

**ACTION
PLAN
FOR
JOBS**

2016-2017

**MID EAST
REGION**

**Second Progress Report:
Actions to December 2016**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword by An Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise and Innovation	1
Employment Snapshot.....	3
Key Highlights.....	4
Scorecard: Actions to End 2016	5
Opening Commentary.....	6
Notable Developments and Announcements.....	6
Progress on National Initiatives	9
National Broadband Plan	9
Measures not delivered as planned by June 2016	10
Action Updates: H2 2016 and Ongoing.....	12



FOREWORD BY AN TÁNAISTE AND MINISTER FOR ENTERPRISE AND INNOVATION

I am delighted to see the publication of this second Progress Report for the Mid East Action Plan for Jobs. Since it was launched in January 2016, the objective of this Plan has been to provide a platform for Kildare, Meath and Wicklow to work together, building on the unique strengths of the region to support businesses to start up, grow and generate exports. I believe that we, as a small country, can achieve much more by working together, across county and provincial boundaries, combining resources and expertise, than we could acting alone.

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

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

Progress in the Mid East in 2016 has been very positive. At the end of 2016, the region had the lowest unemployment rate in the State at 5.3%; compared to the State average of 6.7%. 5,800 additional people entered employment across the region in 2016. Figures from the CSO show that that growth is happening across a range of sectors, including Industry, Retail, Health and Social Work.

In addition to this, recent job announcements from firms such as Endress+Hauser and eCOMM demonstrate the continued confidence of industry in the Mid East region to support both established and growing companies, often requiring specialist skills. The commendable work undertaken this year by the Mid East Regional Skills Forum, bringing business together with education providers, will further benefit the region's competitiveness by improving its pipeline of skilled workers.

I am looking forward, in the coming months, to meeting the committee for the Mid East Plan: in reviewing this progress report, it is clear to see the hard work being undertaken by all the individuals and organisations who are dedicated to making this plan a success. I would also like to express my thanks to the Chairman of the Mid East committee, Mr Eamonn Sinnott, for his ongoing commitment to this project. The results to date could not be achieved without the cooperation and input of the private sector, and thanks are due to the region's Enterprise Champions for that.

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

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

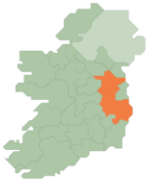
The Regional Action Plan for Jobs initiative will continue to support and drive job creation across the regions by encouraging the enterprise development agencies, Local Authorities, higher education institutions, as well as the private sector and communities, to come forward with innovative ideas to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

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

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frances". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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

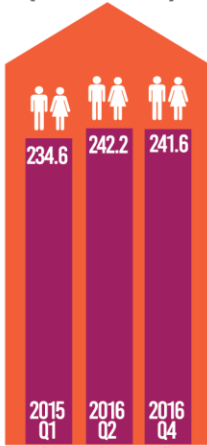


ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS: MID EAST

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

2nd Progress Report, June – December 2016

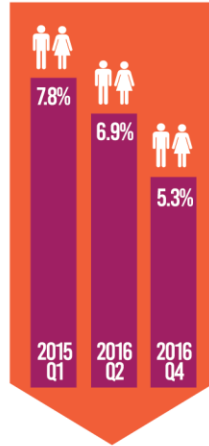
Numbers Employed (Thousands)



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

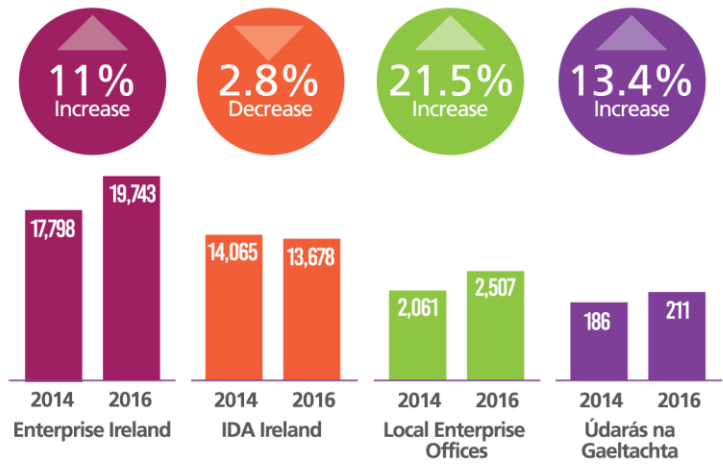
Source: CSO QNHS (QNQ22)

Unemployment Rate



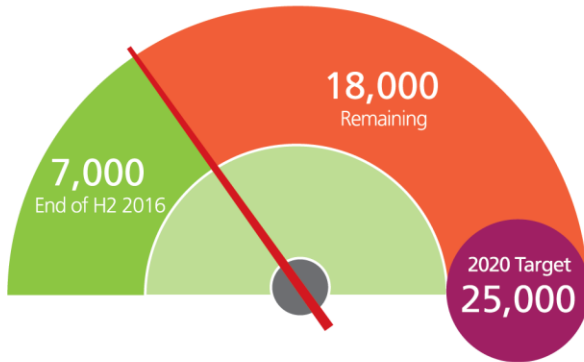
ILO **Unemployment Rate** (15 - 74 years) (%)

Jobs in Agency Supported Businesses



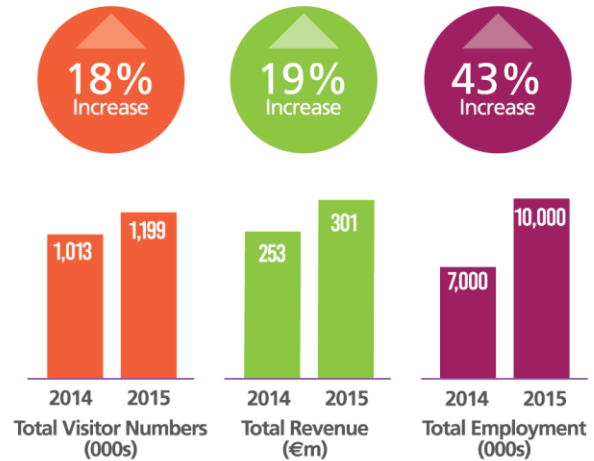
Sources: DJEI Annual Employment Survey, Local Enterprise Office Annual Employment Survey, and Údarás na Gaeltachta

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



Source: CSO QNHS (QNQ22)

Tourism in the Mid East



Source: Fáilte Ireland
2016 figures unavailable at time of publication

Employment by Sector



Source: CSO QNHS (QNQ40)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Action 12: LEOs in the Mid East received over 170 applications for the Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur competition, with over 50 young entrepreneurs selected to undertake the Business Boot Camp and compete in the final round. Companies from the region were awarded investment totalling €150,000.



Action 8: Kells Tech Hub has been fitted out as part of the REDZ project to provide shared services and hot-desking facilities. The centre includes incubation space for start-ups, a training centre and an innovation centre.



Action 29: In Sept 2016 the European Space Agency (ESA) Space Solutions Centre Ireland incubator was opened on the Maynooth campus - funded by the ESA and Enterprise Ireland and intended to help companies gain access to space research and seed funding and to support the creation of high value jobs in the region. The centre is one of fourteen ESA Business Incubation Centres in Europe.



Action 121: A new Boyne Valley Food Strategy 2016-2021 was launched in October 2016 by Meath County Council in partnership with Louth County Council and their respective LEOs. The 5 year roadmap seeks to cement the development and success of the food industry in the Boyne Valley and maximise the economic gains that can be achieved



Action 107: RadioSpace national 5G test facility is now under construction in Maynooth University campus. It will provide a unique, large-scale, interference-free facility to allow scientists and engineers from industry and universities to develop new 5G communications devices. The project is part of CONNECT, SFI's Research Centre for Future Networks and Communications



Action 148: Mid East companies trained with over 30 Skillnets in sectors such as software, plastics, bio-pharma, animation, food, healthcare and financial services. 8 Mid East companies participated in Skillnets' ManagementWorks programme from June to December, undertaking modules in financial planning, sales, marketing, teamwork, customer service and leadership.



Action 89: A new Kildare Tourism Strategy has been produced, and Kildare Fáilte has launched a mobile-friendly digital platform to drive tourism in the county. Consisting of a mobile platform and website (intokildare.ie), the project was developed with support from Kildare County Council and IPB Insurance.



Action 115: A Film Industry Symposium took place in Wicklow County Campus in October 2016 with over 100 participants, facilitating discussion between enterprises and key industry stakeholders on trends and opportunities in the creative AV sector. Delegates heard from speakers including Paul Young, CEO Cartoon Saloon; Naomi Moore, CEO Windmill Lane Recording; Sarah Dillon, Executive Irish Film Board; Jim Duggan MD Screen Scene and Siun Ni Raghallaigh, CEO Ardmore Studios

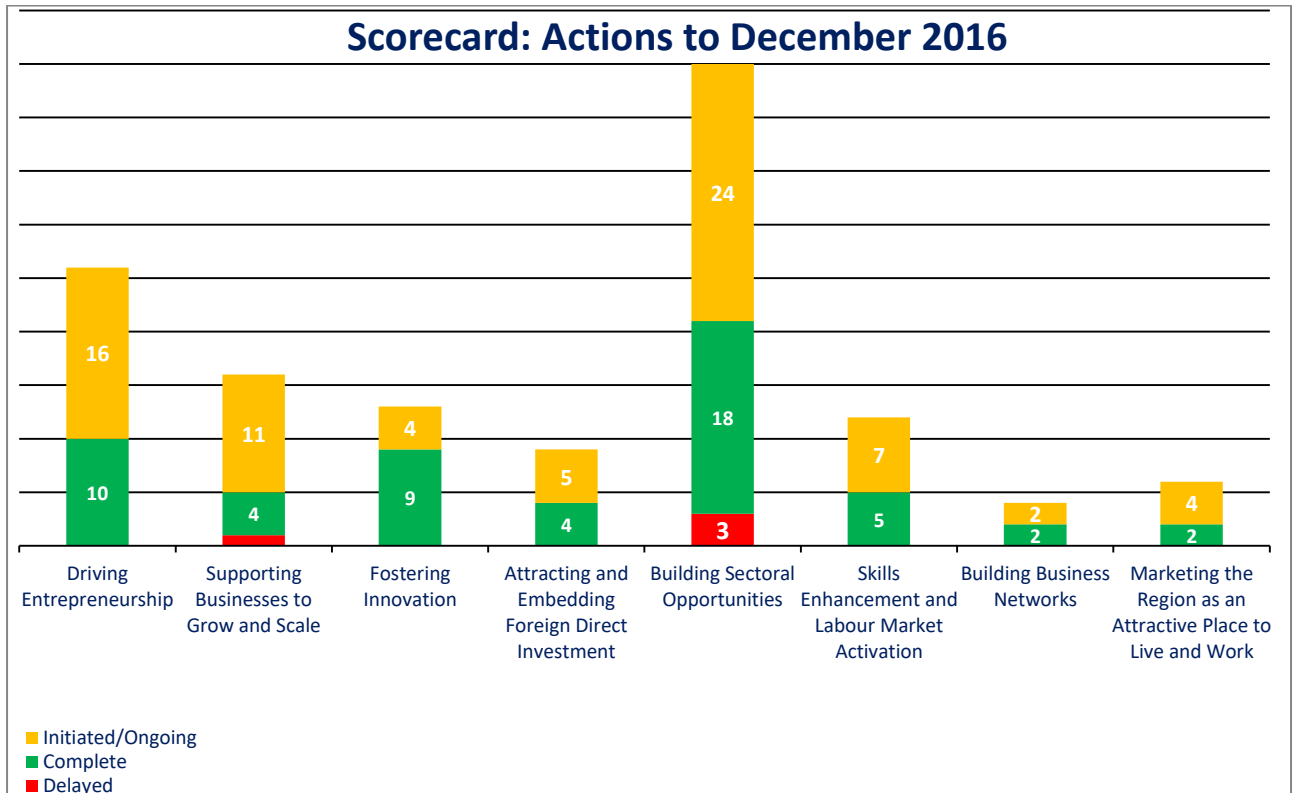


Action 87: Wicklow Enterprise Park, together with Wicklow County Tourism Ltd. and Wicklow Chamber sponsored a product development evening in Dec 2016, supported by Failte Ireland. The aim of the event was to give life to the *Ireland's Ancient East* brand for the benefit of businesses and the community, to capitalise on 'stories' to drive the brand, and to encourage community collaboration, cross selling and co-operation between tourist attractions in the county



Action 64: The Design and Craft Council and IT Carlow are developing a 'Design Dojo' pilot project to be rolled out in Kilkenny and Carlow, and developed with strategic partners including LEOs in the region and VISUAL in Carlow. It has been devised as a design, technology and craft-innovation action-research initiative for post-primary students aimed at engaging them with technology, user-centred design and craft innovation in classroom and community

SCORECARD: ACTIONS TO END 2016



Actions due by end 2016

136 of the Mid East Action Plan's 163 actions were due to be initiated or completed by the end of 2016. 127 of these are on track to be delivered, or have been completed. 4 actions are delayed; 5 actions are no longer being progressed, or have been deemed unfeasible (further details on page 10).

OPENING COMMENTARY

This is the second Progress Report from the Implementation Committee established by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to oversee and monitor implementation of the measures outlined in the Mid East Action Plan for Jobs 2016- 2017. The report details progress made on measures due for completion up to and including the second half of 2016, as well as measures that are ongoing during the full lifetime of the Plan.

The Mid East Action Plan was launched on the 11th January 2016, to help progress a key priority for Government – to deliver local jobs and ensure that every region achieves its economic potential. This will be achieved through the delivery of 163 collaborative actions focusing on increasing the number of start-ups as well as developing the capacity of existing enterprises, with actions targeted at sectors of strength and potential competitive advantage such as manufacturing, food, tourism, and film and the creative industries.

Each Plan is driven and overseen by an Implementation Committee, made up of representatives from the Enterprise Sector, Local Authorities, Enterprise Agencies, and other public bodies in the region. The Mid East Implementation Committee is chaired by Eamonn Sinnott, General Manager of Intel Ireland.

The overarching objective of the Plan is to support the creation of an extra 25,000 jobs across Kildare, Meath and Wicklow. This represents an important step towards the Government's ambition of creating 200,000 jobs across the State by 2020, with 135,000 of these to be outside Dublin.

By end 2016 the Mid East had the lowest Unemployment Rate in the State at 5.3%, compared to the Q4 2016 State Unemployment Rate of 6.7%, and the Dublin Unemployment Rate of 6%. At end 2016, the Unemployment Rate was 2.5% below where it was in Q1 2015. 2,100 people entered employment in Q4 2016; 7,000 have entered employment from Q1 2015 to Q4 2016. Labour Force and Participation Rates have seen small fluctuations, but are broadly unchanged since Q1 2015. In total, at end 2016, 241,600 people in the Mid East were in employment.

The largest sectors of employment in the region currently are Industry, Wholesale and Retail, and Human Health and Social Work, with the largest increases in numbers employed since Q1 2015 being recorded in Industry (up 5,200) and Health and Social Work (up 5,300).

NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

eCOMM announcement

In September alternative banking provider and financial technology specialist Prepaid Financial Services (PFS) announced the creation of 50 new jobs in the UK, Ireland, and Malta following explosive growth during the first six months of 2016. The majority of roles will be based in the company's Irish offices, eCOMM Merchant Solutions, in Navan. Founder and CEO Noel Moran hopes to see Navan, County Meath, develop into a FinTech hub for up-and-coming companies that will one day rival Dublin. Thirty new staff will be employed at the Navan location, joining the 52 existing employees to support the business' fast-growing customer base.

Endress+Hauser announcement

In July the Swiss process automation company Endress+Hauser announced it is to establish an international SAP IT Hub, in Kill, Co. Kildare, creating 20 jobs over five years. The company offers comprehensive process automation products, solutions and services across pressure, level, flow, analytics and temperature allowing customers to optimise their processes to achieve greater efficiency, safety and environmental protection. Endress+Hauser already have a local sales and service centre in Kill with a satellite office in Cork, both serving its domestic Irish client base. Twenty-six people are employed between the two operations. The 20 new roles will be in SAP software and financial management.

Progress of Mid East Regional Skills Forum

1. Agri-Food

The Mid-East Regional Skills Forum has identified Agri-Food as a sector for a pilot collaboration on skills needs in the Region and this complements the Mid East Action Plan for Jobs. It is planned to conduct a detailed skills audit with a sample of employers to identify skills needs and required education and training responses. Engagement is ongoing with Meath Enterprise and the Mid East Regional Skills Forum regarding Agri-Food and how this will link in with the establishment of the Boyne Valley Food Hub. On the 24th March 2016, a 'Round Table' discussion on skills needs in the Agri-Food sector was hosted by Maynooth University in collaboration with the Regional Skills Forum, and included Champion employers in the Region such as Intel, Kerry Food, Kerry Group and Teagasc. The discussion focussed on the provision of education and training programmes in Maynooth University and other education and training providers in the Region and how these programmes can meet the existing and future skills needs of employers in the Region.

2. Creative / Film Industry

There continues to be ongoing engagement with Ardmore Studios and Screen Training Ireland, regarding scoping out suitable skills analysis for the Creative Cluster / Film Industry

3. High Value Manufacturing / Indigenous Engineering Cluster

Dromone Engineering, a member of the Mid East Regional Skills Forum will host a workshop in the near future to begin an assessment of skills needs for a cluster of indigenous engineering / high tech manufacturing employers in the Region.

€555 million in Capital Grants secured by Minister Mitchell O'Connor to support jobs in all regions

In October Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O'Connor secured a 10% increase in her Department's capital allocation in Budget 2017 to bring it to €555 million. It represented the largest increase in the Department's Capital Budget for over a decade. It includes an extra €52 million to support further job creation, innovation and support Irish companies help to respond to the challenges and opportunities from Brexit.

The additional funding demonstrates Government's ongoing commitment to delivering 200,000 additional jobs by 2020 of which 135,000 will be in the regions. The Minister wants both the IDA and Enterprise Ireland to bring the job numbers in their client companies to over 200,000 each next year. To support the Regional Action Plans for Jobs, Enterprise Ireland will also roll out a series of competitive regional funds to support collaborative approaches to job creation projects across the

regions in 2017. The Local Enterprise Offices' (LEOs) will see their capital funding grow by 22% to €22.5m, recognising their potential to generate start-ups and job creation at local level.

Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) funding announced

Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) are functional, rather than administrative geographic, areas that reflect the spatial patterns of local economic activities and development processes. They are essentially the sub-county zones within which most people live and work. The 2016 REDZ scheme, details of which were announced in November 2016, provides funding for projects of differing scale and ambition that share the mutual objective of supporting economic development in rural areas, with a particular focus on maximising the synergies between towns and their hinterlands and encouraging collaboration between Local Authorities on larger projects. The funding covers:

- Flagship projects – 1 in each Regional Assembly region
- 9 Medium scale projects – 3 in each Regional Assembly region to a max grant of €200,000 per project.
- Small REDZ projects –to a maximum grant of €100,000

Under the 2016 REDZ scheme, just over €5.3 million is being approved to 41 projects nationwide with over €450,000 in funding awarded to projects in the Mid East region:

- Arklow, Wicklow: €150,556 awarded to develop a heritage and visitor activity centre based around the world-renowned Arklow Pottery
- Ballitore, Kildare: €100,000 awarded for the Tanyard Project in Ballitore. The proposed project will see the Tanyard buildings converted to a theatre performance space with meeting rooms, toilet and kitchen facilities. The Tanyard buildings date back to 1801 and sit at the heart of Ballitore.
- Kells, Meath: €200,000 awarded for continued development of 'International Technology Hub' at Kells Enterprise & Technology Centre. The Hub aims to foster collaboration between the state agencies, universities, multi-nationals and indigenous businesses in order to facilitate the development of a 'Technology Cluster' in the region.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

In November, the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys TD, announced that 172 towns and villages across the country would benefit from €10 million in funding under the 2016 Town and Village Renewal Scheme, which she launched in August.

Funding awarded to each individual town and village under the 2016 scheme ranges from €17,000 to €100,000. The funding is being used for a wide variety of projects, identified by Local Authorities in conjunction with local community groups and businesses, including improving playgrounds and footpaths, tourism amenities, public art pieces and a wide range of works to improve the streetscape and public realm of towns and villages nationwide, to help make them more attractive and more sustainable places in which to live and work.

Over €1m in funding was awarded to selected towns in the Mid East under this scheme:

- In Wicklow, Kilcoole, Carnew, Shillelagh, Wicklow Town, Dunlavin, Rathdrum and Rathdangan received funding, with Rathdrum being awarded the largest amount of €100,000 for footpaths, street furniture, signage, and works on the town square.
- In Meath, Duleek, Dunderry, Dunshaughlin, Enfield, Rathoath, Skryne, Stamullen and Kilmainham Wood all received between €30,000 and €65,000 each for various projects such as the provision of footpaths, signage, pedestrian crossings and other improvements.
- In Kildare, Athy, Kildare Town, Ballymore Eustace, Timolin, Prosperous, and Ballitore all received funding, with Athy, Kildare Town and Prosperous being awarded between €95,000 and €100,000 each for projects such as landscape and public realm enhancements, car parking, and carrying out a town centre ‘health check’.

Wicklow wins at Community and Council and Irish Tourism Industry Awards

At the 2017 Community and Council Awards (announced in February)– presented by IPB Insurance and LAMA (the Local Authority Member’s Association), Bray.ie was crowned the “Best Connected Community”, while awards for the Best Adventure Experience and Best Accommodation went to Vagabond Tours in Newtownmountkennedy and River Valley Holiday Park Redcross respectively.

Separately, the Bray Air Display was named as winner in the Best Festival/Event Experience in the Irish Tourism Industry Awards beating off competition from other high profile events such as Dublin’s St Patrick’s Festival and Waterford’s Winterval.

PROGRESS ON NATIONAL INITIATIVES

National Broadband Plan

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

A formal procurement process is in train to select a company or companies who will roll-out a new high speed broadband network within the State Intervention (AMBER) Area. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Energy (DCCAE) will shortly update the High Speed Broadband map to finalise the Intervention Area for the Procurement process, taking into account industry investments that have not materialised in BLUE areas, together with new industry investments within the proposed State Intervention Area, along with concrete and credible commitments by industry for further new investments within the current Intervention Area.

The procurement process is being intensively managed, to ensure an outcome that delivers a future-proofed network that serves homes and businesses across Ireland, for at least 25 years. The timeframe for the procurement continues to be dependent on a range of factors including the complexities that may be encountered by the procurement team and bidders, during the procurement process. During the Department's extensive stakeholder consultations in 2015, telecommunications service providers indicated a 3-5 year timeline from contract award to roll-out a network of the scale envisaged under the NBP.

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

MEASURES NOT DELIVERED AS PLANNED BY JUNE 2016

The actions below have not yet been, or will not be, delivered as planned for the following reasons:

- Action 40, 'InterTradeIreland will host a "Going North" workshop in the Mid East'
Initiation of this action has been delayed for 2016. A further update will be provided in the third progress report.
- Action 60: 'Support the development of spin-off companies for the distribution and logistics sector: explore potential for innovation links with HEIs'.
This action has been deemed no longer relevant: a logistics spin out was not developed as anticipated; pursuing this action has been deemed unfeasible.
- Action 70: 'Develop a Regional Connect Ireland Plan that is integrated with the local authorities' enterprise development and job-creation activities and formalise the name of a nominated officer from each county in the region for the roll-out of the Plan'
This action is no longer being progressed as the contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.
- Action 72: 'Announce and run the Connectivation competition, inviting third Level students to share their ideas for the future development of the Succeed in Ireland initiative'
This action is no longer being progressed as the contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.
- Action 104: 'Investigate potential of Tara Mines site to provide sustainable geo-thermal heating solutions for horticulture, agriculture and aquaculture'
Initiation of this action has been delayed as the feasibility of the project is being assessed.
- Action 106: 'Examine the potential for a digital hub in the region, and identify opportunities for integrating ICT with sectors such as Heritage/Tourism, Retail, etc. The group will conduct a feasibility study to examine where opportunities exist and where the focus should be'
Feasibility of this action has been assessed; no further action will be taken for resource reasons. However, work on the development of a strategy for eHubs is ongoing as part of the Action Plan for Jobs 2017 (Action 124).
- Action 127: 'Expand the Dublin Food Chain initiative to other cities'
Has not yet commenced; existing initiatives like the Boyne Valley Food Series are currently well placed to support local artisan food producers. Initiatives in other parts of the region are being investigated and the implications of the recently published Boyne Valley Food Strategy on this initiative are being examined.
- Action 153: 'Maynooth University will establish a 'top table' advisory forum on linking University and regional employment needs, to include representation from IDA and EI'

This action has been deemed no longer relevant: the developing work of the Mid East Regional Skills Forum is deemed a better vehicle for this interaction.

- Action 156: 'Ibec will host a seminar in the Mid East, in association with relevant stakeholders, in the context of its recent Manufacturing survey'

This action is no longer being progressed: however the Irish Medtech Association will host a manufacturing seminar in September 2017 in Galway- which is planned to cover some of the elements of the proposed AIB roadshows.

ACTION UPDATES: H2 2016 AND ONGOING

Action:	1
Measure:	Each of the Local Enterprise Offices in the Mid East region will aim to increase employment in its baseline through increased start-ups and the scaling of existing clients. Annual Business Plans will be developed, setting out clear targets and objectives to support start-ups and enterprises in their region. Key aggregate targets for LEOs in the Mid East are: • Over 900 participants at Business Advice sessions • 20 Start Your Own Business courses will be run, for over 285 participants • Over 200 clients will be assigned Start-up/ Business Development mentors • Approx. 800 women will participate on core LEO training programmes (Start Your Own Business, Accelerate, Hi Start, Export Awareness, Lean, Mentoring) • 65 schools to participate in Student Enterprise programme, with almost 4,000 participants These targets will be further developed in 2016 and 2017.
Lead:	LEOs
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The following were provided/delivered by the LEOs in the Mid East Region during the 6 months July 1st 2016 to December 31st 2016: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 1300 participants took part in training programmes. • 10 Start Your Own Business (SYOB) programmes ran with over 150 participants. • Over 120 participants took part in mentoring assignments. • Over 600 female participants took part in training programmes. • 48 schools in the region, with over 3000 participants, took part in schools entrepreneurship programmes.

Action:	5
Measure:	Enterprise Ireland will run a "Start-up Open Day & Clinic" in the Mid-East for newly registered Start-ups in Manufacturing and Internationally Traded Services from the region, with a view to prospecting for future start-ups and communicating and raising awareness of supports available to potential entrepreneurs in the Mid-East
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	In the Mid-East (and Dublin) region, this activity is being driven through Enterprise Start Events (see action 22 for update) and Project Assessment Days (PAD). Project Assessment Days are being run approx. every 6 weeks, or more frequently if required. Prospective clients (start-ups that have gone through some pre-assessment) have an opportunity to pitch their business to a panel consisting of Enterprise Ireland HPSU's Development Advisers and Representatives from Dublin Business Innovation Centre (BIC). The combination of Enterprise Start Events and Project Assessment Days are currently sufficient to meet the demand from newly registered Start-ups in Manufacturing and Internationally Traded Services from the region.

Action:	6
Measure:	Consider the feasibility of establishing a Foundation for Entrepreneurship in County Meath in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including enterprise agencies and the Boyne Valley Food Hub 2016.
Lead:	INFE, GEN Ireland, Meath Enterprise, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The new foundation for entrepreneurship for Ireland has successfully completed its strategic business development plan and was announced as the Cantillon Foundation for entrepreneurship for Ireland, by Minister Mary Mitchell O'Connor at the Innovation Summit, Sept 2016 (APJ 55), a programme initiative of the foundation that was successfully delivered. The foundation is currently completing feasibility for locating in Co. Meath. It is envisaged that this will be completed by June 2017. The foundation is modelled on the Kauffman Foundation, a USA based non-profit private foundation focussing on entrepreneurship and education. The foundation will work in partnership with stakeholders and build upon its existing success and programs for 2017, e.g. Innovators Summit, Cantillon Entrepreneurs Scale-Up Programme, GEW (Global Entrepreneurship Week) and GEN, Global Entrepreneurship Network) a 160 country entrepreneurship network.

Action:	7
Measure:	Increase awareness of non-financial supports available to enterprise in the region
Lead:	All Enterprise Agencies
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Enterprise Ireland's supports are being communicated to companies throughout the country via traditional and online media channels, social media, public events and via the Local Enterprise Offices. Information and advice clinics are being held regularly by Meath LEO to promote both financial and non-financial supports. These clinics were initiated as part of Enterprise Week and continue as a regular part of the Start Your Own Business (SYOB) programme. A new emphasis has been placed on the LEO Facebook and Twitter pages to 'get the message out', along with a revamped email communication strategy. Kildare LEO is now running monthly "Accessing Finance for your Business" workshops. Wicklow LEO provides advice on access to finance on an ongoing basis and through such events as Local Enterprise Week.

Action:	8
Measure:	Establish 'enterprise zones': space for entrepreneurs, both high-tech (linked to colleges/universities, focus on graduate/student entrepreneurs) and low-tech (focus on building space/property solutions)
Lead:	Local Authorities
Status:	Ongoing

Progress Update: **Meath:** Kells Tech Hub has been fitted out as part of the REDZ project to provide shared services and hot-desking facilities. The centre includes incubation space for start-ups, a training centre and an innovation centre. Close collaboration continues between Meath LEO and the Regional Development Centre in Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Wicklow: A number of projects are being investigated and potential funding opportunities being explored in partnership with IT Carlow and other bodies. A new strategic plan has been developed for Wicklow County Campus and a number of options are being pursued. In addition the feasibility of creating co-working spaces in Local Authorities owned premises are currently under investigation.

A number of projects are being investigated by **Kildare LEO** and potential funding opportunities being explored in partnership with Educational Institutes and other bodies. A number of options are being pursued. In addition, the feasibility of creating co-working spaces in Local Authority owned premises is currently under investigation.

Action: 10
Measure: The Local Enterprise Offices will maximise collaboration with the Community Enterprise Centres to assist start-ups and existing businesses to grow and develop
Lead: LEOs
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: **Meath** Head of LEO has joined the board of Meath Enterprise to ensure close collaboration between the Local Authority, the Local Enterprise Office and the management of the Enterprise Centres. The three organisations work closely to ensure seamless support is offered to companies looking to scale.
Kildare LEO is actively engaged with Community Enterprise Centres. Discussions are currently taking place regarding establishing food incubation units in Athy and Clane Enterprise Centres.
Wicklow: A protocol is in place to maximise collaboration. The Head of Enterprise is on the Board of both Arklow Business Enterprise Centre and Wicklow Enterprise Park and regular interaction and referrals are taking place. Discussions are being undertaken on collaborative development of enterprise space. Joint promotion of initiatives aimed at supporting business growth and development is also taking place. Close working relationships are in place. A coffee morning has also been hosted by LEO Wicklow in Wicklow Enterprise Park for all companies located in the Park.

Action: 11
Measure: Enterprise Ireland will support and monitor successful applicants under the €5 million Community Enterprise Initiative Scheme launched in 2015
Lead: **Enterprise Ireland**

Status: **Ongoing**

Progress Update: Under Enterprise Ireland’s Community Enterprise Initiative, funding was approved to the following:

Meath Enterprise Centre: To develop a Food Innovation & Research Centre and a Digital Media Hub while continuing to manage, promote and develop existing facilities, projects and initiatives.

Arklow Business Enterprise Centre Limited: ABEC currently supports a variety of businesses in the ICT, Food, Services, Construction, Consultancy/Training and Distribution sectors. There are plans to develop the Centre to support a Call Centre business, and to convert space to provide a Commercial Kitchen and a Hot Desk location.

In addition, Enterprise Ireland regularly meets with Community Enterprise Centres to assess progress and to advise and assist where possible. Visits in 2016 to Community Enterprise Centres included the towns of Kells, Navan and Wicklow.

A further competitive fund of up to €60million is currently being rolled out, to support enterprise development in all regions of the country.

Action: 12

Measure: Local Enterprise Offices will work with Enterprise Ireland to increase the number of start-ups in the region through, for example, competing for a place in Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur, Competitive Feasibility, Competitive Start, and High Potential Start-ups

Lead: **LEOs**

Status: **Ongoing**

Progress Update: LEOs in the Mid East Region received over 170 applications for Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur competition, with over 50 young entrepreneurs selected to undertake the Business Boot Camp and compete in the final round. Companies from the region were awarded investment totalling €150,000.

El representation on LEO EVAC (Evaluation and Approvals Committee) continues. A referral process for HPSUs (High Potential Start-Ups) is in place. Promotion of Competitive Start Fund, New Frontiers, Innovation Vouchers, El exporting seminars and other El initiatives has also been undertaken.

Action: 14

Measure: Review the provisions of the CEDRA reports and examine the potential for a pilot CEDRA REDZ (rural economic development zones) in Meath or similar concepts to enhance the capacity of local economic development at sub county and town level

Lead: **Meath County Council**

Status: **Complete**

Progress Update: Application has been made and approval received for €200,000 REDZ grant for the International Technology Hub in the Kells Enterprise Zone. This funding was approved in November 2016.

Action:	15
Measure:	Design, promote and deliver an economic preplanning clinic through Kildare County Council to support the development of micro-enterprises and SME's in a sustainable manner
Lead:	Kildare LEO
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Kildare Head of LEO and the senior planner of Kildare County Council are hosting a pre-planning clinic monthly on a pre scheduled date to meet applicants, review their economic development proposals and provide advice on next steps including referral to other agencies where appropriate, ensuring projects are progressed in the most efficient and timely manner .

Action:	17
Measure:	The Local Development Companies in the region will provide an area-based response to long-term unemployment and deliver a range of programmes to support entrepreneurship and social enterprise. The Local Development Companies will work with the LEOs, with a view to progressing clients to the LEO services
Lead:	Local Development Companies
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Local Development companies continue to provide support through Tús and SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) programmes. Tús is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people. The aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality through local, regional and national engagement and collaboration. These programmes are ongoing in the Mid East region and the following job creation figures apply to H2 2016: SICAP- Direct employment in the workforce, 50; self-employment, 146. Tús - Direct employment in the workforce, 84. LEADER also commenced in September 2016, with further details under action 19.

Action:	18
Measure:	Enterprise Ireland will work with client companies from the region, including high potential start-ups, to increase participation on capability building programmes and to accelerate their capacity to scale up and succeed in international markets
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	A range of channels are used on a continuous basis to make entrepreneurs and existing companies aware of the range of supports available to provide access to finance. These include 1-1 consultations with executives of Enterprise Ireland (regionally & nationally based), briefing seminars, provision of relevant literature, attendance at exhibitions & conferences to promote the supports to new audiences, promotion through social media (regionally & nationally) and via e-zines. Enterprise Ireland currently supports 517 client companies in the Mid East region.

Enterprise Ireland's Strategy 2017 – 2020 is focused on addressing the need for greater scale across Irish enterprise, in every region throughout the country, including the Mid-East. Through the process of implementation of the 2017 -2020 strategy, Enterprise Ireland's supports and engages with clients and local enterprise development partners in the Mid-East to increase participation on capability building programmes and to accelerate their capacity to scale up and succeed in international markets.

Action:	19
Measure:	Develop Local Development Strategies for the delivery of the LEADER programme over the period 2015-2020
Lead:	Local Development Companies
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	<p>Wicklow Partnership is currently seeking expressions of interest for LEADER 2014-2020. Meath Partnership has also published a Local Development Strategy, as has Kildare Local Development Company. Further details are at: http://www.ahrrga.gov.ie/rural/rural-development/leader/local-development-strategies/</p> <p>Since the commencement of LEADER in Co Meath on the 1st September 2016 a total of 147 Expressions of Interest have been received, and the total sum sought by way of grant aid is €6,308,987.61. Of these EOI's 104 have been deemed eligible and have been progressed to application stage. To date five applications have been approved by the Meath Local Action Group (LAG), grant aid awarded total €44,206.66. The estimated economic contribution of these projects to the local economy is €499,500.00 in 2017.</p> <p>Since the commencement of LEADER in Co Wicklow on the 1st July 2016, a total of 206 Expressions of Interest have been received. These EOI's have a total sum sought by way of grant aid of €8,998,324.50. Of these EOI's that were eligible under the theme the call was promoted under 111 were invited to progress towards making applications to the LEADER Programme and two were deemed ineligible by the LCD. These applications are due to be submitted to County Wicklow Partnership by the 28th of July.</p>

Action:	20
Measure:	Develop a communications strategy to build awareness of available enterprise/business supports, including financial, training, and incubation units
Lead:	LEOs
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Mirroring the National LEO Communications Strategy, all LEOs in the region have engaged in regular planned communications and marketing including: Direct Marketing, Advertising, Newsletters, Digital Marketing, Press Releases, Exhibitions & dissemination of marketing / business information collateral.

Action:	21
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Measure:	Promote and support entrepreneurship and start-ups in the region through showcasing local success stories/testimonials on platforms such as LEO and council websites
Lead:	LEOs
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Local success stories are regularly promoted on the LEO websites in the region and local media outlets. Wicklow LEO Case Studies were prepared and featured in local press, LEO Newsletter & Website, with Wicklow LEO client Goldfish.ie featured on the national website localenterprise.ie Case Studies of client companies are being showcased on the Kildare LEO website and updated on a regular basis, and featured in LEO newsletters and promoted via social media. Detailed case studies are being prepared by Meath LEO as part of the overall Meath County Council marketing plan roll-out.

Action:	22
Measure:	Drive and encourage entrepreneurship in the Mid East region through initiatives such as Enterprise Start workshops and the New Frontiers Entrepreneurial Development Programme
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The LEOs are actively promoting and recruiting for the Maynooth University, Athlone and Dundalk Institutes of Technology managed New Frontiers programmes. Meath LEO also provides hands-on assistance to the programme organisers in DkIT by providing mentoring and judging facilities. The first intake of a new five year intake at EI funded Eolas centre in Maynooth University was in place in 2016. To drive and encourage entrepreneurship in the Mid-East region Enterprise Ireland provides a range of supports which are available regionally; for example: Enterprise Start Workshops: These workshops target people who have an idea for an innovative and ambitious start-up business that have the potential for exporting and growth in International Markets. The objective of these workshops is to explore key business areas of focus, such as customer, market and funding needs. Enterprise Ireland ran 3 Enterprise Start Workshop in the Mid-East Region in 2016 (Newbridge, Kells and Wicklow). These events were attended by 44 participants. New Frontiers Entrepreneurial Development Programme: New Frontiers is Enterprise Ireland's national entrepreneur development programme for innovative, early-stage start-ups. It is a three-phased programme, based in 14 campus incubation centres across the country. Nationally, each year, New Frontiers funds approximately 150 companies. In the Mid-East Region, New Frontiers is delivered by Maynooth University in partnership with Athlone Institute of Technology. The total intake in 2016 was 13 and

participants will be housed in the new Maynooth university incubator, (Eolas) and in MIRC (the Midlands Innovation and Research Centre) in Athlone Institute of Technology. Both incubators were part funded by Enterprise Ireland.

Competitive Feasibility Fund:

Enterprise Ireland offers feasibility funding for business start-ups in various sectors and geographic regions. The objective of the Competitive Feasibility Fund for the Mid East Region was to assist new start-up companies or entrepreneurs to investigate the viability of a new growth-orientated business proposition which has the potential to become a High Growth Potential Start-Up. In the first half of 2016, a joint Competitive Feasibility Fund was run for the Midlands and the Mid-East Regions. 3 projects from the Mid-East were awarded funding.

Action:	23
Measure:	Increase the take up by start-up and growth enterprises of the various financial supports for enterprise (SURE, Microfinance, Seed and Venture Funds, SBCI, etc)
Lead:	LEOs
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Formal protocols are in place between LEOs, Revenue and MFI to increase take up of these supports. Information on these schemes is available in the Mid East LEO offices, on LEO websites and through one to one business advice sessions. All LEOs in the region continue to actively promote and process applications for MFI loans. From October 2012 to March 2017, 140 Microfinance loans were approved to companies in the Mid East; 11% of the total number of loans approved across the State.

Action:	24
Measure:	Communicate to business the opportunities that exist from EU funds
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Enterprise Ireland is currently promoting opportunities for businesses to benefit from Horizon 2020 through traditional and online channels, through thought leadership pieces in the national press and through e-zines.

Action:	25
Measure:	InterTradelreland will run its annual Seedcorn Competition on a regional basis, to give companies the opportunity to improve their investor readiness and greatly increase their chances of raising equity. Local companies will have the opportunity to compete on a regional basis for a prize of €20,000. The regional winner can go on to compete for overall prizes of €50,000 and €100,000
Lead:	InterTradelreland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The 2017 Seedcorn competition was launched on 8 March. Early stage companies from the Mid East region are encouraged to apply for the

competition. The Seedcorn competition mirrors the real life investment process and can greatly improve a company's ability to attract investment by helping it become investor ready. The competition is aimed at early and new start companies that have a new equity funding requirement and has a total cash prize fund of €280,000.

Action: 26
Measure: Promote national supports available to provide access to finance to start ups and existing businesses
Lead: LEOs
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: All LEOs in the region are actively promoting support and financing opportunities to their client base. Formal protocols are in place between LEOs and Revenue, Microfinance Ireland, Department of Social Protection, and the Companies Registration Office. Information on schemes is also made available in LEO offices and on LEO websites and through one to one business advice sessions.

Action: 28
Measure: InterTradelreland will deliver a series of equity awareness events in the Mid East including the unique equity advisory clinics where companies can meet with an equity expert, business planning workshops and venture capital case studies
Lead: InterTradelreland
Status: Complete
Progress Update: Dublin clinics are in place to cater for companies based across the Mid East and Dublin regions. These events are taking place on a monthly basis, and this schedule will continue into 2017. Clinics are delivered by InterTradelreland's venture professional, who meets with companies to advise independently on their fundraising activities including business plan review, investment pitch practice and signposting to investors across the island. This service is provided free of charge with pre-screening under taken in advance to ensure companies using the service meet the minimum criteria.

Action: 29
Measure: Link, develop and market innovation/incubation space in the region
Lead: Maynooth University
Status: Complete
Progress Update: MaynoothWorks is Maynooth University's new Business Incubator offering state of the art office space as well as critical advice and support for technology start-ups. Spin-out and spin-in companies in Maynoothworks created over 80 jobs between Oct 2015 and Dec 2016. 14 new start-up companies were recruited on the New Frontiers Program in September 2016. In the same month the ESA Space Solutions Centre Ireland incubator was opened. This will be the first partner to host a company from this program.

Maynoothworks reached a capacity of 86% occupancy in H2 2016. The majority of the client base is working towards having an investible

proposition with a high level of success in securing grants from Enterprise Ireland. Its largest client secured a significant round of funding with a second client in the process of raising a series A round (€1.5 million). Maynoothworks has supported over 19 companies up to H2 2016.

The MaynoothWorks manager is now working with Kildare LEO and Chamber of Commerce to run an initiative to support candidates from the recent round of redundancies in Hewlett Packard who have expressed an interest in becoming entrepreneurs. In addition, he will sit on their LEO Funding board and Kildare Economic Development Strategic Policy Committee. This resulted from support provided in H2 2016 by the manager sitting on their panel for the IBYE awards and as a guest speaker during Enterprise Week in the regional offices.

The ESA (European Space Agency) business incubator based on the Maynooth campus launched on 7th September is a partnership with Athlone Institute of Technology, Tyndall Institute, and Irish Maritime and Energy Research Cluster. This incubator is funded by the ESA and Enterprise Ireland and is intended to help companies gain access to space research and seed funding and to support the creation of high value jobs in the region. The centre is one of fourteen ESA (Business Incubation Centres) in Europe.

25 start-ups will receive €50,000 in seed funding, along with expert technical assistance and opportunities to access other funding mechanisms. The centre will also offer ten rounds of €40,000 funding to support technology transfer for established companies that want to develop demonstrators for new products and services using space technology. Companies can work from any of the four host institutions. Interested companies and entrepreneurs were invited to learn more at a workshop in Maynooth University, on 9th September 2016.

Action:	33
Measure:	Enterprise Ireland will run 1 “Get Export Ready” workshop in the Mid East region in 2016 to outline supports available to drive development of local enterprises who are considering an export agenda
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Enterprise Ireland held a Get Export Ready event in December 2016 in Kildare. At these events companies have the opportunity to hear first-hand from an Irish company sharing their experience and business lessons learned as they successfully made the transition from selling domestically to exporting to world markets.
	Enterprise Ireland also outlines the programmes available to support new and early stage exporters, and covers the range of information, training and financial products that are designed to test the commercial or technical feasibility of a new export business idea.

Action:	34
Measure:	Enterprise Ireland will run 1 “Exploring Exporting Workshop” in the Mid-East region for early and pre-export companies, to explore the export opportunities for their companies
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Companies in the region showed a preference for the Get Export Ready Workshop (held in December 2016. See action 33); thus the objectives of this action were delivered through the December event.

Action:	36
Measure:	EI will roll-out their new client engagement model to different cohorts of companies to drive development and growth, targeting those with the potential to grow and create employment
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	In line with its new four year strategy, Enterprise Ireland is currently in the process of implementing a new Client Engagement Model (CEM) of working with its client base, in order to help them scale and expand their businesses. This is currently happening with a number of sectors across the country and in the Mid East region. The client engagement model includes a joint assessment of the business needs to ensure that EI deliver the right supports, at the right time, relative to the company’s growth ambitions and with a clear timeline for action by the company and by Enterprise Ireland, based on agreed needs. This approach is currently being piloted.

Action:	37
Measure:	Identify locations for the development of enterprise units, with provision of shared services, to help small companies grow
Lead:	Local Authorities
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	In Wicklow facilities are available in Arklow Business Enterprise Centre and Wicklow Enterprise Park. Additional potential sites are also being actively pursued including Wicklow County Campus and other Local Authority owned sites. Meath Local Authority, Meath LEO and Meath Enterprise are working closely to ensure there are sufficient Enterprise units available for small companies in the county. Meath Local Authority continues a long tradition of supporting and developing enterprise units in the county. Kildare LEO is undertaking discussions regarding the possibility of establishing food incubation units in Athy and Clane Enterprise Centres.

Action:	38
Measure:	Raise awareness of the EIS (Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme) as a finance option, following its recent extension to SMEs in the Mid East
Lead:	LEOs
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Protocols are in place between the LEOs and Revenue to support this. Information on the scheme is also available in LEO offices, on LEO

websites and through one to one business advice meetings.

Action: 39
Measure: InterTradelreland will promote its Acumen and Elevate programmes in the Mid East region
Lead: **InterTradelreland**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: Both programmes are being promoted in the region though the Acumen Consultant network, through InterTradelreland events, and through local press. The Acumen programme assists businesses to source the right expertise and people to target new markets effectively and increase cross-border sales; the Elevate programme is a micro-Business support programme providing consultancy expertise to help companies create cross-border sales development plans.

Action: 40
Measure: InterTradelreland will host a “Going North” workshop in the Mid East
Lead: **InterTradelreland**
Status: **Delayed**
Progress Update: Initiation of this action has been delayed for 2016. A further update will be provided in the third progress report.

Action: 41
Measure: InterTradelreland will set a target of at least 10 Acumen approvals in the region to investigate and pursue export opportunities in Northern Ireland
Lead: **InterTradelreland**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: During the period July-December 2016 a total of 5 Acumen projects were approved under the programme. The Acumen programme assists businesses to source the right expertise and people to target new markets effectively and increase cross-border sales. The programme offers three support options: support towards employing a full or part-time sales person, or specialist consultancy support of up to £4,000/€5,000 to research cross-border opportunities and implement a cross-border strategy.

Action: 42
Measure: EI will utilise the new Regional Aid designation of Athy, Arklow and Kells to assist enterprises in the Mid East to grow as appropriate
Lead: **Enterprise Ireland**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: Enterprise Ireland has been engaging with companies in these areas. This opportunity is being communicated to relevant companies through traditional and online media channels and at public events, for example in Arklow, December 2015, with Chambers of Commerce.

Action: 43
Measure: Through its Trade Accelerator Voucher scheme, InterTradelreland will help companies to identify and break down barriers to trade leading to

new export opportunities in Northern Ireland

Lead: **InterTradelreland**

Status: **Ongoing**

Progress Update: This work continues and the scheme is promoted to all companies seeking to develop their cross border markets. Through the scheme, InterTradelreland offers financial support worth £1000 / €1200 towards professional advice in areas such as taxation, employment law, currency, or regulation. It can also be used for market research to help a company scope the potential business opportunity in the opposite jurisdiction.

Action: 44

Measure: Enterprise Ireland will target manufacturing and internationally traded service companies in the Mid-East region to scale, innovate and develop international markets

Lead: **Enterprise Ireland**

Status: **Ongoing**

Progress Update: Enterprise Ireland supports companies in every county of Ireland to start and scale, innovate and remain competitive on international markets, now and in the future. The contribution of Enterprise Ireland client companies (517 of which are in the Mid East) to the Irish economy is very important, particularly from a regional and county perspective.

Enterprise Ireland's Strategy 2017 – 2020 is focused on addressing the need for greater scale across Irish enterprise, in every region throughout the country, including the Mid-East, by driving:

- Innovation: Driving innovation in Irish enterprise to unprecedented levels through new supports to reach the target of €1.25bn in R&D expenditure per annum by 2020.
- Competitiveness: Improving the competitiveness of Irish companies through Lean programmes and new client engagement model, which will provide targeted supports based on agreed milestones.
- Diversification: Increasing the diversification of client company exports into new markets, with two-thirds of exports going beyond the UK. This includes a major focus on the Eurozone where we are targeting a 50 per cent increase in exports.
- Ambition: Inspiring more companies to have global ambition.

In addition to financial support, extra support is provided to client companies through access to a range of programmes such as Management & Leadership Development, Trade Missions, Selling Opportunity events, Mentoring, providing Market Intelligence and more. In addition to this Enterprise Ireland has been active in the development of the market for risk money, enterprise space, and the innovation infrastructure.

Action: 45

Measure:	LEOs in collaboration with EI will develop progression pathways for clients to EI's HPSU programme
Lead:	LEOs
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	During second half of 2016, 8 clients were referred for support to EI Potential Exporters Division and EI Market Research Centre. 1 Formal High Potential Start-Up transfer took place. This is a formal Agenda item at every Evaluation & Approvals Committee meeting: Enterprise Ireland is also represented on this committee. Regular informal contact is also happening regarding potential clients. Regional LEOs have a close working relationship with the relevant section in EI.

Action:	46
Measure:	The telecoms industry, through the Telecommunications and Internet Federation (TIF), to work with DCENR, DTTS, CCMA and NRA to address any barriers to the rollout of high speed broadband
Lead:	Ibec
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Work on this action is ongoing. The Telecoms and Internet Federation is engaging with relevant stakeholders on the rollout of the National Broadband Plan.

Action:	47
Measure:	Collaboration & Global Sourcing: To enhance the Regional offering and increase collaboration with existing clients, and introduce relevant Enterprise Ireland clients to IDA clients
Lead:	IDA Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	IDA Ireland is working closely with Enterprise Ireland to increase collaboration, including the sourcing of goods, between multinational and indigenous companies. The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation together with IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland will host a Trade & Investment Mission for the Mid-East and Dublin regions which will be held in Croke Park on May 17 th 2017. The purpose of the Mission is to facilitate networking opportunities between IDA backed multinationals and Enterprise Ireland client companies.

Action:	48
Measure:	InterTradelreland will deliver 3 public tendering workshops for SMEs in the Mid East over the period 2015-2016 and will provide relevant training for local small businesses in the region
Lead:	InterTradelreland
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	InterTradelreland have delivered 6 Go2Tender workshops in the region over this period, in Wicklow and Naas, for a combined total of 33 participants. These workshops provide a comprehensive review of public procurement markets on the island, where to find tender opportunities, e-tender portals, and how to complete tender documentation.

Action:	49
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Measure:	InterTradelreland will promote public tendering opportunities to SMEs in the region including cross border public sector opportunities, consortia building for larger contracts and below threshold contracts
Lead:	InterTradelreland
Status:	Merged with action 48 due to similarity of objectives
Progress Update:	See action 48 for update

Action:	50
Measure:	EDEN Centre will run a series of half-day workshops and mentoring for industry participants on the topic of Business Model Innovation
Lead:	Maynooth University
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	EDEN is Maynooth University's Centre for Entrepreneurship, Design and Innovation. EDEN ran an Innovation Masterclass with Bank of Ireland at Carton House in February 2016. 80 local businesses participated and the topics covered involved business model innovation and making innovation happen in SMEs. EDEN also hosted a focus group of 13 local SMEs in September 2016 to do a needs assessment for their requirements for creativity and innovation. Allan Shine (CEO, County Kildare Chamber) selected a diverse group of SMEs for EDEN to work with to assess how the University can help them develop ideas and build capacity to grow their businesses through innovation. Subsequent to this, EDEN has been working closely with Jacqui McNabb (Head of the Kildare Local Enterprise Office) and Allan Shine to prepare for a Business Model Innovation (BMI) full-day event which is being held in Maynooth University on June 27th 2017.

Action:	51
Measure:	IDA will continue to roll out its Research, Development & Innovation Program to incentivise client companies in the region to develop new processes and products
Lead:	IDA Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	IDA Ireland continues to support and provide its Research, Development & Innovation Program to incentivise its 56 client companies in the Mid East to develop new processes and products. IDA targets and engages with its existing client base at both corporate and local executive level following analysis of the company's R&D strategy.

Action:	52
Measure:	Maynooth University Commercialisation Team to continue to offer Connect networking events to facilitate academic-industry partnerships
Lead:	Maynooth University
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Maynooth Commercialisation ran a CONNECT eHealth forum and Workshop in Nov 2016 at the Glenroyal Hotel in Maynooth. eHealth is

a rapidly developing area which attempts to deliver more efficient healthcare through technology. There were approximately 150 healthcare stakeholders in attendance including thought leaders and industry practitioners. The event involved a series of presentations, a panel discussion, networking sessions and three workshops. Following the success of a Connect event in April 2016, which was attended by 190 delegates, two further events are planned in 2017 and 2018. These will have a technology/innovation emphasis and may focus on a sectoral theme (e.g. Food Innovation, 5G future), or a cross-cutting theme such as Design for Business.

Action: 53
Measure: Maynooth University Department of Design will run two Design Thinking Masterclass workshop courses for industry participants
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: Maynooth University Design Innovation faculty partnered with Irish Research and Development Group (IRDG) to run two sets of four full day workshops on Design Thinking as a route to New Product Development.

The courses ran over 4 half-days and focused on developing radical innovation using a design thinking approach. Participants learnt how to apply tools and techniques of Design Thinking to develop concepts matched to a firm's strategy and capabilities. Each day took place in one of 4 member companies.

Workshops were staged in Spring and the second in Autumn of 2016. Organisations involved as delegates included Opennet; ESB; Coillte; Permanent TSB, Transitions Optical, Logitech, and Intel.

Building on this connection, the inaugural meeting of a new special interest group on Design Thinking was held at Maynooth University in Feb 2017. Participants included Intel, SAP, ESB, Coillte, and UCC.

Action: 54
Measure: Establish a Mid East Region forum to bring together Enterprise Development Agencies, HEIs and Technology Transfer Offices, and Industry representatives to identify and exploit development opportunities
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: Objectives of this action are being fulfilled by the work of the Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative. The Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) consortium comprising Maynooth University (MU), Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and Institute of Technology Carlow (ITC) was approved in 2016 for a further funding period to build on and expand the successes of the partnership that was developed as a consortium supported by TTSI phase 2. The consortium is working closely with KTI and is a strong component of the national TT / KT landscape. The

consortium has a key focus on industry collaborations and partnership development. Each of the respective offices spends a large portion of time on relationship and business development and creating links to Research Performing Organisations. EI and KTI provide the consortium with substantial industry links; colleagues in SFI and the IDA also provide links to key industry collaboration opportunities.

Action: 55
Measure: Explore the potential for Meath to host an Innovation summit during Meath Enterprise Week 2016 (MEW2016) and Global Entrepreneurship Week in Ireland (GEW2016) and in collaboration with GEN Ireland
Lead: **Meath Enterprise**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: A successful inaugural Innovation Summit took place from Sept 16-19, 2016, in Co. Meath and Co. Dublin, where 100 USA/Ireland high-potential entrepreneurs gathered for a global scale-up, peer-to-peer learning experience (50 USA/50 Irish).

The event provided a unique platform to evaluate the potential for an ongoing Innovators Summit to help high-potential Irish entrepreneurs to scale globally, through expert and entrepreneur led Master-Sessions. The specific focus areas included: accessing new and emerging global market opportunities, achieving funding for growth and preparing for Brexit challenges and opportunities. It is envisaged that the event would become an annual gathering and would form the platform for the establishment of the new Cantillon Entrepreneur Program for high-potential entrepreneurs capable of global scaling, and will expand in 2017 as part of GEW (Global Entrepreneurship Week - Nov 2017), a further initiative supported by the Cantillon Foundation. The Cantillon Foundation is Ireland's new Foundation for entrepreneurship, (APJ 6) (previously INFE).

Action: 57
Measure: Maynooth University will investigate the potential for developing a Research and Innovation centre in the Mid East focused on business opportunities linked to climate change
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: A proposal has been developed and funding is now being pursued at both national and EU level.

Action: 58
Measure: Develop a regional promotion and outreach programme to assist enterprises and research teams participate in collaborative research, especially EU Horizon 2020 projects
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: The University is in the process of establishing an “industry gateway” for collaboration with the university. Through this, once a link to the university has been made, advice on grant funding is available from a

Horizon 2020 specialist in the Maynooth University Research Development Office. The application rate to H2020 increased compared to the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) which ended in 2013. Approximately €3.8M in H2020 funding has been secured to date by the university, with a further €3M in EU programmes outside H2020.

Action: 59
Measure: Maynooth University will explore the potential of an innovation approach based on the Spanish ‘Gradiant’ organisation (non-for-profit research company) for Innovation Value
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: No funding has been secured for a not-for-profit research company based on the Spanish “Gradiant” model, and Maynooth University are not pursuing this approach further at this time. Separately, however, an Innovation Value Institute (IVI) spin out company (Innovation Value Services Ltd) was created in Feb 2016. The objective of the company is to commercialise the IVI research outputs. IVI Services Ltd has 4 employees to date, based in rented space on campus in Maynooth.

Action: 60
Measure: Support the development of spin-off companies for the distribution and logistics sector: explore potential for innovation links with HEIs
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Deemed no longer relevant**
Progress Update: A Logistics spin out was not developed as anticipated; pursuing this action has been deemed unfeasible.

Action: 61
Measure: InterTradelreland will promote the Fusion Programme to SMEs in the Mid East and will set a target of at least 7 Fusion approvals in 2015/16
Lead: **InterTradelreland**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: 6 companies from the Mid East region completed FUSION projects across 2015/16; 2 projects which started in 2016 are still ongoing. Product development and innovation is at the heart of growth but often needs costly technology support. InterTradelreland’s FUSION programme can provide that support by helping to fund a high calibre science, engineering or technology graduate and partnering a business with a third level institution with specific expertise.

Action: 62
Measure: InterTradelreland will provide access to its Challenge programme to SMEs in the region
Lead: **InterTradelreland**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: A programme of 1:1 mentoring of 8 companies attending the Challenge event in Naas is now complete. Aimed at Managing Directors and CEOs of ambitious SMEs, the Challenge Programme allows business owners to transform their company’s prospects in just

nine months by learning and applying the most effective methods of generating, marketing and launching new products and services. After an introductory briefing, companies are selected to take part in workshops and then go through a competitive process where 25 SMEs annually will be selected for intensive specialist in-house mentoring and support.

Action: 64
Measure: Develop a 'Design Thinking' initiative for young people, through partnership between LEOs, culture and arts venues and education providers to deliver enterprise skills to young people using existing resources, similar to the coder dojo model for enterprises
Lead: **IT Carlow**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: This is an ongoing project to be designed and delivered over the next two school years. The Design and Craft Council of Ireland and Institute of Technology Carlow have agreed to develop a 'Design Dojo' pilot project to be initially rolled out in Kilkenny and Carlow. This programme will be developed with a number of strategic partners including Local Enterprise Offices in the region and VISUAL in Carlow. Design Dojo has been devised as a design, technology and craft-innovation based action research initiative for post-primary students aimed at engaging students in the use of technology, user-centred design and craft innovation in the classroom and community. It will build on DCCoI's existing designED, CRAFTed and Future Makers programmes and complement curricular learning in the visual arts, craft and design by developing connectivity through technology and user-centred design processes.
 Activities have commenced with the appointment of a researcher to commence rollout of the pilot project.

Action: 66
Measure: IDA will target a 30 to 40% increase in investments for the Mid East over the period 2015-2019
Lead: **IDA Ireland**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: Many of the investments won in 2016 were capital intensive, with 63% of this expenditure made outside of Dublin. During 2016, Shire announced its plans to expand its global biotech manufacturing capacity with an investment of US\$400 million and creating 400 jobs in Co. Meath. Swiss process automation company Endress+Hauser announced it is to establish an international SAP IT Hub, in Kill, Co. Kildare, creating 20 jobs over five years. IDA's marketing focus continues to include New Name, Expansion and R&D projects. Numbers of investments are not reported per region on an annual basis.

Action: 67
Measure: Transformation: Drive Transformation with IDA clients by seeking new mandates with the established base of companies
Lead: **IDA Ireland**

Status: Ongoing

Progress Update: An integral part of IDA’s relationship with its clients is to review operations and support investments that will ultimately make the operation more sustainable. Transformation investments are aimed at existing clients in the region to ensure the sustainability of the operation and to further embed companies in the region. IDA Client companies of all scale are met by IDA on a regular basis and many of these clients have recently availed of incentives such as Lean Start, Training and RD&I. It is noted that it is the company that decides on whether to announce such an investment.

Action: 68

Measure: Second Site Initiative: Develop a value proposition to market the Mid-East Region as a second site location option for existing multinationals in the Dublin area

Lead: IDA Ireland

Status: Complete

Progress Update: IDA’s Mid-East Regional office has created a second site value proposition for the Mid East region. This material is being used to promote the region as a location for a second site with a particular focus on existing client companies in the Dublin area.

Action: 69

Measure: Property: Continually review all property options across the region identifying potentially suitable options for new and existing clients

Lead: IDA Ireland

Status: Ongoing

Progress Update: IDA’s Property Division marketing team and the Mid-East Regional Office engage frequently with the private sector to review all property options in the region on an ongoing basis.

IDA is actively involved in supporting the private sector market available property solutions in locations across the region including Arklow, Leixlip, Maynooth and Kells. These property solutions consist of green field site, advance manufacturing and office facilities.

IDA and Meath County Council have collaborated on an initiative to enhance Navan’s marketing proposition by processing the design and planning permit for a new technology building for IDA’s Navan Business & Technology Park. This could reduce the lead time of delivering a new building by approximately 6 months.

Action: 70

Measure: Develop a Regional Connect Ireland Plan that is integrated with the local authorities’ enterprise development and job-creation activities and formalise the name of a nominated officer from each county in the region for the roll-out of the Plan

Lead: Connect Ireland

Status: No longer being progressed

Progress Update: The contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.

Action:	71
Measure:	IDA to utilise the new additional Regional Aid designations of Athy, Kells and Arklow to target relevant investors
Lead:	IDA Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	IDA Ireland is marketing Athy, Kells and Arklow to relevant target clients. Specific marketing material is available to target clients to promote the financial supports available.

Action:	72
Measure:	Announce and run the Connectivation competition, inviting third Level students to share their ideas for the future development of the Succeed in Ireland initiative
Lead:	Connect Ireland
Status:	No longer being progressed
Progress Update:	The contract between IDA and Connect Ireland has concluded.

Action:	73
Lead:	IDA Ireland
Measure:	Develop Value Proposition- Global Business Services: The international business services cluster of Generali, Welch Allyn, Hewlett Packard, Intel, Elavon is supported by an IT / technology capability. These international brands are an attraction & very significant reference for additional companies to potentially locate to the Mid-East
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	This action has been completed. Through its network of overseas offices as well as in Ireland, the Mid East regional office is marketing the region for Global Business Services investment opportunities to both new and existing clients. This is primarily being undertaken through 1:1 meetings with clients, but marketing materials are also available if required.

Action:	76
Measure:	Infrastructure: Continue to encourage and positively influence infrastructure improvements in the Region
Lead:	Local Authorities
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Meath County Council: one of the eight key elements of the Economic Development strategy for County Meath 2014-2020 is the identification of and support of investment in infrastructure and services that enable and deliver economic development. A key output of the strategy is the merging of investment opportunities with land use planning. Wicklow Local Authority is working with developers and Road engineers to plan improved road infrastructure to service Wicklow County Campus and the Rathnew area. Work is underway to deal and engage with the National Broadband Plan, including the establishment of structures within the Local Authority.

Action:	77
Measure:	Roll out Ireland’s Ancient East international advertising campaign
Lead:	Tourism Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland’s Ancient East continues to be a major focus of Tourism Ireland’s promotions in 2017. It is highlighted in Tourism Ireland’s new ad for Ireland, which rolled out as part of a national TV campaign in the US in January and February, reaching an estimated 255 million potential American holidaymakers; it rolled out in cinemas in the lead up to St Patrick’s Day in Britain, reaching an estimated 4 million potential visitors; it also rolled out in Germany and France this spring on national and satellite channels and online – reaching almost 36 million potential German and French holidaymakers. • Ireland’s Ancient East is also highlighted on Ireland.com, Tourism Ireland’s suite of international websites (29 market sites available in 11 language versions) which attracted more than 19 million visitors in 2016. Ireland’s Ancient East is also highlighted through Tourism Ireland’s social media platforms, Facebook (almost 3.9 million fans worldwide), Twitter (almost 400,000 followers) and YouTube (31 million views). For example, in February, Tourism Ireland released a time-lapse video of Ireland’s Ancient East on its social platforms; called “Dawn to Dusk in Ireland’s Ancient East”, the short film showcased locations around Ireland’s Ancient East – including Glendalough, Newgrange, Castletown House, Hook Lighthouse and Kilkenny Castle. • Tourism Ireland has also partnered with Wexford, Waterford and Kilkenny County Councils, Stena Line and Rosslare Europort to promote Ireland’s Ancient East in Britain this year, with two promotional campaigns rolling out, one in April and a second in September, reaching an estimated 3 million potential visitors. The April campaign includes online ads on popular websites, radio ads (on stations in London, the Midlands and South Wales) and ads on Facebook. As well as highlighting ease of access, the ads are encouraging British holidaymakers to “Stir your soul...drive over to Ireland’s Ancient East”.

Action:	79
Measure:	Put in place an extensive familiarisation programme to attract media and international buyers to Ireland’s Ancient East
Lead:	Tourism Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of familiarisation visits to Ireland’s Ancient East for tour operators, travel and lifestyle journalists and bloggers from around the world is in place for 2017 and will operate year-round. The aim is to encourage tour operators to include Ireland’s Ancient East as a new destination in their programmes or to expand the ‘Ireland’ content of existing programmes. A further aim is to raise the profile of Ireland’s Ancient East through the articles and broadcasts of journalists and bloggers who visit Ireland as part of Tourism Ireland’s overseas publicity

programme. This programme generates an estimated €380M in positive publicity for the island each year.

- To give a couple of examples: In March, Italian tour operator Cocktail Viaggi and a group of its travel agents explored Ireland's Ancient East as guests of Tourism Ireland. In February, a group of Finnish tour operators and travel agents visited Ireland's Ancient East. In April, a group of journalists from Denmark and Sweden – with a combined readership circulation of 1.7 million Scandinavians – visited Ireland's Ancient East. The itineraries for their visits were designed in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland.

Action:	81
Measure:	Fáilte Ireland will: • Enact phase 2 of Ireland's Ancient East online presence • Commence phase 2 of Ireland's Ancient East attraction signage
Lead:	Fáilte Ireland
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Phase 2 of www.irelandsancienteast.com was rolled out in Dec 2016. New features include enhanced design, personalised trip planner, driving directions and inclusion of all tourism activity and attraction listings. Social Media channels continue to play a key role together with the website in strengthening the digital presence for Ireland's Ancient East. Phase 2 of the Orientation Signage project has commenced and will run throughout 2017.

Action:	83
Measure:	Maintain and manage 156km of Inland Waterway for navigational and recreation purposes
Lead:	Waterways Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The management and maintenance of the Royal Canal and Grand Canal in Counties Kildare and Meath continues. Waterways Ireland are currently working with Kildare and Meath County Councils to construct a cycleway along the Royal Canal as part of the National Cycle Network (NCN). This project is funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.

Action:	84
Measure:	Promote and raise awareness of Fáilte Ireland 's new accreditation for alternative accommodation ('Welcome Standard') among providers of, or those interested in developing, non-mainstream accommodation options in the region
Lead:	Fáilte Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	There are now 17 tourism accommodation businesses approved to Fáilte Ireland's Welcome Standard in counties Wicklow, Kildare and Meath. Fáilte Ireland continues to promote this standard in these 3 counties. The standard is aimed particularly at alternative, non-mainstream accommodation options.

Action:	86
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Measure:	Provide support to the holders of Boyne Valley Tourism digital assets with integration of Ireland’s Ancient East into existing online information around the Boyne Valley tourism area
Lead:	Boyne Valley Tourism
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Boyne Valley Tourism has been working closely with tourism providers to ensure their online presence is up to date and encourages use of Ireland’s Ancient East branding. Ireland’s Ancient East has been incorporated into the website via branding and story content on www.discoverboynevalley.ie in addition to the Discover Boyne Valley app.

Action:	87
Measure:	Enable/inform stakeholders so they can identify new business opportunities to capitalise on 'Ireland's Ancient East': tourism, heritage, cultural, food
Lead:	Local Authorities
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	<p>Wicklow County Council has formed a committee consisting of representatives of Wicklow Tourism, elected members and representatives of tourism service providers to develop the County’s Tourism Strategy. There will be wide consultation and engagement with service providers and the wider community to raise awareness and to identify opportunities associated with the roll out of Ireland’s Ancient East, the Local Economic and Community Plan and the Mid East Action Plan for Jobs. Wicklow County Council is engaging with Fáilte Ireland in this regard.</p> <p>Wicklow Enterprise Park, in partnership with Wicklow County Tourism Ltd. and the Wicklow Chamber of Commerce sponsored a product development evening at Wicklow Gaol before Christmas 2016. This was supported by Fáilte Ireland. The idea behind the evening was to reach out within the community to encourage giving ‘life and legs’ to the Ireland’s Ancient East brand in Wicklow for the benefit of the business community and the community at large. A big part of this was to capitalise on ‘stories’ or ‘tales’ to drive the brand, and to encourage community collaboration, cross selling and co-operation between tourist attractions in County Wicklow. The plan is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with print/social media to carry IAE logo • Co-ordinate COTRI (China Outbound Tourism Research Institute) training for Chinese tourist market • Encourage all local festival groups to use Ireland’s Ancient East and Wicklow in any promotional material for events • Run a competition in the community for local stories. <p>The evening focussed on the benefits of what collaboration, cross selling and promoting each other’s businesses can achieve.</p> <p>Meath Local Authority continues to provide considerable resources to the Boyne Valley Food Series. There is ongoing engagement with tourism resources in the region. Meath County Council is also</p>

developing Boyne Valley experiences based on Ireland's Ancient East. These will be sold through the ITOA (Incoming Tour Operators Association Ireland) & World Travel Market to incoming tour operators.

Action: 88
Measure: Seek to develop the maritime sector in the region for commerce and tourism; including the development of marinas for leisure activities
Lead: **Wicklow County Council**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: Wicklow County Council has formed a Maritime Business Development Group (MBDG) consisting of representatives of the council and the maritime sector. The group have undertaken a Baseline Study and are proceeding to develop a maritime strategy for the county. The Council and the MBDG are also working with Wexford and Waterford on a number of Maritime initiatives under the Flag project and a Blueway Project.

Action: 89
Measure: Develop an implementation strategy to maximise Kildare's potential to become a dedicated and recognised location for recreational and cultural tourism within the Greater Dublin Area, including the Strengthening of Kildare's digital tourism marketing capability, online presence and social media platforms
Lead: **Kildare County Council**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: Kildare's new Tourism Strategy Has Been Produced. Kildare Fáilte has also launched a mobile-friendly digital platform to drive tourism in the county. Consisting of a mobile platform and website (intokildare.ie), the project was developed with support from Kildare County Council and IPB Insurance. The website includes several microsites devoted to tourism, food, and golf; a 'foodscape' app has also been developed, making it easy for users to save favourite places and access full directions inside the app with interactive mapping. Additional microsites and trail apps are in development.

Action: 90
Measure: Investigate the use of recent technological advances in digital humanities to promote the heritage and cultural heritage of the region, with the potential pilot for two assets on Ireland's Ancient East
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: A project commenced in 2016 connecting Maynooth University's Department of Old Irish with Fáilte Ireland and Ireland's Ancient East. The project is led by Dr Elizabeth Boyle, head of Old Irish at Maynooth University.

Action: 92
Measure: Build on 'Ireland's Ancient East' by developing trails and trail activities around identified sites/locations
Lead: **Local Authorities**

Status: Ongoing

Progress Update: Wicklow County Council, in tandem with all Local Authorities, is engaged in developing a Tourism Statement of Strategy to be submitted to the Local Government Management Agency in March 2017. The Statement of Strategy will reference the actions listed under the Mid East APJ, the tourism actions in the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and to identify areas for collaboration with other local authorities. A large number of trails have been developed in recent times in Wicklow, and many of these have been funded by LEADER. An application for funding has been submitted to Fáilte Ireland for funding of the Blessington Greenway and the South Wicklow Greenway. Wicklow County is working to consolidate and connect the trails throughout the county, to develop an online interactive map of the trails and to link in with Wexford and Waterford to facilitate trails from Bray to Ardmore.

Meath County Council is currently involved in developing two flagship Cycleways:

1. Galway Dublin Cycleway: this will be the first inter-city greenway in a proposed national network. Stretching 276 km from coast to coast, it will be a world-class amenity for families, communities and tourists to enjoy, providing a cross-country route away from busy roads. From west to east the route passes through counties Galway, Roscommon, Westmeath, Meath, Kildare and Dublin. It will travel by rivers and through woods, along a disused railway line and old canal paths, and on well-signed, purpose-built cycle paths, offering rural tranquillity in a safe and traffic-free environment to everyone who uses it. Work on the cycleway commenced in 2013 with funding from the National Roads Authority (NRA) and in collaboration with the local authorities.
2. The Boyne Greenway: a shared use walking and cycling route from Drogheda Ramparts to Oldbridge entrance (Battle of the Boyne site). This is Phase 1 of a route from Drogheda to Slane, Navan, Trim and connecting onto the Dublin to Galway corridor at Enfield. Total route length is approximately 45km.

Action: 93

Measure: Bring together Boyne Valley Tourism and Kildare/Wicklow destinations strategy stakeholders to drive collaboration and focus on issues of skills, job creation, maintaining trails /walkways and supporting small companies in the sector

Lead: Boyne Valley Tourism

Status: Complete

Progress Update: The brand is now being sold across the region under Ireland’s Ancient East. The range of activities being undertaken (see actions 77, 79, 86, 87, 90, 92) to support the development of Ireland’s Ancient East have been, and continue to be, focused on these issues.

Action: 94

Measure: Produce tourist literature for the region's key tourist sites that includes information for visitors with disabilities

Lead: Local Authorities

Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: Through Wicklow Tourism which is partnered with Mobility Mojo, Wicklow County Council is working to update its literature in this regard. An extended audio guide of the Boyne Valley has been prepared by Meath County Council.

Action: 98
Measure: Wicklow, Kildare and Meath County Councils to explore recommendations, outlined in the NTA's draft GDA Cycle Network Plan, for the promotion of existing roadways as potential cycling tourism routes
Lead: Local Authorities
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: Kildare County Council is currently in public consultation to create and improve cycle routes within the county, such as the Naas cycle Network.
Meath County Council is currently involved in two flagship Cycleways: the Galway Dublin Cycleway, and the Boyne Greenway (see action 92)

Action: 99
Measure: Promote and assist the delivery of cost savings through energy efficiency programmes and training for businesses and public sector organisations in the region
Lead: SEAI
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: SEAI is assisting local and regional businesses and Public Sector Organisations to make energy efficiency savings. The Public Sector Energy Efficiency Plan Report for 2015, which was supported by SEAI, has been published by the Department of Communications, Climate Action, and the Environment (DCCA). The SEAI energy efficiency programmes for business are also continuing to make major savings in all areas and the Minister for DCCA has provided additional budget for 2017 to advance these programmes further. SEAI is also developing further energy efficiency supports for SME's which will be available in Q3.

Action: 104
Measure: Investigate potential of Tara Mines site to provide sustainable geothermal heating solutions for horticulture, agriculture and aquaculture
Lead: Meath Chamber
Status: Delayed
Progress Update: Initiation of this action has been delayed as the feasibility of the project is being assessed.

Action: 105
Measure: Leverage Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies to identify clusters and areas of strength that support the region as a whole, and build a streamlined strategy around clusters that avoids duplication and competition
Lead: Eastern & Midlands Regional Assembly
Status: Ongoing

Progress Update: The process of preparing and adopting the Regional Economic Strategy will commence after, the preparation and adoption of the National Planning Framework (NPF) – Ireland 2040. The NPF will be the successor document to the National Spatial Strategy and is being prepared by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. This process has commenced with initial public consultation of the Issues and Options documents. The Regional Assembly will inform all the constituent local authorities of the process and timelines of preparing and adopting the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, when this information is available.

Action: 106
Measure: Examine the potential for a digital hub in the region, and identify opportunities for integrating ICT with sectors such as Heritage/Tourism, Retail, etc. The group will conduct a feasibility study to examine where opportunities exist and where the focus should be
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Deemed no longer feasible**
Progress Update: Feasibility of this action has been assessed; no further action will be taken for resource reasons. Work on the development of a strategy for eHubs is ongoing as part of the Action Plan for Jobs 2017 (Action 124).

Action: 107
Measure: Explore the potential opportunities along the M4 corridor for Communications/5G research development as a lever for FDI
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: RadioSpace national 5G test facility is under construction in Maynooth University campus.
RadioSpace is among 21 exemplary research projects to be funded by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation through Science Foundation Ireland. The total facility will cost in the region of €750,000 with €538,000 provided by SFI and the remainder coming from University resources. The facility will provide a unique, large-scale, interference-free facility that allows scientists and engineers from industry and universities to develop new 5G communications devices. Currently, Ireland has no large facility to develop such new technologies, for academia or industry. The project is part of CONNECT, Science Foundation Ireland's Research Centre for Future Networks and Communications
The facility provides an opportunity to leverage RadioSpace to attract Foreign Direct Investment in the region particularly in the development of 5G and the growing area of the Internet of Things (IoT).

Action: 108
Measure: Develop a joint marketing strategy to brand the region as the Equine Capital of the World, including details of relevant companies/services in the region
Lead: **Kildare County Council**
Status: **Ongoing**

Progress Update: Phase 1 of this action is underway: a database holding details of relevant companies/services in the region is at an advanced stage.

Action: 109
Measure: Build on the Equine industry in the region: Research and Development, Bloodstock, Centres of Excellence, Human Resources and Industry Skills
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Merged with action 110 due to similarity of objectives**
Progress Update: See action 110 for update

Action: 110
Measure: Establish connections between Maynooth University and equine industry representatives to explore innovation and R&D opportunities
Lead: **Maynooth University**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: Several contacts were established in support of this action; however primary interest from industry has been in education provision rather than research and innovation. The main vehicle for education is Maynooth University's established undergraduate degree in Equine Business. The Equine Business degree is offering students insights into the equine business, thoroughbred and sport horse breeding and riding, and its management here in Ireland and internationally. The course combines a comprehensive business degree with an equine business specialism, granting students the ability to engage with a rapidly changing world by creating value for the equine industry and the wider economy.

Action: 111
Measure: Wicklow County Council Film Industry Development Group will commence a feasibility study and business plan for the development of a Film Industry Cluster in the county
Lead: **Wicklow County Council**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: Work has commenced on developing a Film Industry Strategy for the County. Consultation has taken place with Screen Training Ireland, IT Carlow and other relevant training bodies, as well as key industry figures. The Film Group (comprising Local Authority/LEO/Film Commission/Public Representatives) has met regularly.

Action: 115
Measure: Commence the provision of film industry related training programmes in partnership with 3rd level institutions and Screen Training Ireland
Lead: **Wicklow County Council**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: The Film Industry Symposium took place in Wicklow County Campus in October 2016 with over 100 participants. The Symposium facilitated discussion between enterprises and key industry stakeholders on the trends and opportunities for business growth in the creative audio visual sector and related sectors. Delegates heard from a variety of speakers including Paul Young, CEO of Cartoon Saloon, Naomi Moore,

CEO of Windmill Lane Recording, Sarah Dillon, Executive with the Irish Film Board, Jim Duggan MD of Screen Scene and Siun Ni Raghallaigh, CEO of Ardmore Studios. After this they had an opportunity to network and to learn more about the Creative Corridor programme, which commenced in December 2016 with a regional bootcamp in Kilkenny, focused on goal setting. This will be followed by a series of training workshops and accountability boards to be held in each county. The programme will culminate with an Audio-visual summit in December 2017.

Action: 117
Measure: Explore feasibility of developing the Boyne Valley Food Hub: securing anchor tenants, promoting workspace to start-ups, developing links with third level
Lead: **Meath Enterprise**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: Initial funding has been secured to develop a food laboratory in the region. Meath Enterprise have been awarded funding under the Government's Regional Action Plan for Jobs 'Community Enterprise Initiative' (CEI) to support enterprise development in both the food and digital sectors. The funding of €186,946 is a major boost to the region and will enable Meath Enterprise to forge ahead with its ambitious plans to develop the Boyne Valley Food Hub and the Digital Hub Navan.

Action: 119
Measure: To ensure a good quality pipeline of food entrepreneurs, run a pre Food Works clinic in the Mid East in 2016
Lead: **Enterprise Ireland**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: The progress of engagement with food entrepreneurs has been changed due to demand led issues. Interested parties now register their interest on foodworks.ie and then are met by Enterprise Ireland, Bord Bia and Teagasc in groups of 4. These introductory meetings are taking place across the regions throughout the year – 6 are scheduled to take place from March to June. A dedicated website, 'Foodworks.ie', is now also providing interested parties with all available information on the scheme.

Action: 120
Measure: Target an increase in the number of participants on the Food Academy Programme and progress a number of companies in the region to the next level -Food Academy Advance
Lead: **LEOs**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: Two very successful food academy programmes were run in the region during 2016. It is planned to continue these into 2017. Food Academy is a training programme aimed at supporting and nurturing start-up food businesses, and is a collaboration between the Local Enterprise Offices, Bord Bia and SuperValu.

Action:	121
Measure:	Build on the Boyne Valley and Powerscourt brands to develop food hubs in the region
Lead:	Meath County Council - Boyne Valley Food Hub
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The Boyne Valley Food Strategy 2016-2021 was officially launched on Wednesday 19th October 2016 at Kilsharvan House by Meath County Council in partnership with Louth County Council and their respective Local Enterprise Offices. This five year roadmap seeks to cement the development and success of the food industry in the Boyne Valley in recent years and maximise the economic gains that can be achieved. Plans for the Boyne Valley food Hub are also well advanced. The Boyne valley Food Series had a very successful 2016 with plans to continue and expand during 2017.

Action:	122
Measure:	Commence implementation of the Athy Regeneration Strategy as a Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) and identify other potential REDZ zones across the county and assist them to prepare for future funding opportunities
Lead:	Kildare County Council
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Consultants have been engaged to prepare a design for the rejuvenation of Emily Square; public consultation commenced on 1st July 2016 with works to commence in 2017. Work has commenced on the upgrade and rebranding of the Heritage Centre to become the Shackleton Centre, and work is also underway on the visual image of the town. Funding was received under REDZ to purchase a barge; four people have been trained to operate it (under a Department of Social Protection funded Community Employment Scheme) and cruises are now being offered – it is hoped this will provide an impetus to private sector operators to offer other water based activities. A regional training centre for civil defence is being developed with Athy Rowing and Canoe Club. TriAthy is also growing in national significance.

Action:	123
Measure:	The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, in conjunction with stakeholders, will develop an agri-food tourism measure with an emphasis on food, beverage and eco-trails pairings, to complement the current Marine Leisure and Tourism schemes
Lead:	DAFM
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	A provisional allocation of €500,000 to agri-food tourism schemes in rural areas has been suggested for 2017 from the overall budget allocation of €1.5m for the Rural Innovation and Development Fund (RIDF) under the CEDRA process. The RIDF (CEDRA) scheme 2017 proposals by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine were submitted for approval in Q1 2017. It is intended that procurement of these services will take place in Q2 2017. The agri-food element of the RIDF is intended to focus on longer-term, wider impacting proposals, such as business and skills training, network development, initiation

and development of inter-county agri-food tourism schemes/trails and especially those schemes that are linked to existing or developing local authority tourism/agri strategies. The fund will be managed through Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Offices.

A consultative information and discussion session with Local Authorities/LEOs was held in February 2017 to obtain and provide feedback on the scheme's operation and scope.

Action:	124
Measure:	Promote the uptake of Innovation Vouchers specifically among small food companies
Lead:	Enterprise Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Innovation vouchers are a significant opportunity for all companies where they can access €5,000 worth of innovation services in all third level colleges on the island of Ireland. This opportunity is continuously promoted to all sectors in the Mid East and other regions through traditional and online media channels.

Action:	125
Measure:	Create civic and festival markets similar to the English market in Cork and Harvest Festival in Waterford in major towns and cities
Lead:	Local Authorities
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Meath Local Authority will continue to support and build upon the success of the Boyne Valley Food series to capitalise on Navan being named Food Destination 2016. The Boyne Valley Food Strategy 2016-2021 has also been produced and launched.

Action:	126
Measure:	Teagasc will support and increase the level of farm diversification in the Mid East through their Options programme and their pilot Opt-In web portal
Lead:	Teagasc
Status:	Complete
Progress Update:	Teagasc have been working with National Rural Networks and local agencies on alternative enterprises for farmers, through the Options Programme and "Expand Your Horizons" Seminars. Five of these Seminars were held in the Mid East Region in February 2017. The purpose of the seminars is to provide information on the range of agencies, services and funding and training opportunities available in rural Ireland. The series has particular relevance for those interested in diversifying their farm, considering a new on-farm or off-farm enterprise, retraining for a new job or applying for funding opportunities under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. Rural agencies, who provide services such as up-skilling, social and economic development and education provision, provide information on their services and funding opportunities. Participating stakeholder agencies have included Local Action Groups, Local Enterprise Offices, Citizens Information, Mental Health Ireland, Money and Advice Bureaus, Education and Training Boards, Fáilte Ireland and Inland

Fisheries Ireland.

Action: 127
Measure: Expand the Dublin Food Chain initiative to other cities
Lead: LEOs
Status: Delayed
Progress Update: Has not commenced. Existing initiatives like the Boyne Valley Food Series are currently well placed to support local artisan food producers. Initiatives in other parts of the region being investigated and the implications of the recently published Boyne Valley Food Strategy on this initiative are being examined.

Action: 129
Measure: Help small/primary food producers to add value to/develop their products
Lead: Teagasc
Status: Merged with action 126 due to similarity of objectives
Progress Update: See action 126 for update

Action: 131
Measure: Build on the success of marketing Irish Whiskey and beers internationally by demonstrating the linkages of these products to the wider agri-food sector
Lead: DAFM
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: In December 2016 Minister Creed launched an Irish Whiskey Tourism strategy, which has been developed on an all-island basis by the Irish Whiskey Association. Bord Bia and stakeholder work is ongoing to identify further opportunities and develop messaging.

Action: 132
Measure: Bord Bia will work with LEOs to assist food and drink companies in the Mid East to be included in the Tesco Taste Buds programme
Lead: Bord Bia
Status: Complete
Progress Update: A fresh cohort started in August 2016, with a Mid East company selected by Tesco to be included in the Taste Buds programme. Taste Buds is an annual 7 month programme that supports participants to develop the necessary skills required to secure, grow and maintain a listing with Tesco in Ireland and overseas.

Action: 133
Measure: Enterprise Ireland will target food companies in the Mid-East to scale and innovate in line with national policy
Lead: Enterprise Ireland
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: Supporting the creation and development of high potential food and drink companies in the region is an important goal of Enterprise Ireland. This is achieved through supporting food entrepreneurs participate on the New Frontiers Programme and through a dedicated

Food Accelerator programme (FoodWorks- see action 119).

Action:	134
Measure:	Kildare County Council to operate a Shopfront/Town Centre Improvement Scheme to financially assist and support independent business owners to improve the appearance of their shopfronts/commercial properties
Lead:	Kildare County Council
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	This scheme launched in 2016 on a pilot basis, continued through to end 2016 with 91 businesses applying for funding by between July 1st and Dec 31st. It is expected that the scheme will continue in to 2017. The Council has established this scheme to financially assist and support independent business owners to improve the appearance of their shopfronts or commercial properties. This funding is being provided in recognition of the fact that a building's facade makes a big impact on town centres.

Action:	135
Measure:	Meath County Council will explore the development of retail plans for Navan and Ashbourne, in collaboration with Retail Excellence Ireland
Lead:	Meath County Council
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Meath County Council has begun working closely with Retail Excellence Ireland to support the development of the retail sector across the county. For the first time the county formally participated in the retail retreat in Mount Wolsley to promote the retail potential of the county. A pilot training course organised by Retail Excellence Ireland was very well attended by retailers from the Navan region in late 2016. Further training courses and seminars will be organised.

Action:	136
Measure:	Progress involvement in the EU funded, Urbact III Project "City Centre Doctor" and strengthen partnership with other European cities to inform future development strategies for retail innovation in Naas town centre
Lead:	Kildare County Council
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The URBACT Programme assists projects in a structured manner with three types of interventions namely by engaging partner cities in transnational exchanges which fosters inter-city learning; by building the capacity of partner cities through skills training and knowledge sharing; and by capturing and publishing the knowledge created in the projects. Naas is a partner member of the City Centre Doctor Project, which is a partnership of smaller cities in ten European countries that are located in proximity to larger cities. The aim of the project is for the partner

cities to develop collaboration mechanism and integrated action plans that will drive revitalisation of their city centres. The City Centre Doctor Project has now entered Phase 2, and Kildare County Council are actively working with the other European cities in the network. An Urbact Local Group has been established in Naas.

Meath County Council are also continuing their engagement with URBACT, through Maynooth University.

Action: 138
Measure: Develop a skills profile for the region to identify skills of existing workforce
Lead: SLMRU
Status: Complete
Progress Update: In October the Regional Labour Markets Bulletin for 2016 was published, produced by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS on behalf of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. The report provides labour market statistics for the eight regions in Ireland, presenting an in-depth skills profile for each.

A profile of the Mid East includes statistics and information on education and training awards, growing employment sectors, and education and previous occupations of unemployed persons.

Action: 139
Measure: Maynooth University will offer a new four year undergraduate B.Sc. degree in Robotics and Intelligent Devices
Lead: Maynooth University
Status: Complete
Progress Update: A new four year undergraduate B.Sc. degree in Robotics and Intelligent Devices took in its first cohort of 30 students in September 2016. The programme is designed to support the future skills needs of Irish based companies and enterprises such as Intel, Irish Medical Devices Association, Microsoft and United Technologies Research Centre.

The programme focusses on the convergence of software and hardware to produce intelligent machines - in our houses, our cars, and in the form of robots. It is based on Maynooth's expertise and research in Electronic Engineering and Computer Science, along with a blend of modules on ethics, business and communications.

Students acquire strong skills in systems and knowledge of how systems fit together, through areas such as hardware, signal processing and system control. Through their work in hardware and software, students are equipped with skills which will enable them to work on items such as music devices, physical computer interfaces, mobile phones and healthcare systems.

Action: 140
Measure: Develop new apprenticeships across a range of sectors
Lead: DES

Status: **Ongoing**

Progress Update: The Apprenticeship Council continues to work closely with the consortia of education and industry to develop apprenticeship proposals into sustainable national apprenticeships. The first of the new apprenticeships were launched in late 2016 with the new Insurance Practitioner Apprenticeship launching in September and the Industrial Electrical Engineer Apprenticeship getting underway in November 2016. 13 further new apprenticeships are due to launch in 2017 in various sectors including medical devices, polymer processing and financial services.

An Action Plan to expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020 was published in January 2017 and sets out how state agencies, education and training providers and employers will work together to deliver on the Programme for Government commitment on the expansion of apprenticeship and traineeship in the period.

A second call for apprenticeship proposals was opened on the 4th May and will close on the 1st September. The Apprenticeship Council will evaluate proposals in October and November.

Action: 141

Measure: Maynooth University will expand its undergraduate programmes in business with the introduction of specialist business degrees in management and marketing

Lead: **Maynooth University**

Status: **Complete**

Progress Update: Maynooth University is now offering undergraduate programmes in business with the introduction of specialist business degrees in management and marketing. The management degree aims to teach the fundamentals of all major aspects of business. The Marketing degree gives students the opportunity to craft possible solutions to current marketing and business problems for real companies.

Action: 142

Measure: The Local Enterprise Offices will collaborate with Skillnets to ensure a streamlined approach to training offerings in the region

Lead: **LEOs**

Status: **Ongoing**

Progress Update: The LEOS have a protocol in place with Skillnets. The aim of the agreement is to:

- Establish a structured link between the LEO and Skillnets, regarding the provision of information and guidance on measures in support of enterprise development
- Increase and maintain mutual awareness of the services and supports offered to SMEs through Skillnets and the LEOs
- Provide for cooperation on awareness and promotion activities
- Build on best practice by broadening awareness of good working relationships that are already in place between Skillnets networks at regional level by encouraging the replication of such relationships

- Identify further areas of strategic importance and collaborative initiatives between Skillnets and the LEOs

There has been progress on the implementation of this agreement. Emphasis will be placed on further improving the collaboration between Meath, Kildare and Wicklow LEOs and Skillnets and individual Skillnets training networks operating in the Mideast Region in 2017.

Action: 143
Measure: Promote the Graduate Business Growth Initiative, which supports the placement of graduates with SME companies, through EI's Mid East office
Lead: Enterprise Ireland
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: The Graduate Business Growth initiative supports Enterprise Ireland SME client companies to hire up to two graduates per year. The initiative will support graduate placement across all disciplines and sectors. This initiative is continuously promoted by Enterprise Ireland through traditional and online media channels (including social media and the general enterprise Ireland website).

Action: 144
Measure: Assess the feasibility of establishing IoT outreach offices in the region
Lead: Enterprise Ireland
Status: Complete
Progress Update: This has been assessed; however given the current presence of Carlow IT outreach in Wicklow Clermont Campus, the ongoing activity of Maynooth University and DCU (Dublin City University) in Meath and Kildare, and that the LEOs are actively promoting and recruiting for the Maynooth University, Athlone and Dundalk Institutes of Technology managed New Frontiers programmes, more formal outreach offices are not felt necessary at this time.

Action: 145
Measure: Ibec and IMDA Skillnet will provide training conversion programmes at level 6 to meet the skills shortages in process technician roles in Med Tech, Plastics, and engineering in the Mid East
Lead: Ibec
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: Progress on this action by the Irish Medtech Association will depend on the level of interest from businesses in the region.

Action: 146
Measure: Enhance collaboration between ETBs and Chambers of Commerce to improve awareness of training offering among employers
Lead: ETBs
Status: Complete
Progress Update: ETBs in the region have actively engaged with Kildare Chamber in 2016, and have undertaken regular meetings with clients to raise awareness of the training offering available in the region. KWETB are actively engaged with the Kildare Chamber and the Wicklow Chamber. Through collaboration with the local chambers, KWETB have

commenced work with many employers in different sectors to identify training needs and to plan specific skills training, where appropriate. KWETB will continue to collaborate with employers throughout 2017.

Action:	148
Measure:	Skillnets will raise awareness among the Mid East region's enterprises of the significant benefits of enterprise led training offered by Skillnets through the Training Networks Programme and of management development offered through the ManagementWorks programme
Lead:	Skillnets
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	<p>Skillnets continued to promote the benefits of enterprise-led training to local enterprise through a number of fora and channels in 2016. Each Skillnets network has a remit to promote their training plans to private enterprise which is an ongoing part of their operation. There are two Skillnet networks based in the Mid East region, Wind Skillnet and Trainers Learning Skillnet.</p> <p>Wind Skillnet delivered a range of programmes in the region including courses in Wind Turbines foundations, Safety Management, and a programme in Trading in Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM) in Naas. Skillnets national sectoral networks also have a significant presence in the Mid East. For example, over 70 SMEs and sole traders within the agriculture and agri-food sectors in the Mid East region availed of training with the National Organic Training Skillnet. In one example an agri-food company in Navan, County Meath which trained 24 employees in a specialised software package for supply chain management of fresh and perishable food and horticultural products. Companies based in this region participated in training with over 30 Skillnets in sectors including software, plastics, bio-pharma, animation, food, healthcare and financial services on programmes that were delivered within the region or other locations.</p> <p>Skillnets also continues to promote management development training offered through the ManagementWorks programme. From June 2016 to Dec 2016, Skillnets delivered a ManagementWorks Business Growth programme in the Mid East region in Naas. The Business Growth programme gives the participant skills to create and implement daily, weekly and monthly business systems and practices that are key to growth. Modules include financial planning, sales, marketing, teamwork, customer service and leadership. Eight companies from the region participated in this programme to develop their management capability in order to increase their competitiveness.</p>

Action:	149
Measure:	The Department of Social Protection, will collaborate with stakeholders such as IDA and EI in promoting the recruitment of people from the Live Register amongst client companies
Lead:	Department of Social Protection
Status:	Ongoing

Progress Update: DSP and Enterprise Ireland (EI) have met to explore options for collaboration, including presenting information on the supports & services available to established employers and potential employers through EI training programmes such as “Enterprise Start “and “New Frontiers” particularly the “What’s Involved in Employment” days. DSP’s Employment Engagement Officers have been making direct contact with local EI companies in Wicklow and Kildare.

DSP has produced an Employer Engagement Pack for the IDA – outlining a range of supports. With a falling live register (now 6.6%), there are a decreasing number of High PEX (Probability of Exit from the Live Register) customers with higher qualifications. It is this cohort that would be in most demand for IDA’s FDI clients. DSP and IDA continue to work collaboratively, for example through jointly attending a meeting with HP Management to discuss the recent announcement of redundancies and explore the range of supports DSP can offer employees.

Action: 150
Measure: Leverage business networks to identify hubs of activity that could be supported in the region: Film, Food, etc.
Lead: **Local Authorities**
Status: **Ongoing**
Progress Update: Wicklow Local Authority is actively engaged in supporting a number of sector specific business led development groups including the Maritime Group and the Tourism Group as well as Chambers of Commerce and the Film Group.

In Meath the Boyne Valley Food Hub continues development with funds available from the Competitive Funds. The PLATO Network is also very active in the county.

It is expected that the Regional Enterprise Development Funding call of up to €60m 2017-2020 being rolled out by Enterprise Ireland will provide a fresh impetus for the development of such collaborative activities.

Action: 152
Measure: Establish a business network with flagship companies/enterprise champions from each county, to focus on looking within the region for skills and supply chain opportunities
Lead: **Chambers**
Status: **Complete**
Progress Update: The Chambers are now working with KWETB, ETBI, FIT (an industry-led initiative which aims to promote an inclusive Smart Economy by creating a fast track to marketable technical skills for those at risk of unemployment long term), the Mid East Regional Skills Forum and local business champions.

Action: 153

Measure:	Maynooth University will establish a ‘top table’ advisory forum on linking University and regional employment needs, to include representation from IDA and EI
Lead:	Maynooth University
Status:	Deemed no longer relevant
Progress Update:	The developing work of the Mid East Regional Skills Forum is a better vehicle for this interaction – accordingly this action has been deemed no longer relevant to avoid duplication of effort.

Action:	154
Measure:	Ibec will work with its Regional Executive Committee on the key business policy issues facing businesses in the Mid East
Lead:	Ibec
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The Regional Executive Committee is meeting on a quarterly basis to address key business issues facing the region.

Action:	156
Measure:	Ibec will host a seminar in the Mid East, in association with relevant stakeholders, in the context of its recent Manufacturing survey
Lead:	Ibec
Status:	No longer being progressed
Progress Update:	A decision has been made to not progress this seminar for the Mid East. However the Irish Medtech Association will host a manufacturing seminar in September 2017 in Galway- which is planned to cover some of the elements of the proposed AIB roadshows.

Action:	158
Measure:	Kildare County Council will advance a plan for a marketing strategy for the county
Lead:	Kildare County Council
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	Phase 1 of this action is underway: a series of promotional videos have been launched and distributed across social media and diaspora.

Action:	159
Measure:	Relevant IDA Executives based overseas will visit relevant companies in the region to enhance marketing knowledge
Lead:	IDA Ireland
Status:	Ongoing
Progress Update:	The IDA Regional Team presented to the Annual Conference in Q1 on a number of regional initiatives. The Mid-East regional team presented to IDA’s sectoral global teams and regularly update our overseas colleagues. This engagement within IDA continues through visits to locations across the Mid-East, including where IDA staff accompany clients visiting Mid-East locations or meeting existing clients.

Action:	160
Measure:	Meath County Council will advance a plan for a marketing strategy for the county to support its Economic Development Strategy
Lead:	Meath County Council

Status: Complete
Progress Update: A multi-year contract to roll-out a comprehensive marketing strategy for the county has been signed and work has commenced.

Action: 161
Measure: Wicklow County Council will develop a brand and a supporting marketing strategy that communicates all that Wicklow has to offer to its citizens, diaspora, visitors, business and investors
Lead: Wicklow County Council
Status: Complete
Progress Update: Brand development has been completed and new branding has launched. The brand concept combines the Sugar Loaf mountains and the sea to make a modern unique identity appealing to live/work/invest/play, underpinned by the Brand Promise: “Wicklow is a place of endless possibilities, it’s all here waiting for you”



Action: 162
Measure: Wicklow County Council will develop a web portal which will operate as a show window for the County, highlighting its quality of life, USPs, and will aim to attract inward investment
Lead: Wicklow County Council
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: Work is currently underway on developing the new Portal. A contractor has been procured, framework of new site agreed, and content is now being developed.

Action: 163
Measure: Meath and Kildare County Councils will explore the development of marketing plans for larger towns in collaboration with local business representative bodies
Lead: Meath County Council, Kildare County Council
Status: Ongoing
Progress Update: Retail Investment prospectuses have been prepared in 2016 for both Navan and Ashbourne, as part of the engagement with Retail Excellence Ireland.