

SECOND PROGRESS REPORT FOR

ACTION

PLAN

FOR JOBS

2018



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Contents

Contents	2
Commentary	4
H2 Measures	12
Preparing for Brexit	13
National Preparedness and Intensified Supports	13
Intensifying and Diversifying Trade	13
Improving Access to Finance	14
Stimulating Regional Development Further	16
Realising our Regional Enterprise Potential	16
Tourism	17
Investing in Infrastructure for Growth	18
Broadband	18
Participation, Employment, and Meeting Skills Needs	19
Facilitating Female Participation in Employment	19
Talent Pool for a Growing Economy	19
Skills Needs for Enterprise	20
Boosting Productivity, Competitiveness and Innovation	21
Increasing Productivity and Capturing Opportunities	21
Enhancing the Business Environment and Competitiveness	23
Female Entrepreneurship	25
Research, Development, and Innovation for Smart Growth	25
Ongoing Measures	30
Preparing for Brexit	31
National Preparedness and Intensified Supports	31
Intensifying and Diversifying Trade	32
Improving Access to Finance	35
Stimulating Regional Development Further	35
Strengthening the Rural Economy	35
Agri-Food	37
Broadband	38
Participation, Employment, and Meeting Skills Needs	38

Removing Barriers and Maximising Participation	38
Skills Needs for Enterprise	39
Boosting Productivity, Competitiveness and Innovation	40
Enhancing the Business Environment and Competitiveness	40
Glossary of Terms	41
APJ Notes	43

Commentary

This is the second 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 second half (H2) of 2018.

The Government published the seventh in its multi-annual Action Plan for Jobs series in March 2018. 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.

In the second half of 2018, Departments and agencies were to deliver 54 measures under the Action Plan. 43 measures were completed. The remaining 11 measures are underway but have been delayed, giving a completion rate of 80%. With the H1 actions that have been completed taken into consideration along with the delivered ongoing actions, the overall completion rate for 2018 stands at 87%.

The latest official statistics on employment and unemployment in Ireland (CSO LFS Quarter 4 2018) show that total employment increased by 50,500 in the year to the fourth quarter of 2018, bringing total employment to 2,281,300. This represents an increase of 48,200 in full time employment and 2,300 in part-time employment.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2018 was 5.7%, unchanged from November 2018 and down from 6.2% in December 2017.

These actions contained in the 2018 Action Plan are in addition to c. 3200 measures already implemented under Action Plan for Jobs 2012-2017, cumulatively, and reported on in previous progress reports (see www.dbei.gov.ie). Having now completed the Action Plan for Jobs strategy, the overall final implementation rate over the seven year period (2012-2018) was 92%

In the period since the launch of the Action Plan for Jobs in Q1 2012, over 390,000 jobs have been created in the Irish economy. In the first quarter of 2012, when the Action for Jobs was introduced, seasonally adjusted unemployment stood at 16%, which has now fallen to 5.7% (LFS Q4 2018).

Measures not delivered as planned in H2

As previously stated, eleven of the H2 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

Action 12	Develop and launch a Business Finance Advisory Hub to help firms (SMEs) strengthen their financial planning skills and make informed funding/investment decisions
H2 Measure: Develop and launch a Business Finance Advisory Hub	
Responsible body: DBEI with DoF, SBCI	
Status: Delayed	
Update: Work is ongoing with regard to development of a Business Finance Advisory Hub. Launch is expected in the first half of 2019	

Action 14	Finalise the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies reflecting the economic competitiveness and enterprise development agenda for each of the three Regional Assembly areas
H2 Measure: Finalise and publish Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies as complementary regional development frameworks to the Government's National Planning Framework	
Responsible body: DHPLG, Regional Assemblies, DBEI, DES	
Status: Delayed	
Update: Executive of each Regional Assembly will prepare a report on the public consultation process, followed by determination of any proposed changes to the draft RSEs by the Assemblies prior to finalisation, which is expected to be achieved prior to the European and local elections in May 2019.	

Action 22	Increase digital footprint via the National Broadband Plan to over 77% of premises by 2018
H2 Measure: Continue to monitor progress in the eir 300k rural rollout. Ensure that, in line with Commitment Agreement, all 300k premises are passed by the end of 2018	
Responsible body: DCCA	
Status: Delayed	
Update: The Department continues to engage with eir and monitor the roll out to 300,000 rural premises under the April 2017 Commitment Agreement. To end of December 2018 over 210,000 premises have been passed under this roll out.	
eir has indicated to the Department that their deployment schedule has been impacted by storms Emma and Ophelia, and other construction issues. The company has proposed new timelines for its deployment which would see the project completed by mid-2019.	

Action 24	Increase awareness among employers of the portfolio of labour activation services and supports in order to maximise take up
H2 Measure: Conduct a customer survey to gauge awareness of and satisfaction with services and support	
Responsible body: DEASP	
Status: Delayed	
Update: The Employer Engagement Customer Satisfaction Survey has received initial approval from the Annual Project Conference and will revert to PGC for permission to proceed with the Request for Tender early in 2019.	

Action 33	Align skills supply with enterprise needs
H2 Measure: Support up to 6,200 apprenticeship registrations and 3,900 traineeship enrolments	
Responsible body: SOLAS Apprenticeship Council, DES, HEA, HEIs	
Status: Delayed	
Update: In 2018 there was a total of 5,648 new registrations (5,058 craft and 590 new). Target of 4,697 registrations in craft was exceeded but did not meet our target of 1,500 registrations in new apprenticeships was not met.	
We are on target to meet 3,900 traineeship enrolments (final figures not yet available).	
As set out in the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020, SOLAS has completed a review on pathways to participation in apprenticeship. The purpose of the review is to ensure that our national apprenticeship system is more reflective of the range and diversity of our population, more inclusive of diverse backgrounds and abilities and that apprenticeship opportunities are more readily accessible to all. The review is available on SOLAS website www.solas.ie .	

Action 33	Align skills supply with enterprise needs
H2 Measure: Develop 10 new Apprenticeship programmes in sectors of the economy with identified skills needs	
Responsible body: SOLAS Apprenticeship Council, DES, HEA, HEIs	
Status: Delayed	
Update: 9 new apprenticeships have been rolled out to date in 2018. A further 2 which were due to get underway by year end have now been delayed until Quarter 1 2019.	

Action 34	Publish and implement successor to the ICT Skills Action Plan
H2 Measure: Publish and implement successor to the ICT Skills Action Plan	
Responsible body: DES/DBEI with EGFSN	
Status: Delayed	
Update: The ICT Skills Action Plan 2019-2022 was signed off by the Minister for Education and Skills on 20 December 2018. Technology Skills 2022: Ireland's Third ICT Skills Action Plan was published on 18 February 2019.	

Action 38	Develop Sectoral Strategies for EI's client base
H2 Measure: Develop an end market strategy for Timber Products, incorporating the full supply chain (as part of the implementation of the Timber Sector Action Plan 2017/2020)	
Responsible body: EI, DAFM	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: Enterprise Ireland has developed and is implementing its Timber Products Action Plan 2017-2020.</p> <p>A significant 2020 deliverable set out in the Action plan is the development of a wider strategy for Forest Industries Sector.</p> <p>This action requires the inputs and collaboration of various departments, agencies and industry groups. Work has commenced on this strategy which is expected to be completed in 2019 / 2020.</p>	

Action 41	Establish Ireland as a leader in the digital economy
H2 Measure: Develop an Industry 4.0 strategy that responds to the specific opportunities and challenges for the manufacturing sector based in Ireland arising from the impact of digital technologies	
Responsible body: DBEI	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: DBEI has developed a draft final document for the 'Industry 4.0 Strategy'.</p> <p>The strategy aims to provide manufacturing and supply chain firms in Ireland with the opportunity to adopt advanced digital technologies so as to realise productivity gains and harness new business opportunities. Such activity is set to transform manufacturing globally and positioning Ireland at the forefront of this digital transformation will ensure sustainability of high quality jobs and support economic progress into the future in Ireland. The strategy sets out a vision, goals and set of strategic actions, and strategic actions are focused under a number of themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and Understanding of Concepts • Exploring and Planning • Implementation of Firm-Level Industry 4.0 Strategies • Ecosystem • Implementation of the National Industry 4.0 Strategy 	

Action 41	Establish Ireland as a leader in the digital economy
H2 Measure: Expand the Trading Online Voucher Scheme and increase number of vouchers from the target of 1,000 in 2017 to 1,500 for 2018	
Responsible body: DCCAIE with LEOs/EI	
Status: Delayed	
Update: 1,100 vouchers approved to end of December 2018.	

Action 54	Launch new “Industry Connectors” (research and technology domain experts) as part of Knowledge Transfer Ireland’s Strategy 2018 -2021, brokering quality engagement and collaboration between business and the Higher Education sector
H2 Measure: Launch new “Industry Connectors” as part of Knowledge Transfer Ireland’s Strategy 2018 -2021	
Responsible body: KTI/EI	
Status: Delayed	
<p>Update: The aim of the Industry Connectors is to increase quality engagement and collaboration between companies and publicly funded research and technology in the higher education sector. This “Industry Connector” team will be a resource that will provide information for companies that helps them navigate their way to finding potential partners and supports and that can advise companies and entrepreneurs on the mechanisms to engage and the cross agency supports available. The official request for sanction of KTI Connector posts is to be submitted by Enterprise Ireland to Department of Business Enterprise & Innovation.</p> <p>Commencement of the recruitment process is subject to sanction being received.</p>	

Update on actions delayed in H1

As reported in the First Progress Report for 2018, there were eight measures delayed. The following five measures have now been delivered:

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: Completed H2 2018	
<p>Update: A Tourism Action Plan for the period 2019-2021 was published on 19 December 2018. The plan contains 27 actions and addresses the potential for recalibrated growth targets, sustainable tourism, Brexit, a greater emphasis on regional growth and season extension, enhanced tourism experiences and the contribution of wider Government to support tourism. A copy of the plan is available on the Departments website at the following link:</p> <p>http://www.dttas.ie/tourism/english/tourism-policy</p> <p>Two of the actions from this plan were agreed by the Tourism Leadership Group in April 2018 and the implementation of both actions has begun. Working Groups have been established to address recalibrated tourism targets and also to review sustainable tourism development.</p>	

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: Completed H2 2018

Update: The Strategy was published and the funding call for Greenway proposals was announced on 20 July 2018. The current budget available to the Department for the period 2019 to 2021 is €53m. The funding call closed on 30 November 2018 and 22 applications were received from 15 Local Authorities and 1 State Agency, funding will be awarded in Quarter 2 2019 with drawdown between 2019 and 2021.

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.

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: Completed H2

Update: 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) .

The Ready Reckoner for the disability payments has been launched. See links:

<https://www.mywelfare.ie/benefitofwork/disabilityandillnesspayments#resultPage>

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Benefit-of-Work-Estimator.aspx>

Work on developing a Ready Reckoner for lone parent (and jobseeker) payments is complete. The new jobseeker/lone parent Benefit of Work Estimator went live on 27 October 2018.

It is located at: <https://www.mywelfare.ie/benefitofworkjsestimator>

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: Completed H2

Update: The Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS) was introduced on Monday 1 October 2018 and has been open to applications from that date. The YESS is a work experience programme, targeted at young jobseekers who are 12 months unemployed or who face significant barriers to employment. The scheme aims to provide participants with the opportunity to learn basic work and social skills in a supportive environment while on a work placement. The programme is available to jobseekers and other eligible cohorts who are:

- aged 18 years or over and under 25; on their commencement on the programme and
- have been out of work and in receipt of a qualifying payment for at least 12 months, or
- if unemployed for less than 12 months, be considered by a Departmental Case Officer to face a significant barrier to work.

Participants must be in receipt of one of the following payments: Jobseekers Allowance, Jobseekers Benefit, One Parent Family Payment, Jobseeker Transition Payment, Disability Allowance, Blind Person's Pension or Supplementary Welfare Allowance.

Participation on the YESS is wholly voluntary for both jobseekers and Placement Hosts. The YESS is a work experience placement programme only, and is not employment. Participants on the scheme continue to receive their weekly social welfare payment with an additional top-up allowance as a contribution towards expenses arising from their participation on the YESS. A Standard Agreement between the participant and Placement Host forms the basis of the work experience placement, and this includes details of the placement duties, weekly hours of attendance and the knowledge/skills to be developed during the course of the placement. Placements are for an initial 3 months, with the option to extend this further to 6 months, following a review of same by a case officer after 2 months. Each placement is a standard 24 hours per week.

During the placement, participants are paid a weekly YESS payment by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The total weekly YESS personal rate of payment for 24 hours work per week is €229.20. Participants whose underlying entitlement is in excess of that amount will receive a payment equivalent to their current entitlement plus a top-up of €22.50 per week. However there is no employer top-up contribution allowed.

Since the start of the scheme, a total of 184 YESS vacancies have been advertised on jobsireland.ie, while to date, 91 participants have commenced a YESS placement, with 7 more due to start on Monday 14 January.

Action 29	Complete the independent review of the National Training Fund
H1 Measure: Complete the Review	
Responsible body: DES	
Status: Completed H2	
Update: The independent review of the National Training Fund was published in August 2018. The review examines the existing operation of the NTF and provides recommendations to inform its future direction.	
There are 14 specific recommendations across four key areas:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reform of the future direction of the NTF.• Utilising the NTF to support investment in Higher Education.• Enhancing enterprise engagement and input to NTF priorities.• Improvements in monitoring/evaluation of the NTF.	

H2 Measures

Preparing for Brexit

National Preparedness and Intensified Supports

Action 3	Engage directly with companies to increase response to Brexit challenges
H2 Measure: Support the completion by companies of sustainability action plans to address the challenges of Brexit	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Enterprise Ireland throughout 2018 supported 1,032 client companies' completion of Sustainability Action Plans, aimed at addressing the challenges posed by Brexit.	

Intensifying and Diversifying Trade

Action 4	Increase Ireland's international reach
H2 Measure: Broaden the overseas network of diplomatic missions and agency offices in key and emerging markets as per the Global Footprint 2025 Initiative	
Responsible body: DFAT with EI and IDA	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: Ireland has opened two new diplomatic missions in Wellington, New Zealand and Vancouver, Canada in 2018. Ireland's new Ambassador to New Zealand presented his credentials on 29 August 2018. In addition to broadening the trade and economic relationship the establishment of the resident Embassy will consolidate the traditionally strong bilateral relationship between Ireland and New Zealand and will reflect the depth of the people-to-people links between the two countries.</p> <p>Ireland's new Consulate General in Vancouver opened in October 2018 with a focus on developing high level business, community and political contacts; promoting Ireland's prosperity; enhancing engagement with the growing Irish community and their networks; and supporting the large and growing number of Ministerial visits.</p>	

Action 4	Increase Ireland's international reach
H2 Measure: Increase the number of Ministerial-led trade missions, with a focus on the Eurozone, in line with EI's Eurozone Strategy	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: A key element of the Enterprise Ireland 4 year corporate strategy is the implementation of Enterprise Ireland's Eurozone Strategy 2017-2020. 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. Enterprise Ireland client companies exports to the Eurozone grew to €4.61bn in 2017 a year on year increase of 9%.</p> <p>To continue the increase Ireland's reach Enterprise Ireland is encouraging companies to 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 increase the scale of their exports into the region. Ministerial-led trade missions, with a focus on the Eurozone, in line with EI's Eurozone Strategy support this objective. In 2018 there were 10 Ministerial-led trade missions to Eurozone markets.</p>	

Action 4	Increase Ireland's international reach
H2 Measure: Seek to facilitate increased competition and connectivity in air services in and out of Ireland, in particular on new routes serving key markets in Asia, in line with the National Aviation Policy goal of enhancing connectivity	
Responsible body: DTTAS	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: In 2018, Hainan Airlines began operating scheduled flights to Beijing and Cathay Pacific commenced direct services to the Hong Kong SAR. These flights were facilitated by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Ireland and China in 2016 and the negotiation of a Bilateral Air Services Agreement with the Hong Kong SAR in June 2018. These new services represent a milestone in relations between Ireland and China and will significantly boost both our trade and tourism links.</p> <p>Ireland also formalised its aviation relationship with the United Arab Emirates with the signing of a Bilateral Air Services Agreement on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September 2018.</p> <p>In 2018, Ethiopian Airlines continues to operate an Addis Ababa to Dublin service and Aeroflot commenced a direct service between Dublin and Moscow.</p> <p>Ryanair continues to expand its network and has sought to fly new routes to destinations beyond the EU single aviation market.</p> <p>Norwegian Air International continues to operate flights to the United States (US).</p> <p>Aer Lingus has expanded the number of US destinations they fly to (i.e. Seattle, Chicago, Dallas) and continues to develop its transatlantic hub operation at Dublin Airport.</p>	

Improving Access to Finance

Action 9	Consider the development of potential Brexit response loan schemes for farmers, fishermen and for longer-term capital financing for food businesses; for which DAFM has secured €25 million of funding in 2018
H2 Measure: Consider the development of potential Brexit response loan schemes for farmers, fishermen and for longer-term capital financing for food businesses	
Responsible body: DAFM and SBCI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The Future Growth Loan Scheme has been developed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation (DBEI) in partnership with the Department of Finance, the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) and the European Investment Fund (EIF).</p> <p>DAFM is providing 40% of the funding so an overall agri-food package of €120million will be available. The scheme will make up to €300 million of loans with a term of 8-10 years. This scheme will be available to eligible Irish businesses and the primary agriculture & seafood sectors to support strategic long-term investment in a post-Brexit environment. Finance provided under the scheme will be competitively priced and have favourable terms, for example no security required for loans up to €500,000. It will be delivered through participating finance providers.</p> <p>The Scheme is expected to be in place in early 2019 and will run for three years from its launch date.</p>	

Action 10	Consider other sources of finance for SMEs impacted by Brexit
H2 Measure: Examine policy proposals for a new longer-term Business Investment Loan Scheme to support businesses to invest strategically for a post-Brexit environment	
Responsible body: DBEI, DoF and SBCI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: A new longer-term Business Investment Loan Scheme, to be called the Future Growth Loan Scheme was announced in Budget 2019. The Scheme will take the form of a loan fund of up to €300 million available to eligible Irish businesses at for terms of 8-10 years.</p> <p>The scheme will be available to eligible Irish businesses, including those in the primary agriculture and seafood sectors, to support strategic, long-term investment in a post-Brexit environment. The eligibility criteria have yet to be finalised, but the scheme will be open to SMEs with an establishment or branch in Ireland. Sole traders will be eligible for funding under the scheme. Finance provided under the scheme will be competitively priced and have favourable terms, including the interest rate, with loans up to €500,000 unsecured.</p>	

Action 11	Explore alternative sources of finance
H2 Measure: Examine options to extend the European Angel Fund in Ireland to provide equity funding to business angels and other non-institutional investors to support innovative companies	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The €20m extension to the European Angel Fund was announced by the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation in November 2018.</p> <p>On the 9 November 2018, the Government of Ireland, through Enterprise Ireland, and the European Investment Fund (EIF) announced the signing of an agreement to double the size of the existing European Angels Fund Ireland (EAF Ireland) to €40m.</p> <p>The European Angels Fund Ireland co-invests alongside approved Business Angels in Irish-based internationally trading SMEs and allocates sums from €250K to €4m over 10 years to the Angels, to double their investment into the SME.</p> <p>The first €20m of the fund is now fully allocated, following agreement with nine Irish Business Angels, who have invested in 20 early stage companies to date. By increasing the fund to €40m, it is anticipated that up to 100 companies will be supported over the next 10 years.</p> <p>In recent years, Business Angels have become an increasingly important part of the funding ecosystem for Irish SMEs. In 2017 support for Irish Business Angels through the Halo Business Angel Network (HBAN) totalled 43 investments and provided over €12m for Irish start-up and early-stage companies.</p> <p>The commitment of an additional €20m by Enterprise Ireland and the European Investment Fund recognises the importance of Business Angels and will help to ensure that more Irish companies can access the funding necessary to build scale and expand their reach in international export markets over the next 10 years.</p> <p>Building a strong funding ecosystem at each stage of the funding journey for start-ups is of critical importance to the success of Enterprise Ireland client companies. The availability of Angel funding at</p>	

the essential early stages of a company's development provides both essential capital and hugely valuable industry experience to support companies through this early phase of growth.

Through the European Angels Fund, Business Angels can draw on the expertise of Enterprise Ireland and unique network of the European Investment Fund. Innovative companies across Ireland will benefit from an additional funding source that builds on the proven contribution of venture capital financing in Ireland.

Enterprise Ireland is very encouraged by the strong take up of the funding to date amongst the Angel community and can already see the positive impact first hand through the accelerated growth and development of Irish businesses.

Action 11	Explore alternative sources of finance
H2 Measure: Develop proposals for new Seed and Venture Capital funding for early stage high growth companies and start-ups	
Responsible body: EI with DBEI	
Status: Complete	
Update: On the back of an independent evaluation of the most recent Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2013- 2018), the outline of the Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2019-2024) was developed and presented for approval to the Board of Enterprise Ireland in September 2018.	
Minister for Business, Enterprise & Innovation in October 2018 announced a new allocation of €175m towards the Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2019-2024). This scheme aims to stimulate job creation and support the funding requirements of young innovative Irish companies.	

Stimulating Regional Development Further

Realising our Regional Enterprise Potential

Action 13	Undertake a refresh and refocus of the existing Regional Action Plans for Jobs
H2 Measure: Undertake a refresh and refocus of the existing Regional Action Plans for Jobs for the period to 2020	
Responsible body: Regional Implementation Committees with DBEI	
Status: Complete	
Update: DBEI has worked with each of the nine RAPJ Implementation Committees during 2018 who have completed their refresh and refocus of the existing Plans. The Department is currently compiling the outcome of the refresh and will work towards publication of the refreshed and more strategically focused Action Plans in Q1 2019.	

Action 14	Finalise the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies reflecting the economic competitiveness and enterprise development agenda for each of the three Regional Assembly areas
H2 Measure: Prepare Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies - Public consultation commenced	
Responsible body: DHPLG, Regional Assemblies, DBEI, DES	
Status: Complete	
Update: Draft RSEs have been prepared and Public consultation has commenced	

Tourism

Action 20	Strengthen the resilience of the tourism sector in each region
H2 Measure: Develop and promote Blueways on the 420km of public canal network and develop the inland navigations' built heritage assets to increase recreational amenities for residents and attract tourists	
Responsible body: Waterways Ireland, CHG, Las	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: Waterways Ireland has formed a strategic partnership with Fáilte Ireland to develop tourism on the inland waterways. The Body is currently working with the local authorities and Fáilte Ireland, a Shannon Masterplan study has been commissioned and work is in preparation to develop a Dublin City Canals Greenway and a Tourism Masterplan for Grand Canal Dock.</p> <p>The North Shannon Blueway Development is continuing with development of a walking and cycling path to connect Acres Lake to Lough Allen and on the Shannon Erne Waterway in partnership with Cavan County Council to create a 5.5km recreational trail is being developed from Ballyconnell to Ballyheady along the Woodford River.</p> <p>The Lough Derg Blueway was officially opened on 6 March 2018 and was the culmination of a partnership between Clare, Tipperary and Galway County Councils, the Lough Derg Marketing Group and Waterways Ireland. The Blueway has 21 individual shoreline paddling trails, offering over 160km of paddling experience; 11 walking trails can be accessed from around the Loughshore; with a variety of cycling trails and routes available at Portumna Forest and the Nenagh Cycle Hub.</p> <p>The Royal Canal Blueway was launched on 23 July 2018.</p> <p>The launch of the Royal Canal Blueway is one element of work by Waterways Ireland in partnership with Westmeath, Meath, Longford, Kildare, Fingal and Dublin City Councils to develop and launch the Royal Canal as a major new tourist product in 2019. At 125 km the Royal Canal Greenway will be the longest walking/cycling trail in Ireland, stretching from Maynooth to Clondra, Co.Longford with development of the towpath to complete in early Summer 2019.</p> <p>Waterways Ireland continues to work with local authority partners on development of 22km of Greenway along the Ulster Canal funded by a €4.95m INTERREG VA Sustainable Transport measure due for completion in 2021.</p>	

Investing in Infrastructure for Growth

Action 21	Develop property solutions - the IDA building programme for 2018/2019 includes commencing construction in 2018 on buildings in Galway, Dundalk, Limerick, Carlow, Waterford and Athlone (2nd build) which are all scheduled for completion in 2019
H2 Measure: Commence construction in 2018 on buildings in Galway, Dundalk, Limerick, Carlow, Waterford and Athlone	
Responsible body: IDA	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: As part of its €150m Regional Property Programme (RPP) the IDA are directly investing in a building programme to help ensure property solutions are in place for overseas companies considering investing or expanding, thereby encouraging more foreign direct investment in regional Ireland.</p> <p>The construction of an Advanced building solution is due to commence in Nov/Dec 2018 in Parkmore, Galway and is scheduled for completion in 2019. The IDA Property Division is continuing to advance the building programme with the construction of a new c. 4,500m² three storey Advanced Office Building in the National Technology Park in Limerick. A tenant has expressed interest in the building.</p> <p>Tenants have been secured by the IDA for the first buildings completed under its Regional property investment programme in Waterford and Athlone. The site selection process (for the 2nd build) is in progress for Athlone with the IDA looking for a town centre location. Construction of a 31,000sq.ft. Advance Office Building is progressing at Finnabair Business Park, Dundalk and a site has been selected for the Carlow Advanced Technology Building.</p>	

Broadband

Action 22	Increase digital footprint via the National Broadband Plan to over 77% of premises by 2018
H2 Measure: Host an annual Stakeholder Forum for all stakeholders to discuss issues impacting on the rollout of telecoms infrastructure	
Responsible body: DRCD, DCCA	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The National Stakeholder Forum took place on 12 October 2018 in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The invite list included Government Departments, representatives from industry and local authorities' members and allowed them to have an open and constructive discussion on the issues they meet when rolling out telecommunications infrastructure. The conversation was led by a panel of telecommunications CEOs, academic, EU representatives and technology journalist. The points and views raised during the day by all in attendance have now been reviewed by DCCA and DRCD officials and will form the basis of the 2019 Work Programme of the Taskforce.</p>	

Participation, Employment, and Meeting Skills Needs

Facilitating Female Participation in Employment

Action 27	Implement reforms to existing childcare subsidy schemes, and develop the Affordable Childcare Scheme
H2 Measure: Continue implementation of September 2017 reforms to existing schemes	
Responsible body: DCYA	
Status: Complete	
Update: Enhanced measures introduced in September 2017 will continue until the introduction of the Affordable Childcare Scheme.	

Action 27	Implement reforms to existing childcare subsidy schemes, and develop the Affordable Childcare Scheme
H2 Measure: Progress development of the Affordable Childcare Scheme	
Responsible body: DCYA	
Status: Complete	
Update: The ACS will open for applications in October 2019 with payments flowing from November 2019.	

Action 28	Identify relevant policy issues for cohorts with low participation rates based on analysis of patterns of labour market participation
H2 Measure: Analyse patterns and identify relevant policy issues	
Responsible body: DBEI, DES, DEASP, D/Taoiseach	
Status: Complete	
Update: A document detailing the findings of this analysis is currently being finalised and will be used as an input to Future Jobs Ireland.	

Talent Pool for a Growing Economy

Action 30	Carry out survey of enterprises that have engaged with the Regional Skills Fora to establish satisfaction levels
H2 Measure: Carry out the Survey	
Responsible body: DES, Regional Skills Fora	
Status: Complete	
Update: A survey of enterprises that have engaged with the Regional Skills Fora to establish satisfaction levels has been completed. 83% of respondents reported that they are either extremely satisfied or very satisfied with their engagement with the Fora.	

Skills Needs for Enterprise

Action 32	Develop training initiatives to improve in-company capability
H2 Measure: Implement the Finance Pillar of Enterprise Ireland's Client Engagement Model for assessing client's financial management capability and their need for appropriate short and long-term funding	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Enterprise Ireland in recent years has developed and commenced implementation of its current Client Engagement Model. Implementation of the Finance Pillar of Enterprise Ireland's Client Engagement Model, for assessing client's financial management capability and their need for appropriate short and long-term funding, has commenced. To support this an external panel of financial consultants was formed to assist companies with finance issues arising from Brexit and ongoing financial challenges.	
Action 33	Align skills supply with enterprise needs
H2 Measure: Issue a competitive call to HEIs for proposals for Springboard+ courses, with a particular focus on priority areas identified by the National Skills Focus (H1) and roll out new Springboard+ 2018 courses (H2)	
Responsible body: HEA/DES	
Status: Complete	
Update: Following a competitive call for proposals, 245 courses in areas of identified enterprise skills needs were selected for funding. This will provide for over 8,000 places in the following skills areas: ICT, Engineering, Manufacturing, Construction, Hospitality, Business, Administration and Law. Limited courses will also be available in Entrepreneurship, Animation and Medical Devices Decontamination. The eligibility criteria for Springboard+ 2018 has been amended so that all courses are open to people irrespective of their employment status. Returners and those in receipt of certain allowances, including Jobseekers Benefit, continue to be able to access courses free of charge. Level 6 courses remain free to all participants and for employed participants on courses NFQ level 7 – 9, 90% of the course fee is funded by the Government, with participants required to contribute just 10% of the fee.	
Action 33	Align skills supply with enterprise needs
H2 Measure: Engagement with SME owners and managers with the view to develop a new Management Development offering	
Responsible body: Skillnets/DES	
Status: Complete	
Update: Skillnet Ireland developed a bespoke Management Development programme targeted at Irish SME owner-managers. The programme launched in January 2018 and was developed following in-depth consultations with enterprise groups and small business owners, with modules in Business Growth and Scaling, Business Strategy and Innovation, Management Practice, Team Dynamics and Lean Operations. The offering spans NFQ certified programmes, through to 1:1 business mentoring.	
During 2018 over 800 SME owner-managers participated in these part-subsidised programmes:	
https://www.skillnetireland.ie/management-development/	

Action 35	Conduct and publish a study on Skills for the Digital Economy
H2 Measure: Conduct and publish study	
Responsible body: DBEI, EGFSN	
Status: Complete	
Update: The title of this report was changed to ‘Digital Transformation: Assessing the Impact of Digitalisation on Ireland’s Workforce’. This report was published on December 7 2018.	

Boosting Productivity, Competitiveness and Innovation

Increasing Productivity and Capturing Opportunities

Action 37	Review SME policy in Ireland to assess the SME business ecosystem, the range of supports offered to SMEs and their delivery channels
H2 Measure: Prepare a diagnostic questionnaire to be completed by national authorities. The results will flow into a study mission by international experts who will meet with relevant stakeholders. A draft will be prepared for Government stakeholders and the Steering Group of the OECD. A revised report will be submitted for a peer review at a meeting of the OECD SME Working Group	
Responsible body: DBEI with OECD	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: The SME and Entrepreneurship Policy Unit is working with the OECD in preparing a Review of SME and Entrepreneurship Policies and Issues in Ireland. This is an 18-month project which commenced in April 2018 year and will be completed during the second half of 2019. A weeklong stakeholder engagement took place in June in Dublin. DBEI in conjunction with the OECD Secretariat and its four international experts met with a broad range of representatives from government, private sector and further stakeholders. During each meeting, a discussion took place on one or several of the dimensions to be covered in the Report. Topics discussed included: regulation, access to finance, innovation, skills, the role of clusters and networks, and local infrastructures.</p> <p>A first draft of the Report was received by DBEI at the end of October 2018. Stakeholders were invited to provide initial feedback on the draft and attend a summary 2-day study mission in Dublin with the OECD secretariat on 22 and 23 November. Feedback received from this engagement will now form the basis for further drafting of the Report.</p> <p>The OECD continue to liaise with the Department as they progress the Review to its conclusion. The Report will be peer reviewed at the OECD SMEE Working Party in April 2019. The Review will be finalised and published in the form of a Report and a Strategy Roadmap in Q3 2019. This Roadmap will help profile the future of SME strategy in Ireland.</p>	

Action 38	Develop Sectoral Strategies for EI’s client base
H2 Measure: Develop Enterprise Ireland’s strategy for the ICT sector	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Enterprise Ireland has developed its strategy for the ICT Sector. The Board of Enterprise Ireland approved the 2X ICT Strategy in March 2018. This strategy comprises of both a joint IDA Ireland /Enterprise Ireland ICT Strategy, and Enterprise Ireland’s Strategy to Scale, Expand the Reach and Futureproof ICT in Ireland.	

Action 38	Develop Sectoral Strategies for EI's client base
H2 Measure: Develop Enterprise Ireland's strategy for Aerospace	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Enterprise Ireland has in 2017 and 2018 been actively engaged in the development of a number of internal sectoral strategies / Action Plans. An Action Plan for Aerospace/Aviation has been developed, and will be finalised in Q1, 2019.	

Action 40	Explore approaches to improving productivity in light of the recommendation in the forthcoming OECD Review of Ireland
H2 Measure: Engage with Government Departments to progress agreed policy recommendations arising from the OECD Review	
Responsible body: DBEI/DoF, and other relevant Departments	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: Within the published OECD Review of Ireland there will be a specific chapter on "SME Productivity in Ireland". This chapter will explore the issues behind Ireland's SME productivity gap in comparison to other EU countries. The OECD will provide policy practice examples from a set of comparator countries. On foot of their exploration several policy recommendations will be made.</p> <p>Alongside the publication of the OECD Review in the second half of 2019, there will be a 20-page SME Policy Roadmap which is derived from the findings of the overall Report.</p> <p>This Roadmap will inform and focus the Department on future policy implementation in relation to our SMEs and Entrepreneurs.</p>	

Action 41	Establish Ireland as a leader in the digital economy
H2 Measure: Engage with stakeholders to develop a Deep Tech (AI/ML, AR/VR, IoT, blockchain and cloud) roadmap that identifies specific opportunities and challenges for start-ups in this sector	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
<p>Update: Deep Tech refers to fundamental breakthroughs in science and engineering that create radically innovative solutions to challenges in markets and industry processes.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland have identified three initial focus areas of technology where Ireland can become a leader, AI/ML, 5G/IOT and Blockchain, in each case Enterprise Ireland is engaging with stakeholders to develop a view on the opportunities in these areas. Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland have brought together a 5G/IOT Leadership Group to progress Ireland's Deep Tech capability in this area and have supported the formation of a Blockchain industry group.</p> <p>Mapping exercises on AI capability in Ireland has also been completed. Resulting from these engagements Enterprise Ireland expects that the developing ecosystem will continue to identify and highlight a roadmap of opportunities for new start-ups and established companies alike. These groupings are encouraging collaboration across Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland backed companies and will benefit from the Disruptive Technologies Fund to bring these opportunities to reality.</p>	

Enhancing the Business Environment and Competitiveness

Action 43	Progress the reform of the Legal profession
H2 Measure: Support the roll out of functions of the Legal Services Authority – the new independent Legal Services Regulatory Authority – with appropriate staffing and project management	
Responsible body: DJE, LSRA	
Status: Complete	
Update: Authority has completed a series of statutory reports within set deadlines on new legal services models, legal professional education, holding of clients monies by barristers, since its establishment on 1 October 2016 and is now conducting its first statutory review of the operation of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. The roll out of its remaining functions, staffing and ICT capacities is taking place as set out under its Strategic Plan 2016-2018 (www.lsr.ie).	

Action 43	Progress the reform of the Legal profession
H2 Measure: Support the work of the Courts Service in making the extensive legal, procedural and technical preparations to complete the transition of the Office of the Taxing-Master to that of the Legal Costs Adjudicators	
Responsible body: DJE, Courts Service	
Status: Complete	
Update: A working group comprising the Department of Justice and Equality, the Courts Service and the Office of the Taxing-Master has been making the necessary preparations for the transition to the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicators under Part 10 of the Legal Services Regulation Act 2015. The relevant ICT supports, rules of court, forms and procedures are now at an advanced stage of preparation.	

Action 45	Publish new legislation to modernise the collection of commercial rates to make the system more transparent and easily understood for ratepayers
H2 Measure: Publish new legislation	
Responsible body: DHPLG	
Status: Complete	
Update: The Local Government (Rates) Bill 2018 was published on 9 August 2018. The Bill will proceed through the Oireachtas in due course.	

Action 46	Roll-out of new initiatives to support SME engagement in public procurement
H2 Measure: Develop and Implement a communication strategy to build awareness, understanding and skills in public tendering	
Responsible body: OGP with DBEI, EI, ITI and LEOs	
Status: Complete	
Update: The OGP works with the SME industry representative bodies as well as the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, InterTrade Ireland and Enterprise Ireland to promote the engagement of SMEs in public procurement. Meetings of the SME Advisory Group take place on a quarterly basis to address industry concerns. This group includes representatives of the CCPC, IBEC, ISME, SFA, CIF and Chambers Ireland and is chaired at Minister of State level. There has been regular proactive engagement with SME Representative Bodies through this Group. Evidence of the work and co-	

operation in the area can be seen in events such as "Go-2-Tender" workshops and "Meet the Buyer" events which take place across the country.

A cross body communications strategy subgroup of the SME Advisory Group has also been formed, chaired by the OGP and consisting of communications experts in the SME representative bodies and State bodies, has developed an aligned approach to supporting SMEs. Its aims include to:

- Encourage potential suppliers to build their awareness, understanding and ultimately skills in public tendering,
- Understand the role respective bodies play in the communications strategy.
- Work in partnership with industry representative bodies to considerably improve understanding and awareness of public procurement in the target supplier community,
- Focus on efficient and effective use of scarce resources in investing time and money in proposed interventions.

The strategy has led to the introduction of industry targeted and regional informative breakfast briefing events, which have taken place in Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Cork and Mayo with further events planned in 2019. A review of the programme will be undertaken in early 2019. The strategy also includes producing a series of informative YouTube videos explaining specific public procurement topics with case studies of SMEs who have been successful in tendering. Further videos will be launched shortly. The strategy encourages more proactive engagement from industry in promoting and planning events.

The communications strategy has also incorporated raising the profile of the Tender Advisory Service (TAS), a service that can be accessed free of charge by suppliers during a live procurement processes. This has included a relaunch of the service in July of 2018 with a new visual identity for TAS and with an improved profile on the ogp.gov.ie website. A supporting video explaining the service has also been launched to help promote and explain the service.

Action 46 Roll-out of new initiatives to support SME engagement in public procurement

H2 Measure: Drive increased engagement with the Small Business Innovation Research programme and identify and develop a systematic approach to innovative public procurement

Responsible body: EI with OGP and DBEI

Status: Complete

Update: Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Ireland, the dedicated national programme takes a systematic approach to driving innovation in the public sector. The programme enables public sector bodies to connect with technology businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific Public Sector challenges and needs where innovative technological solutions can be applied to the problem.

20 SBIR Challenges have been launched across Ireland. These challenges encompass a variety of themes that impact the Irish citizen, including illegal dumping, flood monitoring, rural transport and last mile delivery. To date, across the EU, 65 SBIR contracts have been awarded to companies, 80% who are based in Republic of Ireland.

Female Entrepreneurship

Action 47	Review the female entrepreneurship programme and develop responses to drive greater impact
H2 Measure: Review the female entrepreneurship programme and develop responses	
Responsible body: EI with other relevant bodies	
Status: Complete	
Update: A review of the female entrepreneurship activities was undertaken by Enterprise Ireland during the summer.	
The output from that review is forming the basis for the development of a new strategy for female entrepreneurship 2019 to 2021, which is currently in development.	

Research, Development, and Innovation for Smart Growth

Action 48	Increase the quality of Irish scientific research and seize opportunities offered by Brexit
H2 Measure: Attract outstanding global researchers to Ireland in partnership with the UK; recruit UK researchers to Ireland; or establish a number of joint PhD schemes with researchintensive UK higher education institutions	
Responsible body: SFI	
Status: Complete	
Update: One outstanding global researcher in partnership with the UK in progress. One UK researcher recruited to Ireland. Seven joint PhD schemes with research intensive UK higher education institutions have been approved by Science Foundation Ireland and are currently under review in the UK.	

Action 49	Drive industrial-academic research and development collaboration through a range of SFI, EI and other collaborative supports in Advanced Manufacturing technologies including Robotics; Artificial Intelligence and Additive Manufacturing or 3D Printing as well as new growth areas such as Fintech and Biotherapeutics
H2 Measure: Continue to extend companies' innovation reach by driving engagement between Irish based industry and academia, in this way effectively employing this important national asset to deliver over 1,000 industrial innovation projects	
Responsible body: SFI/EI/Research Funders	
Status: Complete	
Update: Enterprise Ireland continues to promote and drive collaborative engagement between companies and third level institutes to help companies become more competitive and to assist with accessing global markets and dealing with challenges.	
In 2018 Enterprise Ireland supported 1,048 collaborative Innovations between Industry & Third Level. These include: Innovation Partnerships approved; Technology Gateway Projects Completed, Innovation Vouchers Redeemed and Enterprise Ireland Clients engaged with Technology Centres or Gateways.	
108 industrial innovation projects commenced in the Science Foundation Ireland Research Centres in 2018. 465 industrial innovation projects live in the SFI Research Centres as of Nov 2018.	

Action 49	Drive industrial-academic research and development collaboration through a range of SFI, EI and other collaborative supports in Advanced Manufacturing technologies including Robotics; Artificial Intelligence and Additive Manufacturing or 3D Printing as well as new growth areas such as Fintech and Biotherapeutics
H2 Measure: SFI will secure €200 million in enterprise funding commitments, leveraging public funding, to renew the first seven SFI Research Centres	
Responsible body: SFI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Proposals to Science Foundation Ireland for the renewal of the first seven SFI Research Centres included enterprise funding commitments of €254.6 million.	

Action 49	Drive industrial-academic research and development collaboration through a range of SFI, EI and other collaborative supports in Advanced Manufacturing technologies including Robotics; Artificial Intelligence and Additive Manufacturing or 3D Printing as well as new growth areas such as Fintech and Biotherapeutics
H2 Measure: Implement the next phase of the Technology Gateways Programme targeting over 400 projects in 2018 accessing specialist expertise in the Institutes of Technology	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: The Technology Gateways Programme was established by Enterprise Ireland to provide business development resources to the IoTs (Institutes of Technology) to help them interact with industry on a local, regional and national basis in order to develop and manage new RD&I projects which IoTs have the capability to deliver on. The new phase of the Technology Gateways Programme 2018-2022 was approved by the Board of Enterprise Ireland at the end of 2017 and the implementation of this phase is well underway. The number of 100%	

Action 51	Meet the needs of industry in terms of research and innovation skills
H2 Measure: Increase the number of enrolments of postgraduate researchers by more than 100 places through the introduction of a new targeted Postgraduate Scheme aligned to enterprise needs	
Responsible body: SFI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Science Foundation Ireland launched the Centres for Research Training programme, which provides funding for the training of postgraduate students in areas of identified skills needs. Building on research excellence, the purpose of the Centres will be to provide cohorts of academically outstanding future research leaders with the skills and knowledge required to address the future challenges of an ever-changing work environment. Training programmes will be defined through close engagement with enterprise. The deadline for the inaugural 2018 SFI Centres for Research Training Call was 5 September 2018. Awards will be made in early 2019. The scheme will fund at least 100 postgraduate researchers.	

Action 51	Meet the needs of industry in terms of research and innovation skills
H2 Measure: Through the Career-FIT programme, deliver 50 high quality international researchers into Technology Centres to work on company innovation	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: This Marie Curie Enterprise Ireland Co-Fund programme addresses the skills gap by sourcing the best international researchers for industry. It provides an opportunity for experienced researchers to develop their careers in market focused applied research in Ireland's Technology Centres, with an enterprise secondment during the Fellowship. They will carry out research in Ireland and gain inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary exposure through the programme. There are 21 researchers in situ from Call 1 and in September 2018, 29 additional researchers were approved under Call 2.	

Action 52	Provide and promote enhanced supports for companies to engage in and increase Research Development and Innovation (RD&I)
H2 Measure: Work to secure €15 million of international RD&I funding for disruptive technology companies from Horizon 2020 SME Instrument	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: The SME Instrument addresses small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a radically new idea underpinned by a business plan for rolling out marketable innovation solutions and with ambitions to scale up internationally. It supports high-risk, high-potential SMEs to develop and bring to market new products, services and business models that could drive economic growth. The €15 million target for 2018 has been exceeded with €17.52 million in funding being won by SMEs in Ireland.	

Action 52	Provide and promote enhanced supports for companies to engage in and increase Research Development and Innovation (RD&I)
H2 Measure: Drive access to new product opportunities through targeting €13 million in European Space Agency contracts	
Responsible body: EI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Enterprise Ireland assists companies to bid for ESA contracts, developing space strategies and is a contact point for the international space industry when they want to identify relevant sources of space-related expertise. Up to Quarter 3, 2018 Irish industry and researchers had won €12m in ESA contracts.	

Action 52	Provide and promote enhanced supports for companies to engage in and increase Research Development and Innovation (RD&I)
H2 Measure: Provide and promote engagement in standardization of research communities involved in medtech, additive manufacturing, robotics and other emerging technology domains	
Responsible body: NSAI	
Status: Complete	
Update: Through its work engaging with key stakeholders in the research community in 2018, the NSAI has seen strong growth in the numbers of participants taking part in Standards Development work at both a national and international level. As part of the effort to promote engagement, the NSAI attended a series of key industry conferences this year, and delivered presentations to delegates	

from within our target audiences. The events included the Manufacturing Supply Chain Conference and the Industry Research and Development Group (IRDG) Conference in Q1.

In May the NSAI hosted a briefing session on development work in new international standards for the Internet of Things (IoT). Aimed primarily at Industry personnel and researchers, as a direct result of this engagement a new National Standards committee was established for the IoT, which now has over 30 members. Membership of the committee gives Irish stakeholders the ability to participate in developing future international standards in this domain. Industry stakeholders can contribute to work at European level and technical groups of the International standards organisations ETSI, ISO and IEC, including the influential technical committee ISO/IEC JTC1 on Information Technology. In June the NSAI, with DCU, also organised the 2018 European Academy for Standardisation (EURAS) Conference, sponsored by Microsoft on the theme of ‘Standards for a Smarter Future’, where over 50 delegates from Europe attended and which was very well received.

In the area of Artificial Intelligence (AI), there has been a marked increase in activity across the international research community. Science Foundation Ireland’s (SFI) research centre (ADAPT), Ireland’s global centre for excellence for digital content, is taking on the convenorship of a new working group on ‘Trustworthiness’ under the ISO/IEC JTC 1 committee with NSAI providing the secretariat for this important group. NSAI is also a partner in the EU Project ‘Bridging the gap between Research and Innovation’ (BRIDGET2) and over the year has delivered 10 promotional talks on standards to the Irish Research Community including:

- SFI Research Centres; ADAPT, CEADAR, Insight, I-FORM and CONFIRM
- DBEI Research Prioritisation Quarterly meeting in Q4, and
- SFI Industry Programme Team

Action 52	Provide and promote enhanced supports for companies to engage in and increase Research Development and Innovation (RD&I)
------------------	---

H2 Measure:	Pilot a design for innovation programme to encourage collaboration between the design sector and small businesses
--------------------	---

Responsible body:	LEOs
--------------------------	------

Status:	Complete
----------------	----------

Update:	The Local Enterprise Offices’ in 2018 ran a Design 4 Growth Pilot Programme in the South East. Ten companies participated on the, now completed, Pilot programme. A review of the pilot programme has been undertaken, the initial feedback provided was very positive and indicates that consideration should be given to rolling out the programme nationally in 2019.
----------------	--

Action 53	Deliver technology development, demonstration and training services for advanced manufacturing in Ireland building on existing research and technology centres through the creation of additional facilities
------------------	---

H2 Measure:	Deliver technology development services for advanced manufacturing in Ireland
--------------------	---

Responsible body:	DBEI, IDA, EI, SFI
--------------------------	--------------------

Status:	Complete
----------------	----------

Update:	With over 30 core platform technologies in development, in parallel with over 30 company specific projects, Irish Manufacturing Research (IMR) is collaborating with over 100 Irish manufacturing companies. It provides training on energy efficiency, additive manufacturing (3D
----------------	--

printing), cybersecurity for manufacturing and networks in the EU with 5 projects won. IMR have continued to add to the Mullingar facility with 5 axis CNC machining.

SFI's I-Form Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre at UCD's mission is to shape the future of manufacturing through high-impact research into the application of digital technologies to materials processing. SFI's CONFIRM is a 'smart manufacturing' Research Centre at University of Limerick. It will eventually comprise over 200 researchers in smart manufacturing, including 91 new appointments. The CONFIRM Research Centre is supported by 42 Industry partners including Johnson & Johnson, Analog Devices International and UTRC.

Ongoing Measures

The following measures are designated as complete for 2018, however many of them are ongoing priorities for 2019.

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: Complete for 2018	
<p>Update: This measure has been repositioned as an ongoing measure to take account of ongoing developments in this area. 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> <p>This work has been stepped up in recent months, including with government decisions to further develop ‘central case’ and no deal action plans across government, and to sanction recruitment and ICT/infrastructure to prepare our ports and airports. It has included engagement with the European Commission and with other EU member states facing some similar challenges as a result of Brexit.</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: Complete for 2018	
<p>Update: This measure has been repositioned as an ongoing measure to take account of ongoing developments in this area. In total over 50 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, including through the ‘Getting Ireland Brexit Ready’ campaign which is a whole of government plan to keep citizens and businesses informed about Brexit and what it means for them.</p>	

Action 1	Undertake Adaptive Contingency Planning
Ongoing Measure: Continue to work closely with the European Commission and other EU Member States in securing an orderly Brexit, with a transitional arrangement leading to the closest possible future relationship between the EU and the UK	
Responsible body: DFAT, with relevant Departments and agencies	
Status: Complete for 2018	
Update: This measure has been repositioned as an ongoing measure to take account of ongoing developments in this area. DFAT is coordinating preparedness and contingency planning across government. This has included government decisions to further develop 'central case' and no deal action plans, and sanctioning recruitment and ICT/infrastructure to prepare our ports and airports.	

Action 2	Coordinate a national Brexit preparedness public information and awareness campaign
Ongoing Measure: Coordinate a national Brexit preparedness public information and awareness campaign	
Responsible body: DFAT, DBEI with relevant Departments and agencies	
Status: Complete for 2018	
Update: This measure has been repositioned as an ongoing measure to take account of ongoing developments in this area. In October 'Getting Ireland Brexit Ready' was launched. This has included an initial series of four seminars to inform citizens and businesses, in addition to promotion of information across radio, press and digital platforms.	

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: Complete for 2018	
<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>	

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.

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: Complete for 2018

Update: Enterprise Ireland works with Ireland's most ambitious entrepreneurs and businesses to help them scale and reach new export markets. Whether it's funding, market insight or access to an international network, Enterprise Ireland has the supports to help companies to achieve their global ambition.

Enterprise Ireland through its promotional campaigns has been encouraging its client companies to enter the Eurozone and other global markets. Targetting its client companies Enterprise Ireland's #Global Ambition campaign is designed to encourage Irish companies to launch and expand their Eurozone export activities. In tandem with this campaign the #Irish Advantage campaign also targets Eurozone buyers, inter alia, with the aim of encouraging them to engage with Irish exporters.

The #Global Ambition campaign has showcased 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 #Irish Advantage Campaign promotes the capabilities and innovation of Irish exporters, in Brexit exposed sectors, to international buyers through (1) its website localised for international markets, (2) targeted sector focused buyer lead generation campaigns and (3) in market PR at key trade events and missions.

The campaign is live in 17 markets and 10 sectors/ sub-sectors. Enterprise Ireland plans to expand the campaign in 2019 to new markets and key growth sectors where opportunities for Irish exporters to diversify in the context of Brexit have been identified and prioritised on the basis of their capabilities. This will support the delivery of Enterprise Ireland's 2017 – 2020 Strategy to grow exports to €26bn p.a. by 2020, and exports by 50% in every market outside the UK.

Over 70% of B2B buyers search online for supplier selection* and the campaign promotes Enterprise Ireland clients digitally through case studies and an online client directory to these buyers.

It also features lead generation campaigns targeting key buyers through whitepapers and thought leadership content. To date, whitepapers have been published on highlighting Irish innovation in Data Centres, Medtech, Fintech and Agritech which have generated thousands of leads and Irish exporters have been promoted to buyers at key international events, (Medica, Agritechnica, SXSW, Hong Kong Fintech Week, Moneyconf, CIIE, Showcase etc).

To date the campaign has reached over 1m B2B buyers, over 300,000 unique visitors from B2B audiences, 300+ articles in international and key trade media, 400 client case studies in 5 languages, 1,000+ clients listed on the directory and reached over 15,000 international buyer audience through trade events.

According to the 2017 Enterprise Ireland Annual Business Survey, 90% of Enterprise Ireland client exporters said they wanted to be part of the campaign and listed on the Irish Advantage website client directory to help them diversify globally.

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: Complete for 2018

Update: The next stage of Bord Bia’s market prioritisation study is well advanced with deep dive analysis of five markets completed for meat (Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam and Mexico) and to be completed for dairy in January 2019 (Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam & Philippines). Deep dive analysis is currently underway for PCF and beverages as part of Bord Bia’s overall strategy review for the sector.

The deep dive reports focus on the practicalities of how the market operates, import demand, competitor analysis, market prices, potential barriers to supplying the market and identification/profiling of key players. These build on the 20 page summary reports produced previously for 15 markets within each category.

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. On December 6 2018 the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine attended the Bord Bia Trade Reception in the UK which had over 30 UK buyers present and undertook a series of high level meetings with key customers.

In terms of market diversification, the follow up from Bord Bia’s Marketplace International event in April continues, where ongoing engagements are being maintained with most of the 540 buyers that attended and met with 185 Irish food and drink companies. Over half of the buyers at Marketplace came from emerging markets. Targeted follow-up in conjunction with client companies will continue to be a key focus of activities across Bord Bia’s overseas office network in 2019.

In addition a successful Minister-led trade mission was completed to Indonesia & Malaysia in late October, which saw 9 Irish dairy companies meet with over 150 local buyers in a speed dating format similar to that delivered as part of Marketplace.

Bord Bia has continued to test a revised set of route to market services that will help client companies prioritise their strategic focus and ensure that they deliver the right service in the right market to help clients optimise business development opportunities. Significant focus has been put on developing a robust commercial strategy process, that will build marketing capability in client companies. This has included the delivery of 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’ framework.

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: Complete for 2018	
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 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. There has been focused follow up on Marketplace throughout 2018, with ongoing tracking of leads generated at the event. An additional 30 meetings were held at SIAL with buyers who had attended Marketplace to progress the business leads generated.	

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: Complete for 2018	
Update: A Irish/EU Technical Working Group on State Aid was established in November 2017 and has been exploring opportunities for supports within existing State aid rules for Brexit impacted enterprises. Following a meeting between the Minister for Business, Enterprise & Innovation and the European Commissioner for Competition on 24 January 2019, it was agreed that Irish officials will continue to work closely with the Commissioner’s team in addressing any state aid issues that may arise to ensure a rapid and appropriate response as the ultimate shape of Brexit and its firm-level implications become known.	

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: Complete for 2018	
Update: The Third Progress Report on the Action Plan for Rural Development link here https://drcd.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/APRD-Third-Progress-Report.pdf was published at the end of November. The report covers measures due for delivery between January and June 2018, or which are being implemented on an ongoing basis. Of the 275 actions reported on, 266 have been completed or are substantially advanced. Only 9 actions due for delivery 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: Complete for 2018	
<p>Update: The Department of Rural and Community Development is currently developing a comprehensive National Policy on Social Enterprise, in partnership with the Social Enterprise Sector. To ensure engagement with all stakeholders, and that their views inform the policy, a public consultation on a draft policy will commence shortly. This additional level of consultation will ensure that a robust policy is developed, which has the support and engagement of the social enterprise sector and all other stakeholders. Following consideration of the responses to the public consultation, a final policy is planned for publication in early 2019.</p> <p>The Department is responsible for The Social Enterprise Measure of the Dormant Accounts fund, which assists innovative projects and programmes which are designed to counter economic and social disadvantage. The Measure supports social enterprises that provide services to, or employment opportunities for, disadvantaged people, particularly in rural areas. Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI) is supported by another measure of the Dormant Accounts Fund which supports social enterprises. Established in 2013, SIFI provides growth capital to social innovations providing solutions to social issues in Ireland. The Department of Rural and Community Development provides match funding for all philanthropic funds raised by SIFI.</p>	

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
Ongoing Measure: Continue to develop and implement a range of programmes to support rural economic development	
Responsible body: DRCD	
Status: Complete for 2018	
<p>Update: The Department is continuing to develop and implement LEADER, Town and Village Renewal Scheme and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme in 2018.</p> <p>1,034 LEADER projects were approved in 2018 for funding of approximately €38.9 million. This is over double the value of funding approved in 2017.</p> <p>Over €9 million has been allocated to 145 projects for the development, maintenance and promotion of outdoor amenities such as greenways, blue-ways and cycle-ways under the 2018 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme to date. The 2018 Town & Village Scheme will again focus on supporting projects which demonstrate strong economic impacts for the nominated town/village. 224 projects were selected for funding of €21.3 million this year.</p>	

Agri-Food

Action 19	Support new business ventures in the agri-food sector
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: Complete for 2018	
<p>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. In 2018 Supervalu's Food Academy Start program saw 49 companies go live in Supervalu stores across the country. Building on work to date with Musgraves these services have now expanded to include the Lidl Kick Start Supplier Development Programme. Lidl Kickstart had 39 companies participating in the March 2018 promotion, and had 29 new companies on the September promotion.</p> <p>Grow with Aldi had 40 companies on the initial September 2018 promotion and 5 have progressed to a permanent listing; a 2 further companies have secured seasonal listings as a result of the programme.</p> <p>Tesco Taste Buds was not active in 2018. Bord Bia continues to work with these retailers to identify potential export opportunities.</p>	

Action 19	Support new business ventures in the agri-food sector
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: Complete for 2018	
<p>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. Development projects 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.</p> <p>Projects delivered to date include capability-building projects in Kenya funded by Irish Aid, food safety training (Saudi Arabia 2015-2018), 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). In 2018, SFSI won a bid for a €5m EU-funded project to strengthen food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary controls in Albania.</p>	

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: Complete for 2018	
Update: The NBP procurement process is now in its final stages. The final tender submission was received on 18 September 2018. Officials from the DCCAE 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, commercial operators have invested over €2.75bn in upgrading and modernising their networks over the past 5 years, and further investments are planned.	

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: Complete for 2018	
Update: The National Stakeholder Forum took place on 12 October 2018 in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. The invite list included Government Departments, representatives from industry and local authorities' members and allowed them to have an open and constructive discussion on the issues they meet when rolling out telecommunications infrastructure. The conversation was led by a panel of telecommunications CEOs, academic, EU representatives and technology journalist. The points and views raised during the day by all in attendance have now been reviewed by DCCAE and DRCD officials and will form the basis of the 2019 Work Programme of the 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: Complete for 2018	
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: Complete for 2018	
<p>Update: Intreo provides a professional employment service which is carried out by trained Case Officers and can include advice and information on income supports, training and development opportunities, employment support, career guidance services and job placements. It 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. 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> <p>In addition to the wide range of work related supports for PWDs provided by DEASP, further positive measures initiated by DEASP to develop and strengthen its capacity to engage with and support people with disabilities to gain and retain employment include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designating the Department's Intreo Centres as the first point of contact for those PWDs, who are interested in gaining or re-entering employment and wish to avail of the services of a Case Officer on a voluntary basis who will support them to advance their job seeking efforts. • Developing the Intreo service as a welcoming and supportive environment for PWDs with a personalised, confidential, 1 to 1 approach to each case. • Appointing dedicated Case Officer across the Intreo Network to engage with PWDs. • Upskilling Case Officer's through appropriate accreditation training by participation in the Level 8 Certificate in Professional Practice in Employability Services provided through the NCI. • Facilitating the attendance of a family member, friend or advocate to support the PWD throughout the engagement with the Case Officer, if the person so desires. 	

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: Complete for 2018	
<p>Update: Audits of skills needs within individual enterprises are carried out by the Regional Skills Forum Managers in each of the nine regions as part of the Skills for Growth project. In order to maximise the potential of the audit tool, during H2 the Department of Education and Skills reached agreement with new partners to assist in conducting audits. As a new partner, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection commenced conducting audits with enterprises in Q4 2018.</p>	

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 competitiveness. This work will be overseen by the relevant Cabinet Committees.
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: Complete for 2018	
Update: Issues impacting on competitiveness are considered as needed at Senior Official Group and Cabinet Committee meetings and will also be addressed through the forthcoming Future Jobs Ireland strategy.	

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: Complete for 2018	
Update: Recommendations of the Report on the Cost of Motor Insurance are continuing to be implemented, 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 seven such updates have been published on the Department's website. The seventh such update was published in November 2018 and shows that of the 78 separate applicable deadlines within the Action Plans of the two Reports to the end of Q3 2018, 63 relate to actions which have now been completed. Substantial work has also been undertaken in respect of the 15 incomplete Action Points, the nine Action Points which are classified as "ongoing", and the remaining Action Points with later deadlines. The eighth quarterly update is expected to be published in early 2019 and will focus in particular on the 13 actions spread across the two primary Reports which are due for completion in Q4 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

LA	Local Authorities
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LEADER	Liaisons entre actions de développement 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 tScribhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
ÚnaG	Údaras na Gaeltachta
VAT	Value Added Tax
WRC	Workplace Relations Commission

