	IDA Ireland
		IFS	Irish Financial Services
		IP	Intellectual Property
		ITI	InterTrade Ireland
		KDB	Knowledge Development Box
		KTI	Knowledge Transfer Ireland

LAs	Local Authorities
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LEADER	Liaisons entre actions de developpement de l'économie rurale
LSRA	Legal Services Regulatory Authority
LEO/s	Local Enterprise Office/s
Mbps	Megabytes per second
MEND	Midlands, East and North Dublin
MFI	Micro Finance Ireland
NBP	National Broadband Plan
NCC	National Competitiveness Council
NPF	National Planning Framework
NSAI	National Standards Authority of Ireland
NSC	National Skills Council
NSS	National Skills Strategy
NTF	National Training Fund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGCIO	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
OGP	Office of Government Procurement
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RAGs	Regional Action Groups
RAPJ	Regional Action Plan for Jobs
R&D	Research and Development
RDI	Research, development and innovation
RSF	Regional Skills Fora
SBCI	Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland
SBIR	Small Business Innovation Research
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOLAS	An tSeribhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
ÚnaG	Údaras na Gaeltachta
VAT	Value Added Tax
WRC	Workplace Relations Commission

