

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS --- 2015



Fourth Progress Report

Contents

Commentary	4
Quarter 4 Measures	16
Disruptive Reforms	17
Progressing Disruptive Reforms from 2013 & 2014 Action Plans	33
Finance for Growth	38
Increasing Activation of the Unemployed	39
Growing Irish Enterprise and Foreign Direct Investment	41
Entrepreneurship	55
Competitiveness	67
Research, Development and Innovation	78
Stimulating the Domestic Economy	88
New Sources of Growth	95
Evaluations and reviews to inform future policy development	97
Ongoing Measures	102
Disruptive Reforms	103
Progressing Disruptive Reforms from 2013 & 2014 Action Plans	112
Increasing Activation of the Unemployed	118
Growing Irish Enterprise and Foreign Direct Investment	119
Entrepreneurship	123
Competitiveness	126
Research, Development and Innovation	132
Stimulating the Domestic Economy	136
Glossary of Terms	152

Commentary

This is the fourth report of 2015 from the Monitoring Committee established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the *Action Plan for Jobs 2015* (APJ 2015).

It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the fourth quarter of 2015. It also includes an update on measures described in the Plan as “ongoing in 2015”, and a summary overview of the implementation of the APJ 2015 across the full year, including measures from previous quarters that remain delayed.

The Monitoring Committee is co-chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and also includes representatives of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Office of the Tánaiste.

The Government published the fourth in its multi-annual Action Plan for Jobs series in January of 2015. The Plan contained 382 high level actions, broken down into 608 measures, to be implemented in 2015 by all 16 Government Departments and 46 agencies.

These actions build on those already implemented under the Action Plans for Jobs 2012, 2013 and 2014, and reported on by the Monitoring Committee in its previous quarterly reports (see <http://www.djei.ie>).

As the final review of the implementation of the Action Plan for Jobs 2015 in its entirety, this report also provides a synopsis of the implementation of the Plan as a whole over the year, and shows that 542 of the 608 measures committed to in the Plan have been delivered over the year giving rise to an overall implementation rate of 89%.

As detailed below, 11 measures from Quarter 1, 10 measures from Quarter 2, 14 measures from Quarter 3, 28 measures from Quarter 4 and 2 “ongoing” actions have not been completed as scheduled.

Action Plan for Jobs 2015: Supporting economic growth and job creation

Progress in job creation and addressing unemployment has continued strongly throughout 2015.

Job Creation

In Quarter 3 2015, there were 1.983 million people in employment in Ireland, the largest number since Quarter 3 of 2009. There were 56,000 more people in employment in Q3

2015 than in the same quarter in 2014, an increase of 2.9% over the year. Full-time employment, in particular, increased by 4% (+59,400 over the year).

Looking back to 2012 when the first Action Plan for Jobs was published, there were 135,800 more people in employment in Quarter 3 2015 than Quarter 1 of 2012.

The sectors with the largest increases in employment since the start of 2012 include:

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing (+29,500 or 36%);
- Professional, scientific and technical activities (+23,000 or 23%);
- Construction (+22,000 or 21%)
- Accommodation and food service activities (+16,200 or 14%);
- Industry (+15,200 or 6%)

It is also encouraging that all regions of the country have recorded an increase in employment since the start of 2012, with the largest increases recorded in Dublin (+64,100), South-East (+26,100), and Border region (+20,900) (on an unadjusted basis).

In 2015, client companies of Enterprise Ireland created 10,169 additional jobs, a record high for the agency. Total employment in Enterprise Ireland client companies stands at 192,223 with almost two thirds of the new jobs created outside Dublin, and all of the regions recorded increases in full-time employment over the period.

IDA client companies created 11,833 net new jobs in 2015, representing a year-on-year rise of 66% reflecting a broad-based performance, with all industry sectors and all regions growing. Total employment at IDA client companies now stands at 187,056 people.

This represents the highest level of employment recorded in the history of both agencies.

Addressing Unemployment

Total unemployment as measured by the CSO QNHS stood at 203,000 in Quarter 3 2015, down by 42,500 when compared to the same quarter in 2014 and total unemployment has reduced by 118,900 (on an unadjusted basis) since the start of 2012.

The rate of unemployment in December 2015 was 8.8%, down from 10.2% in December 2014 and from a high of 15.2% in January 2012.

The number of people unemployed for a period of one year or more has also fallen in absolute terms from 204,300 in Quarter 1 2012, to 109,800 in Quarter 3 2015.

The Government's stated aim is to reach full employment (unemployment of 6%) by 2020.

Actions due in Quarter 4

In the fourth quarter of 2015, Departments and agencies were to deliver 199 measures under the Action Plan. 28 of the measures due in Quarter 4 of 2015 have not been delivered, giving a completion rate of 86%.

Measures not delivered as planned in Q4

However, as stated above, 28 of the Q4 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *Implement Cycle 2 of the Strategic Dialogue process for 2015 under the higher education performance framework 2014-2016, including monitoring of performance metrics for skills including those identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and achieve a step change in enterprise; Publish INIS progress report on system indicators - Action 2.* The Strategic Dialogue process with Higher Education Institutions was completed in 2015 and the HEA are preparing a report on the performance of those institutions against agreed targets for publication in early 2016.
- *Consider the provision for a 3rd iteration of Momentum with strong employer input that will provide additional education and training places for the unemployed; Decision on further iteration of Momentum in the context of budgetary requirements - Action 18.* The Department of Education and Skills are working with the Department of Social Protection to determine the overall requirement for education and training programmes for 2016. The arrangements for and the timing of any potential third round of Momentum will be considered in this context and in the light of the evaluation of the current round of Momentum.
- *Develop and commence implementation of a new Foreign Languages in Education Strategy; Begin implementation of strategy - Action 20.* The strategy will be published in Q1 2016 and commencement of the implementation of the actions from the strategy will start in Q2; this action will be included as a separate action in the 2016 Action Plan for Jobs.
- *Progress curricular change in the context of the phasing in of the Junior Cycle reform with the new Specification for English being implemented from September 2014; Development work on new Junior Cycle modern languages and art, craft and design specifications - Action 22.* The draft specification for modern languages and art, craft and design is to be published in 2016.
- *Review the potential contribution of the Excellence through People programme to developing the competencies and retention of employment in Irish based companies; Deliver 30 new Excellence Through People clients in 2015 - Action 24.* The National

Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) registered 11 companies to the Excellence Through People scheme during 2015. Assessments are underway on 14 other applications and a further 12 companies have been shown interest in applying and have been forwarded quotations.

- *Continue implementation of the British-Irish Visa Scheme allowing for travel to and around the Common Travel Area between Ireland and the UK, for tourism and business purposes, on a single visa; Continue rollout of Phase 2 - Action 25.* The British-Irish Visa Scheme is presently in operation in China and India and is proving very successful. Like many new systems, however, particularly one as complex and novel as this one, some initial technical teething issues invariably arise. These issues, which affect a small number of cases, are currently being worked on by our United Kingdom counterparts with full support from the Department of Justice and Equality. A huge effort is being made to effect their resolution, and the intention is to agree with the UK on its extension and roll-out very quickly to other locations worldwide, following the completion of the formal evaluation of the scheme. It is hoped to complete the evaluation by end-Q1 2016.
- *Each Local Authority will make an integrated Plan, for the promotion of economic development and local and community development in its area; Local authorities to adopt an integrated Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) - Action 48.* The final development and adoption of the LECPs is progressing within each local authority. However, in order to ensure robust and worthwhile plans, and to ensure that each LECP is consistent with the existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022, and the City or County Development Plan, the adoption by all local authorities should now be complete by end-Q1 2016.
- *Contribute to the roll out of products for the export sector as part of the new Export Finance Strategy; As per headline action - Action 67.* Following on from research carried out by the Export Finance working group, it became apparent this action needed to be refocused to adequately meet the financing needs of Irish exporters. The working group continues to advance the development of the Export Finance strategy and is looking to the strategic development of capability in the provision of risk sharing products for working capital facilities for exporters. Additionally the SBCI alongside the Export Finance Working group are considering the value of the development of an Export Finance education tool.
- *Work to align the revised Credit Guarantee Scheme with the operations of the SBCI; As per headline action - Action 68.* While the work is ongoing, it will not be finalised until the Credit Guarantee (Amendment) Bill is passed, and a new extended Scheme or Schemes is made thereunder.

- *Establish a National Health Innovation Hub based on a competitive process; Establish stakeholder advisory group (Oversight Group) - Action 85.* A stakeholder advisory group will be established during Q1 2016. The group comprising, inter alia, suppliers and users of innovative goods and services for the health service will provide a forum between suppliers and users, including patients and patient groups, of innovative goods and services for the health service. It will also channel the views of suppliers and users to the Oversight Group, facilitate problem solving and act as a sounding board for topical issues of relevance to the Hub.
- *The Department of Finance and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation will roll-out an integrated export finance strategy in 2015 with financing products and platforms being developed by the SBCI and the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland; Initial products rolled out under this strategy - Action 103.* This action is being advanced and refocused, in conjunction with Action 67, by the Export Finance working group to adequately meet the financing needs of Irish exporters. Further work is required on the proposed platform and proposed products before being considered by Government. This work will continue into 2016. As part of the preparation for the roll out of the Export Finance Strategy, the working group has conducted extensive research on the requirements of Irish exporters. This has allowed the working group to better focus the design of products to meet the needs of exporters. It has also enabled the working group to conclude that the main effort should be on the delivery of risk sharing products for working capital facilities.
- *Transpose the EU Public Procurement Directive and the EU Utilities Directive; As per headline action - Action 163.* There are three Public Procurement Directives, which require transposition and represent a considerable body of work: 2014/23/EU - on the award of concession contracts; 2014/24/EU - on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EU; and 2014/25/EU - on procurement by entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors and repealing Directive 2004/17/EC. The EU transposition deadline is 18 April 2016, and the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) is currently working closely with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel in order to meet this deadline.
- *Commencing 2015 the NSAI will implement a 3 year development strategy with objectives to develop capacity to adequately service large multinational Medical Device companies with a presence in Ireland; capacity to adequately service indigenous Irish companies emerging within the industry; and a significant contributor to the advancement of patient safety within the European Union healthcare system through timely access for patients to safe new technology Medical Devices. Q4 Measure: Grow income base by 16% - Action 177.* NSAI achieved an increase in the income base of 9%. The shortfall was due to the approval and recruitment of additional staff later than budgeted.

- *Broaden and deepen work to support entrepreneurship in schools; Build on engagement on the issue of enterprise in schools exploring the possible modalities of partnership between schools and businesses - Action 178.* Consultative forums on the theme of 'Entrepreneurship Education in Schools' were held in September 2014 and September 2015. The Department of Education and Skills is preparing a paper to articulate its vision for entrepreneurship education in schools, and hopes to advance on the approach proposed during Q1 2016.
- *A Working Group will implement reforms in mentoring; Broaden mentoring services to support the challenges of scaling and under-represented specialist expertise (sectoral, market, technical, internationalisation, etc.); Improve the consistency and quality of mentoring against smart performance metrics - Action 214:* The agreed first step was to focus on the possible creation of a Volunteer Mentors Database or Portal. During the workshop held in February 2014 to examine a proposed model of national volunteer mentoring, it became clear that the idea of a stand-alone volunteer mentoring database would not be sufficient to meet the needs of both the mentor and the mentees. Following on from this, a report was drafted with recommendations for next steps, one of which involved the development and promotion of a pilot regional volunteer mentoring initiative that may develop into a national approach.
- *Incorporate provision in the forthcoming Planning Bill to allow planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála to accept electronic planning applications and appeals, and also to deal with such applications and appeals by electronic means; Enactment of the Planning and Development (No. 2) Bill incorporating enabling provision for electronic planning applications and appeals, supplemented by regulations - Action 221.* The Planning and Development No. 2 Bill as referred to in this Action and incorporating enabling provision for electronic planning applications and appeals was delayed pending the enactment of another Planning Bill. That Bill was introduced at short notice to provide legislative underpinning to certain of the measures contained in a housing package approved by Government in November 2015 for the purpose of supporting increased housing supply. The Planning and Development No. 2 Bill was subsequently published on 6 January 2016 (re-named the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2016), with a view to enactment as early as possible in 2016.
- *Existing maternity, adoption, parental and carer's leave legislation will be consolidated into the Family Leave Bill. This will enable both employers and employees to access just one piece of legislation and also ensure as far as possible a consistent approach to such leaves; As per headline action - Action 233.* Subsequent to the Government approval of the introduction of 2 weeks' paternity leave, it is intended to publish this Bill in 2016 with a view to its enactment prior to September 2016.
- *Revoke outdated Dangerous Substances legislation and replace it with a streamlined, lower cost and enterprise friendly system for the licensing of petroleum storage and*

dispensing facilities. This should help stimulate the economy by providing certainty to those seeking to invest in new or upgraded facilities; Report to Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (JEI) - Action 234. The final report and recommendations are now scheduled for delivery in Q2 2016. This follows upon the outcome of consultations between the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the City and County Managers' Association in October 2015. A widely representative working group is being established to analyse and identify the necessary measures to be put in place through new legislation to replace the Dangerous Substances regime and to report to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government within six months of its establishment.

- *Move the Road Transport Operator licensing appeals process from the District Court to an independent Appeals Officer, to cut down on time delays and decrease costs; As per headline action - Action 243.* Legislation will be required to move the Road Transport Operator licensing appeals process from the District Court to an independent Appeals Officer, and this is being examined in the context of the next Road Transport Bill.
- *Publish the Health Information Bill which will, inter alia, streamline the ethics approval process for health research not governed by statutory regulation and EU Law; As per headline action - Action 292.* Publication of the Health Information and Patient Safety Bill is now due for completion in Q2 2016. Due to policy developments since the original General Scheme was approved by Government, a revised General Scheme was prepared and was approved by Government in November 2015. The revised General Scheme has been made available on the Department of Health website: <http://health.gov.ie/blog/publications/general-scheme-of-health-information-and-patient-safety-bill/>
- *Develop self-guiding tours/trails based on apps and cultural and artistic collections either on Europeana or other websites in order to enhance our tourism offering to visitors from both home and abroad; Pilot ready for testing - Action 320.* The project did not proceed as planned due to a change in the Europeana funding structure, as well as issues around intellectual property rights. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht will co-host a seminar with Europeana in early 2016 to discuss property rights with the National Cultural Institutions.
- *Develop a strategy and appropriate tools to communicate the performance of Ireland's Green Economy to global audiences more effectively to encourage greater investment in the sector in Ireland; Scope out the component elements of a Communications Strategy on the Green Economy and the appropriate tools which could be applied to communicate Ireland's performance in this area more effectively. As part of this process, identify the steps that need to be taken to deliver the Communications Strategy - Action 359.* While a new impetus is building from the private sector on opportunities in the

Green Economy, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation's input is affected by the prioritisation of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs.

- *Review the 2012 Forfás report on businesses licences with a view to identifying further actions which can be taken to reduce the administrative burden for the Retail sector in this area, including, where appropriate, the rationalisation of licences; Report progress to the Retail Consultation Forum – Action 331.* The launch and roll out of the single licensing portal is expected to take place in the first half of 2016; a review of the portal and its impact on the retail sector would take place later in 2016.
- *Undertake a qualitative research project to follow-up on key issues identified in the national employer survey; Publication of relevant findings - Action 370.* The qualitative report has been drafted and is currently being finalised before publication.
- *Facilitate, in conjunction with industry stakeholders and statutory agencies, the transition of voluntary Construction Industry Register Ireland to a statutory register by end 2015; Facilitate all administrative tasks necessary to support enactment of Bill - Action 377.* Draft heads of a Building Control Bill to place the Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) on a statutory footing have been prepared. The timing of a Memorandum for Government on this matter will be kept under review in the context of the management of the delivery of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government's extensive legislative programme.
- *Develop a Workforce Development Strategy; Report on current policy, provision and funding for FET related training of those at work (excluding apprenticeships); Develop Workforce Development Strategy in alignment with the new national Skills Strategy - Action 380.* The drafting of a Workforce Development Strategy is delayed into 2016. This strategy will be developed in alignment with the review of the National Skills Strategy which has also been delayed into 2016.

Action Plan for Jobs 2015: Delivery of “Ongoing 2015” Measures

As noted above, this Fourth Progress Report is the final one dealing with 2015 and thus provides an update on the actions described in the Plan as “Ongoing 2015”. All but 2 of these 104 measures have been delivered over the course of the year, giving a completion rate of 98% for those “Ongoing 2015” measures.

However, as stated above, 2 of the “ongoing” measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule for the Q4 Report:

- *Develop self-guiding tours/trails based on apps and cultural and artistic collections either on Europeana or other websites in order to enhance our tourism offering to visitors from both home and abroad; Clear legal agreements on intellectual property with National Cultural Institutions - Action 320.* This Project did not proceed as planned due to a change in Europeana funding structure and issues around intellectual property rights. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht will co-host a seminar with Europeana in early 2016 to discuss property rights with the National Cultural Institutions.
- *Implement the new Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 following agreement of the Programme with the European Commission; Support the design and development of Local Development Strategies for the delivery of the LEADER elements of the RDP 2014-2020 in defined sub-regional areas. It is expected LDS will be submitted for approval on a rolling basis in Q1 and Q2 of 2015 - Action 49.* An Independent Selection Committee (ISC) has been established and has met on a number of occasions. There are a number of strategies being evaluated at present and it is expected that the remaining Strategies will be submitted for consideration from January to March 2016.

Update on actions delayed from Quarters 1, 2 and 3

As reported at the end of Quarter 1, there were 15 actions delayed. The following 4 measures from this report have now been delivered:

1. *Establish the Low Pay Commission (LPC), to undertake analysis and make a recommendation on the appropriate level of the national minimum wage; Publish legislation to provide for establishment of LPC on a statutory basis – Action 30.* The LPC was set up on a statutory basis on 15 July. The Commission made its first recommendation to the Minister on 17 July. The Government accepted the recommendations of the Commission and made appropriate provision in Budget 2016. In mid-October the Minister signed an order for a new National Minimum Wage of €9.15, which came into effect on 1 January 2016.
2. *Develop and publish a suite of Regional Enterprise Strategies, based on consultation with key stakeholders at regional level and on the analysis of the strengths of each*

region, commencing with the publication of strategies for the Midlands and South East regions. The strategies will include a series of specific actions and targets for delivery by a range of public bodies to support enterprise growth and job creation in the regions and will complement the statutory Plans to be developed as part of Local Government reform; Publish Enterprise Strategy for the Midlands region - Action 34. The Government launched the 'Action Plan for Jobs: Midland Region 2015-2017' on 29 June 2015; the Action Plan is available at: <https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Action-Plan-for-Jobs-Midland-Region-2015-2017.pdf>

3. *Following the passing of the appropriate primary legislation implement and promote the new Credit Guarantee Scheme; Primary Legislation enacted-* Action 106. The Credit Guarantee (Amendment) Bill 2015, containing a number of new provisions and extensions of the Credit Guarantee Act 2012, was published on 16 September 2015. As an interim measure, some changes not requiring primary legislation were set out in the Credit Guarantee (Scheme) 2015.
4. *Present to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and relevant departments and agencies the findings of EI and IDA's engagement with manufacturing firms to assess the need for public investment in research infrastructure and activity to support high value manufacturing; As per headline action – Action 353.* A meeting between the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and IDA was held in February 2015 to discuss progress to date and proposed next steps. The industry-informed AMC proposal was submitted to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation for review in October 2015, representing a joint submission from SFI, EI and IDA.

(please see APJ 2015 Q1 Progress Report for text of undelivered Actions, <https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Action-Plan-for-Jobs-First-Progress-Report.pdf>)

In addition, as reported at the end of Quarter 2, there were 14 actions delayed. The following 3 measures from this report have now been delivered:

1. *A Working Group will implement reforms in mentoring; Create a simple mentors database to which new types of mentors (volunteer entrepreneurs or serving executives) would be attracted - Action 214.* During the course of the workshop in February 2014, it became clear that a stand-alone volunteer mentoring database would not be sufficient to meet the needs of both the mentor and the mentees. Following on from this, the idea of a pilot regional volunteer mentoring initiative was included under the new Community Enterprise Initiatives (CEI) Fund of €5m being rolled out by Enterprise Ireland under the Regional Action Plan for Jobs. The documentation for the CEI Fund included references to mentoring, and specifically to a volunteer mentoring initiative. Applications under this fund are currently being evaluated.

2. *Develop a successor to the Strategy for Science, Technology & Innovation to cover the period to 2020; As per headline action - Action 267.* Innovation 2020, Ireland's new strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology, was launched by the Taoiseach and the Ministers for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and Research and Skills at the 2015 Innovation Showcase on 8 December 2015.
3. *Use the standardisation system intelligently to expedite the commercialisation of new technology and to reduce the risk of project failure; In conjunction with EI and Athlone IT host a H 2020 Application workshop - Action 294.* Following consultation with colleagues involved with the Horizon 2020 programme in Enterprise Ireland, it was considered that a single generic event would not achieve the desired objective because of the differences in interests and needs of the research areas, and that a number of smaller events focussed on key areas of Horizon 2020 such as Health, ICT and Energy would be more effective.

(please see APJ 2015 Q2 Progress Report for text of undelivered Actions, <https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/APJ2015-Second-Progress-Report.pdf>)

Furthermore, 18 actions were delayed from the Quarter 3 Report. The following 4 measures from this report have now been delivered:

1. *Establish a National Health Innovation Hub (HIH) based on a competitive process. Select host for national HIH – Action 294.* A competition to host a National Healthcare Innovation Hub was held, culminating in a review by an international panel of healthcare experts on 27 and 28 May. There were three applicants, one of whom was accepted by the panel as being the best bid. Based on the updates received and discussions with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Health, and the HSE, an investment proposition was brought to the Board of Enterprise Ireland on 8 December for decision. The Board of Enterprise Ireland approved a €5m investment over 5 years (with a commensurate increase in HSE resources of €1.5m) to drive the nationalisation of this important piece of infrastructure.
2. *Announce national HIH – Action 294.* The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Health made a joint announcement on the successful bidder to host the national Health Innovation Hub - a consortium involving University College Cork (UCC), Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD).
3. *Competitive Start Fund (CSF) for the Agri-Sector: Following the launch of the Competitive Feasibility for the Agri-Sector in September 2014, explore launching a Competitive Start Fund to further support potential start-up businesses in this sector; As per headline action - Action 212.* An open call for applications to the Competitive Start Fund for agricultural and manufacturing companies was launched on 16 September 2015, 35

eligible applications were received by the call close on 30 September 2015. The quality of the applications received was good; following a two phase assessment process 10 projects were identified for funding.

4. *Continue to drive implementation of Research Prioritisation through the Government's Prioritisation Action Group and complete the review of the Independent Panel established to review progress; Bring the integrated approach to Government for approval – Action 266.* The findings and recommendations by the international, expert panel on the implementation of Research Prioritisation have been presented to the Prioritisation Action Group; the Inter-Departmental Committee that oversaw the development of '*Innovation 2020, Ireland's Strategy for Research and Development, Science and Technology*'; the Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation; and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The relevant findings and recommendations by the panel formed one of the primary inputs to the strategy, along with submissions to the open consultation and commissioned studies. '*Innovation 2020*' incorporates an integrated approach to all of the key issues raised and was approved by Government and launched in Q4 2015.

(please see APJ 2015 Q3 Progress Report for text of undelivered Actions,
<https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/APJ2015-Third-Progress-Report.pdf>)

Quarter 4 Measures

Disruptive Reforms

National Talent Drive

Action 4: Incentivise 1,250 additional places in 2015 on Level 8 ICT programmes.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DES, HEA And HEIs)

Update: Complete

Applications have been received from 18 HEIs to provide an additional 1061 places in the academic year 2015/16.

Action 7: Enhance industry input to programme content, provision of work placements and promotion of ICT programmes as part of the implementation of Skillnets ICT Conversion Programmes.

Q4 Measure: Finalise Delivery of ICT Conversion Programmes. (Skillnets)

Update: Complete

The ICT Conversion Programmes have all commenced in 2015 with some of the placements continuing into 2016. In 2015 the networks combined have delivered over 10,000 training days to over 240 unemployed persons.

Action 8: Step up collaboration between government, industry and education through Smart Futures to raise awareness of STEM career opportunities for post-primary students, in line with the agreed 2014-16 strategy.

Q4 Measure: STEM careers roadshow to take place during SciFest and Science Week in 2015. (SFI)

Update: Complete

11 STEM careers road shows took place in Institutes of Technology across the country as part of SciFest between 27th March and 15th May 2015. Approximately 2,750 secondary school students were in attendance and directly engaged with talks from people working in research and industry.

During Science Week 2015 (8-15th November) five STEM career road show events took place (two in universities and three in libraries) and these were expected to reach approximately 550 students.

Q4 Measure: Pilot activities launched to increase engagement with the target audiences of parents of post primary students and female post primary students. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Collaboration has continued to grow between stakeholders and partners with vested interests in increasing the number of STEM graduates in Ireland, particularly among the following groups: ICT Ireland / Irish Software Association; PharmaChem Ireland; IDA Ireland; Higher Education Authority (HEA); Irish Computer Society (ICS); Connecting Women in Technology (CWIT).

The website www.SmartFutures.ie has been redeveloped and an accompanying volunteer management system (CRM) also launched.

Smart Futures has piloted a small number of engagement activities in collaboration with other partners in the STEM area with a vested interest in promoting STEM to young females and students from disadvantaged areas. These included:

- Working with the Trinity Access Programme to encourage DEIS schools to sign up for free STEM career talks from trained volunteers in the Dublin region
- Working with the Science Gallery Dublin to deliver STEM career talks and content for their COOLEST JOBS event for secondary school students which operates in conjunction with the TCD Access programme
- Working with the Student Slingshot Academy to reach TY students (particularly females) by providing resource materials on career choices and giving students access to STEM role models
- Collaborating with the GirlsHackDublin event in DCU supporting hands-on coding workshops for young females, with parents also present on the day.

Smart Futures is continuing to look for opportunities to engage students, parents and guidance counsellors over the coming months.

Q4 Measure: 400 Smart Futures volunteers sourced through new and existing partner organisations. (SFI)

Update: Complete

This figure has been vastly exceeded; 1,232 Smart Futures volunteers are now listed on the CRM management system. Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) continues to deliver training of volunteers across the country in partnership with Engineers Ireland's STEPS programme.

Action 9: Provide support to institutions in delivering Summer Computing Camps to

encourage second-level students to consider ICT careers. Higher education institutions to continue to support Coder Dojo in provision of space, administrative supports and mentoring. The success criteria for this action include supporting a specified number of annual summer camps at a range of higher education institutions and offering ICT-related courses.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HEA)

Update: Complete

16 higher education institutions provided summer camps to second level students in 2015, via funding provided by the Information Technology Investment Fund (ITIF), which is managed by the HEA.

Action 19: Promote and support development of the Skills to Work brand to increase awareness of re-skilling options for jobseekers.

Q4 Measure: Implement strategy through promotion and appearance at jobs fairs, exhibitions. (DES, DSP, D/Taoiseach, SOLAS, HEA, Skillnets)

Update: Complete

Following provision of the 2015 budget by DES, the implementation of the promotion of the Skills to Work brand is underway.

This involves the roll out of an online media campaign, the training of Jobs Ambassadors for the promotion of the brand and associated programmes, at job fairs and events.

Action 23: Roll out the a new account management approach to employers under Pathways to Work: Establish a professional account management and sales capability within Intreo targeted at employers; and Allocate a nominated account manager to large employers and implement the 'employer charter'.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DSP)

Update: Complete

6 national Key Account Managers have been appointed. They will manage the top 460 companies and prepare and implement individual account plans across the following sectors:

- Construction and Manufacturing
- Financial and Professional Services
- Hospitality and Food
- ICT and Telecoms

- Retail, Sales and Marketing
- Sciences and Healthcare

Key account managers will be organised in teams of 2 reporting to a senior manager and will operate in a target-driven environment. Another Key Account Manager will develop relationships with the Recruitment Agencies sector.

Non-key accounts will be assigned to regional/divisional/local offices. It is proposed that the remainder of accounts be managed at Divisional level in DSP's 13 geographic areas as follows:

- a) An senior employer relationship manager (at Assistant Principal level) in each Division will have responsibility for ensuring:
 - The direct management of large employer accounts in the Division that are not managed at a national level;
 - The co-ordination of employer engagement activity at a local office level;
 - Participation in a national employer services forum to be managed by the national employer engagement teams;
 - Maintenance of an employer register for the Division;
 - Act as Divisional EURES Advisor.

Each Division will have a team of Employer Engagement Officers who will promote awareness of the Department's employment support services and support employers to recruit from among the Department's jobseeker client groups.

- a) Accounts not managed centrally or at Divisional level will be managed at local office level and via the NCC. Each Intreo Centre will nominate at least one staff member to take the lead in developing and managing a service relationship with local employers. In larger offices it is envisaged that this will be a full-time role, in others, a part-time role.

The NCC will continue to operate as an inbound contact centre, taking enquiries from employers and registering vacancies on the *JobsIreland* website. In addition, it will notify the relevant key account manager/Divisional employer services manager/local office manager as soon as any enquiry/vacancy notice is received from an employer. The account manager will then be responsible for following up on this enquiry and seeking to match the vacancy (if any) with candidates from the Live Register. Since the official launch of the Employment & Youth Activation Charter on 29 September 2014, an additional 256 companies have signed it, bringing the total number to 280, which is well ahead of the PTW target of 200 companies for the year. Local Department of Social Protection (DSP) teams are supporting signatories to deliver on the Charter measures.

Action 26: Continue to ensure employers are able to secure Employment Permits for the critical skills they need, including ICT skills.

Q4 Measure: Facilitate Employer Demand for ICT permits, which is expected to reach 2,000 in 2015. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

	Jan – Dec 2014	Jan – Dec 2015	% Increase
Application Received	8,786	11,783	34%
Green Card/Critical Skills EP	1,784	2,458	38%
Intra-Company Transfer EP	726	1,009	39%
Total Issued in respect of ICT	1,872	2,499	33%

In 2015 2,499 permits were issued in respect of ICT professionals. This represents an increase of 33% over 2014. The increase can be attributed to the continued shortage of professionals in the ICT area and the success of the employment permits system in helping to fill these key shortages.

Q4 Measure: Review progress on a quarterly basis. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The employment permits system is closely aligned with the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) of SOLAS. This ensures that the critical skills list, on which the grant of Critical Skills Employment Permits is based, remains relevant to the needs of enterprise as the Irish economy strengthens.

In order to maintain the flexibility and relevance of the Employment Permits system, the Minister has committed to ensuring biannual reviews of the critical skills list for employment permits continue to reflect the skills shortages relevant to enterprise, particularly in the ICT area.

The first 2015 review of the Critical Skills List was completed, following broad-based consultation with stakeholders, and was included as a Schedule of the Employment Permits (Amendment) Regulations 2015 which were commenced on 1 September 2015. The second review for 2015 has been finalised and new amendment regulations are being prepared.

Employment permit data was reviewed on a quarterly basis to monitor progress made by the system in helping to fill key skills shortages, including ICT, in the Irish labour market.

Action 27: Initiate a Trusted Partner Registration Scheme for Employment Permits open to all eligible employers.

Q4 Measure: Open Scheme to all eligible employers. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Trusted Partner Initiative was launched by Minister Bruton in May 2015. The Initiative provides for faster turnaround times for Trusted Partner employers applying for employment permits. Throughout 2015, Trusted Partner applications were processed in five working days, compared to the average time of over 22 working days. The Scheme was open to all employers from the start.

Action 28: Implement 2015 Research Professorship Programme to attract leading research talent to Ireland in key areas of opportunity.

Q4 Measure: Review process for the Research Professorship Programme complete and funding decisions made. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Four awards were offered in 2015, including two in Advanced Manufacturing. Fifteen applications are under review in areas including Medical Devices, Manufacturing, Immunology, Digital Platforms, Biomedical Engineering, Energy and Agri-Food.

Action 29: Progress the Tax Reform Plan announced in Budget 2015 subject to the Government having sufficient fiscal space.

Q4 Measure: Iterative development and modelling of options for income tax changes along with associated costings for consideration by Government. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Numerous income tax package options were modelled and discussed with Minister. The Income Tax Package decided on by Government focused on USC reductions. In addition, a

new Earned Income Tax Credit for the self-assessed was introduced and an increase was made to the Home Carer Tax Credit to benefit single income families with children.

Action 32: Continue to roll out the Housing Assistance Payment.

Q4 Measure: Full roll out of HAP beyond Wave 1. (DECLG, all LAs on a phased basis)

Update: Complete

The implementation of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme is a key Government priority and a major pillar of the Social Housing Strategy 2020. The full rollout of HAP beyond the initial Wave 1 group of authorities has commenced and is being progressed incrementally. The phased approach that has been adopted for the roll-out has allowed for significant learning to be shared between local authorities and has been crucial to the success of the scheme to date.

HAP has been rolled out to all categories of household in 18 local authority areas. At the end of 2015, over 6,000 households had been accommodated through HAP since its commencement.

The Social Housing Strategy has set a target of supporting 10,000 additional HAP households in 2016.

Delivering Regional Potential

Action 36: Build on the success achieved to date on the Competitive Feasibility Funds and launch 4 targeted funds during the year in the West, Midlands, MidEast, and one sectoral fund.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Action Plan for Jobs supports enterprise growth and job creation in every region of the country. The pace of progress in the regions, especially those with the highest unemployment levels, needs to be accelerated through targeted supports for enterprise and job creation. Vibrant and competitive regions are important, not just from an economic perspective, but also from a societal point of view. Growing the economic base of regions supports social cohesion and provides opportunities for young people in particular to continue to live and work in their local communities.

Enterprise Ireland regularly offers feasibility funding for business start-ups in various sectors and geographic regions. The objective of the Competitive Feasibility Funds is 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 (HPSU). The purpose of the Feasibility Grant is to enable the applicant and Enterprise Ireland to reach firm conclusions regarding the project's viability and set out investor-ready plans and financials associated with developing and commercialising the product or service on international markets. The Fund is open to manufacturing and internationally traded services business and designed to enable start-up companies reach key commercial and technical milestones.

During 2015 Enterprise Ireland ran 4 targeted Competitive Feasibility Funds one each in the following regions: North West; West, Midlands/Mid-East along with one sectoral fund focused on the Agri-sector. The latter, which was built on the success of the regionally targeted Competitive Feasibility Funds, was aimed at companies that produce products and services directed for sale to the wider Agricultural Sector.

The Competitive Feasibility Fund for the West Region received 37 eligible applications of which 17 applicants were invited to 'Pitch' to a Panel of Enterprise Ireland & Industry Experts. In total 13 applicants were considered and approved funding. North West region 8 eligible applications, of which 5 were invited to 'pitch' their idea to a panel of Industry experts of which 3 were approved funding. Similarly the AgriFund CFF received 24 eligible applications of which 11 were invited to 'pitch' their idea to a panel of Industry experts, Teagasc and Enterprise Ireland. In total 6 were approved for funding. The Midlands / Mid-East Fund launched mid-December 2015 is currently underway with the final approvals due early in 2016.

Action 37: Develop a tourism brand proposition and identity for the South, East and Midlands of Ireland, that will help in scaling up the asset base and achieve international "stand-out" for the region based on its comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage.

Q4 Measure: Activating a suite of festivals that complement the destinations brand proposition, e.g., Kilkenny Arts and Wexford Festival Opera. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Complete

A number of large festivals were funded by Fáilte Ireland such as the Wexford Opera Festival, Kilkenny Arts Festival and the Cork International Choral Festival, along with a suite of 55 smaller festivals across the region, developing the international appeal of the region.

Action 52: Issue the tender for the delivery of high speed broadband to all parts of Ireland that cannot be served by commercial operators.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

Procurement launched in December 2015, tender documents will issue in Q2 2016.

Europe's Energy Innovation Hub

Action 54: Promote Ireland as Europe's Energy Innovation Hub, built on excellent research and innovation, and demonstration and enterprise activities. Develop a targeted campaign to achieve greater international awareness of the opportunities to develop leading edge energy products among companies with an existing or new presence in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, IDA, EI and SFI)

Update: Complete

This action is recognised as a 3 to 5 year development action which will continue to be developed over 2016 with the first steps being completed in 2015. Throughout 2015 SEAI, IDA, EI and SFI have been participating on the Inter Departmental Committee (IDC) to develop the Energy Innovation Hub value proposition. This IDC is co-chaired by DEJI and DCENR. The draft value proposition was developed by the IDC and presented to the high level stakeholder group and Minister Bruton. This was also presented at a workshop with Industry Stakeholders in November. The next step for 2016 is to refine the messaging with the IDC and to commence the development of a promotional campaign.

Action 55: Create an integrated one-stop portal of national energy assets and infrastructure, energy related enterprises and innovators and research activities.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI)

Update: On Schedule

As with Action 54 this action will continue over a number of years as the one stop portal will develop into a window to the Energy ecosystem in Ireland. Portals are now completed for Ocean Energy, Renewables (BioEnergy and Wind) and Energy Research. SEAI is working with the IDC to align this with the Energy Innovation Hub concept and a home page for the national one stop portal has been developed and presented to Stakeholders. This will be a key marketing tool used to promote the Energy Innovation Hub value proposition. This early stage portal will be further developed and built over 2016 and 2017 however this will require significant resources which will have to be agreed with the Chairs and members of the IDC.

Action 56: Progress initiatives to exploit the full range of opportunities identified in the SEAI/EI/IDA report on Energy Supply Chain Opportunities for Ireland. IDA, EI, SFI and SEAI to work with indigenous and international enterprises across the energy value chain to develop their activities in Ireland. This will involve ICT multinationals already in Ireland locating new or additional energy activities, attracting multinational energy companies to locate research, innovation and demonstration activities in Ireland and indigenous companies, both ICT and energy, participating in demonstration activities and developing new products and services for international markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, IDA, EI and SFI)

Update: Complete

This Action has been delivered across a number of activities from the Agencies involved and there has been ongoing co-ordination in this area across key sectors. There have been a suite of successful activities completed in 2015. Some examples include:

1. Apple Data centre announcement for Athenry and 1000 additional jobs for Cork. This has been a result of extensive negotiations with the IDA however the project also involved SEAI and the attraction of the renewable energy supply in Ireland and the access to energy efficiency expertise were also key elements of the decision process. SEAI also succeeded in negotiating a partnership with Apple for €1M fund from Apple to support Ocean Energy project testing in Galway Bay.
2. Diageo brewing hall – launched as the most energy efficient brewing facility in the world – supported by SEAI, IDA and EI

An Ocean Energy Europe conference was held in Croke Park – Ireland’s representation was under one banner “Ireland Open for Business” with SEAI, EI, Supply Chain companies, The Industry Association all used the facility to good effect. This attracted 300 international visitors to Dublin for a full week of events and meetings.

Action 57: Develop a truly open Innovation Energy Research System between public research organizations and enterprise, drawing together relevant research and innovation activity underway across the public research system in Ireland. In particular catalyse:

- Major HEI/Industry research partnerships using, e.g., SFI’s Partnership and Spokes schemes programmes;
- International collaborative research applications through Horizon 2020 and US Ireland schemes;
- Recruitment of leading energy researchers to Irish HEIs, using, e.g., SFI’s Research

Professorship scheme

- Collaboration between relevant Research Centres and Industry in Ireland e.g. Energy, ICT, Geosciences etc. using the SFI Spokes scheme
- Placement of HEI researchers in relevant energy industries using e.g. SFI Industrial Fellowship scheme
- Development of at least one large bid in the Energy field to Horizon 2020 e.g. for infrastructure / test bed / demonstrator that would be used nationally and internationally

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFI, HEIs, EI, IDA, SEAI)

Update: Complete

A number of successful Energy initiatives took place in 2015.

The SFI funded MaREI (Marine Renewable Energy Ireland) research centre has been in operation since 2013. MaREI has played a pivotal role in setting up the Galway Bay Cabled Ocean Energy Testbed & Observatory (partners: MaREI/UCC, SEAI, SmartBay, DCU). This test bed was launched in July 2015; more details are available via the SmartBay website: (<http://www.smartbay.ie/Home.aspx>).

MaREI has been awarded €587k as Co-Coordinator on an H2020 grant (INNOWAVE; in collaboration between the Centre for Ocean Energy Research, NUIM (part of MaREI) and Aquamarine Power (Edinburgh, Belfast, European Marine Energy Centre, Orkney).

MaREI was awarded a Spoke grant in 2015: OM-MaREI; Observation and Monitoring of Marine Renewable Energy Infrastructure (partners: SFPC, CIL, BCB Int Ltd, IAA, Aer Lingus, Brickman Consult, IMGS, RPS Ltd, value: €5.0m).

Partnership awards in 2015 include the Energy Systems Integration Partnership (ESIPP) which has a total value of greater than €11m (the SFI contribution is €7.1m; the remainder is to be contributed by an industry consortium (Eirgrid, ESB, Glen Dimplex, Ervia, AIB) and a philanthropic donation. Since the launch of the US-Ireland partnership, 6 awards have been made in the area of Energy and Sustainability.

Action 58: Accelerate commercialisation of research and technologies through greater linkages with enterprise and entrepreneurs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, SFI, SEAI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has been working to accelerate the commercialisation of research and technologies through greater linkages with enterprise and entrepreneurs. To this end

Enterprise Ireland has been arranging direct introductions between industry and the Technology Centres and Gateways. For example a group of Engineering companies have been connected to the South Eastern Applied Materials Research Centre (SEAM) Centre in Waterford.

Enterprise Ireland is actively engaged with companies encouraging greater collaboration with the research infrastructure and supporting the use of innovation partnerships between companies and research centres.

A further aid to this process has been the Innovation Showcase as described in Action 280

Action 59: Promote Ireland's 'Smart Innovation Grid', creating a smooth access path for companies and entrepreneurs to the services suited to their needs. This will allow for genuine cross-cutting collaboration among the range of agencies and departments likely to have a role in a given sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, SFI, IDA, EI)

Update: Complete

SEAI, SFI, IDA and EI are all participating with DCENR, Eirgrid, ESB Networks and Industry representatives on the Smart Grid Implementation group to co-ordinate on Smart Grid. The Smart Grid Portal is under development through this group and will be another key aspect of the Energy Innovation Hub.

Action 60: Use the Public Sector (including schools and hospitals) as exemplars of Smart Energy Management, and set targets for achieving savings through energy efficiency, monitoring and control. In addition, public bodies to review how policy guidelines and regulations can best promote energy efficiency and ensure that new technologies and solutions can be adapted quickly in the Irish context.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, DECNR, DECLG)

Update: Complete

A total of eighteen public bodies, spending in excess of €175m annually on energy, have embarked on a programme with SEAI to implement ISO50001, with a commitment to achieve formal certification by June 2016. All public bodies report their energy use data annually to SEAI through an online system. Progress is measured each year and reported in the Public Sector programme Monitoring and Reporting reports. SEAI has developed a full suite of tools and supports for the Public Sector and they assist in the trialling and demonstration of new technologies. One example is South Dublin County Council which has become a champion of smart grid / micro grid technologies. In Tallaght they are co-

ordinating a project involving IT Tallaght, local schools, businesses and Local Authority homes to successfully demonstrate and trial these new ideas and technologies.

Action 61: In addition, public bodies to review how policy guidelines and regulations can best promote energy efficiency and ensure that new technologies and solutions can be adapted quickly in the Irish context.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, DECNR, DECLG)

Update: Complete

SEAI, DCENR and DECLG are all members of a Technical Steering Group that is collaborating on energy efficiency standards in the Domestic and Non Domestic spaces. This group continually reviews the standards and guidance to ensure the best opportunities and technologies can be incorporated into the latest national standards. Another example is SEAI's participation in a national steering group, chaired by CCMA and with participation from CCMA LUTS and TII (formerly NRA), to develop a strategy on public lighting. This group will try to ensure that standards, policy and market factors are aligned to facilitate the rollout of efficient public lighting and are exploring how this can be best delivered and financed including through energy services procurement models.

Action 62: Promote the use and application of energy efficient technologies and solutions in the manufacturing and services enterprises in Ireland, building on the success of exemplars and demonstration projects to date, to establish leadership in energy management and promote the increased adoption of ISO and other energy related standards in both building design and energy management.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

EAI and NSAI launched the new Standard for Energy Efficiency Design IS399 in 2015. SEAI has also worked with industry (for example, Diageo) and with EI and IDA to promote this as a key offering in Ireland for multinationals. SEAI and IDA currently promote Ireland's leadership in Energy Management and ISO 50001 and this is a key element of SEAI Business and Public Sector programmes.

Action 63: Develop 5 additional proposals for Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or similar test bed actions for innovative procurement related to energy, building on the

success of the SEAI/EI/SBIR for multi-user electricity charging in 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI, EI)

Update: On schedule.

This process is ongoing in SEAI, which has now developed additional SBIR proposals as follows:

1. Home energy data analysis tool.
2. Wave energy data analysis tool.
3. Phase 2 of Electric vehicle charging, with Phase 1 completed in October.

SEAI completed a call for SBIR proposals on Energy Efficiency Research. This focused on stimulating knowledge regarding innovative approaches to supporting the faster deployment of energy efficiency upgrades within the residential sector. 8 projects have been funded across the areas of awareness and engagement methodologies, communications and marketing approaches, and novel and innovative solutions for deployment.

EI is to provide an update on other SBIRS for other organisations.

Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland

Action 66: Implement the SBCI Business Plan for SME lending over the course of 2015, including achieving key milestones as set out in the SBCI plan of: first lending to SMEs and roll-out of products in Q1 2015; bringing new non-bank lenders to the market in Q2/Q3 2015; and bringing a pipeline of other banks and non-bank lenders on board by Q4 2015 and beyond.

Q4 Measure: Facilitate an increase in the number of lenders in the SME market. (SBCI)

Update: Complete

In addition to Bank of Ireland and AIB the SBCI has announced two new non bank on lenders, Finance Ireland and Merrion fleet solutions. The SBCI continues to work with other potential lending partners and it is expected that additional on lenders will be added in the future.

Q4 Measure: Contribute to the roll out of products for the export sector as part of the new Export Finance Strategy. (SBCI)

Update: Complete

The SBCI has contributed throughout the year to the Export Finance Project working group.

As part of the preparation for the roll out of the Export Finance Strategy the working group (which includes the SBCI) has conducted extensive research on the requirements of Irish

exporters. This has allowed the working group to better focus the design of products to meet the needs of exporters. It has also enabled the working group to conclude that the main effort should be on the delivery of risk-sharing products for working capital facilities.

Increasing Entrepreneurial Activity

Action 69: The National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement actions will be progressed.

Q4 Measure: Quarterly monitoring of progress through DJEI Entrepreneurship Group. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

Actions were monitored each quarter. An end of year report has been drafted. It should be noted that implementation of some actions stretch beyond 2015, but any such actions were progressed as expected during 2015.

Intellectual Property in Enterprise

Action 70: Bring forward the key recommendations from the DJEI study on how best to support the enhancement of the Intellectual Property activity of the firm base in Ireland and how best to ensure firm level supports are competitive and appropriate.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, EI, IDA and SFI)

Update: Complete

The DJEI study on ‘Enhancing the intellectual property activities in the firm base in Ireland’ was completed in June 2015 and subsequently published by DJEI. The report was considered within the context of the development of the Enterprise 2025 Strategy, leading to the inclusion of ‘enhanced IP activity in enterprise’ being identified as a key element of innovation policy over the coming decade. The key recommendations from the study – raising awareness of IP, investing in widespread education in IP and building IP management capability – have been adopted as actions within the Innovation 2020 strategy, and have been assigned owners and timelines for implementation within this strategy.

Action 77: Through Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) and EI’s suite of commercialisation and technology transfer supports, ensure the effective commercialisation and efficient transfer of economically important research outputs to industry in order to develop existing and new enterprises including 130 commercially relevant technologies transferred to industry and 35 new spinout companies.

Q4 Measure: Over 130 commercial relevant technologies transferred to industry – 35 New spinout companies. (EI/KTI)

Update: Complete

This action forms part of the Intellectual Property in Enterprise reform which aims to double the number of patents, industrial designs registered and other IP management activities of firms. The objective of the overarching reform is to achieve best in class in the EU by enhancing support for firms, drive commercialisation and ensure the tax environment is optimised for innovative enterprises located here. The Action Plan for Jobs 2015 has set out 9 key actions with 10 deliverables to ensure the achievement of this reform's objectives. The commercially-relevant technologies transferred to industry figures are reported on a quarterly basis. The Q4 outturn will not be available until January 2016.

Action 78: Introduce a "Knowledge Development Box" income-based tax regime for intangible assets in 2015 following completion of a public consultation on this issue during 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Following public consultation in Q1 2015 and engagement with stakeholders on the matter throughout the year, the legislation to implement the Knowledge Development Box is contained in Finance Bill 2015. This has now been passed by the Oireachtas and is awaiting the signature of the President. It is due to be signed before the end of Q4.

Progressing Disruptive Reforms from 2013 & 2014 Action Plans

Manufacturing Step Change

Action 80: In relation to strengthening the ecosystem for manufacturing firms in Ireland, review the pilot mid-tier initiative based on cohort of Engineering companies and select a second cohort of enterprises for an initiative in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

A National Step Change in Manufacturing initiative was launched in 2014 to help place Ireland's manufacturing sector at the forefront internationally and to improve competitiveness, productivity and innovation; improve connections to the customer and expansions into new markets; and to engage in new ways of working.

The *Expert Group on Future Skills Needs*, from consultations with companies, has identified a demand for manufacturing skilled trades for sectors such as food, medical devices, engineering and Pharma/Biopharma, and for apprenticeships/traineeships in formal operative level traineeships, manufacturing technicians, manufacturing machine operators, practical engineering apprentice (progression up to level 8), polymer technologists, and toolmakers.

The National Step Change envisages delivering a suite of supports that are tailored to the specific needs of a firm, depending on its stage of development and strategic intent, and regardless of ownership and/or scale. Additional funding will be provided by DJEI to increase the number of manufacturing operations that can transform their activities so as to sustain jobs into the future.

The Mid-Tier pilot for Engineering clients has been reviewed and presented to the Enterprise Ireland Executive. Approval was given to proceed and a second cohort has been identified. Initial actions with the second cohort will commence and run in 2016. Peer to peer learning has been at the core of this project with exposure to best practice across many different functions including management systems, people management & development and market development. Issues of common interest have also been identified across the cohort.

Action 82: EI will support a total of 115 firms across all levels and activities, through its LeanStart, LeanPlus and LeanTransform Programmes.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland's Lean Business Offer is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisation to increase performance and competitiveness. The Lean Business Offer is made up of three levels of support: LeanStart, LeanPlus and LeanTransform. Each level of support is characterised by increasing levels of capability in implementing lean business principles and other best practice approaches to drive company awareness, adoption and integration of lean tools and techniques. Considerable effort went into increasing the up-take by medium-sized firms through its LeanStart, LeanPlus and LeanTransform Programmes. The suite of Lean Programmes which continued to be rolled out by the Enterprise Ireland are well received by clients.

Enterprise Ireland's Lean Programmes fall under the nation step change referred to in action 80.

Some 115 LeanStart, LeanPlus and LeanTransform projects were supported in 2015, with a strong pipeline for 2016. There is a particular demand for the Lean Transform programme.

LeanStart provides an introduction to Lean concepts and allows companies to gain an understanding of what the tools and techniques can do for your company in a short, focused engagement. A total of 54 Enterprise Ireland client companies undertook the LeanStart programme in 2015.

The emphasis on engaging with medium-sized firms is evidenced in the increase in LeanPlus assignments. In 2015, a total of 45 companies undertook Lean Plus projects. LeanPlus is particularly suited to medium sized companies.

Action 84: EI and the IDA will develop a strategy to develop Ireland's aviation related business sectors. A key part of the strategy will involve roll-out of the SC21 initiative to 18 more sub suppliers.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/IDA)

Update: Complete

This action also falls under the National Step Change referred to in Action 80.

Ireland has a significant sub-supply base relevant to the Aerospace sector MRO businesses and manages the leasing of significant numbers of commercial aircraft.

The 21st Century Supply Chain Programme (SC21) aims to boost the competitiveness of the aerospace and defence industries by forming an innovative and globally competitive supply chain.

A draft Aerospace/Aviation strategy document has been developed and will be presented to

Enterprise Ireland's Executive in early 2016.

In May 2015 Enterprise Ireland's held an SC21 information event. 25 Enterprise Ireland clients attended, and presentations were made by SC21 implementation consultants and senior Executives from Bombardier and B/E Aerospace. Since this event, 19 clients have begun an SC21 initiative or have committed to begin such an initiative within 6 months. It is envisaged that at least 5 Enterprise Ireland clients will be SC21 awarded in 2016.

National Health Innovation Hub

Action 85: Establish a National Health Innovation Hub based on a competitive process.

Q4 Measure: Update Government on progress. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

On 5th January 2016, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Health updated Government on progress to date on the scaling of the Health Innovation Hub to national level, including the outcome of the competitive call to host the national Health Innovation Hub.

Q4 Measure: Transition projects from the pilot to the national HIH as appropriate. (Oversight Group, NHIH)

Update: Complete

The pilot Health Innovation Hub has engaged with 27 companies on 23 projects over the three years of its operation. Of these, 15 projects are complete and eight projects are in their final stages and will be rolled into the activities of Health Innovation Hub Ireland for finalisation (data collection, analysis and reporting).

Competitive Ecosystem for Big Data

Action 90: The Task Force on Big Data will review the opportunities for Ireland arising from the Internet of Things and develop specific policy actions to develop those opportunities.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (Task Force on Big Data, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The terms of reference for the Task Force were expanded to include the "Internet of Things" with the creation of a sub-group in Q2 2015. A Work Programme was agreed which included building a value proposition, development of an IoT Innovation Cluster and the identification of key areas of focus. A number of projects involving collaboration between

industry and academia were presented to the Taskforce. This programme will be progressed further during 2016.

Action 94: Establish a Dublin office for the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Justice and Equality, OPW)

Update: Dublin Office for the ODPC has been established in temporary accommodation. Permanent accommodation is to be in place by July 2016.

Winning Abroad

Action 96: Ringfence €4m in additional funding in 2015 to secure increased inward investment and export growth in high growth and emerging markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Funding was provided to IDA Ireland in 2015 to continue the Winning Abroad programme commenced in 2014 to increase the staffing resources overseas. Recruitment of 35 additional posts is almost complete (see Action 149).

Local Enterprise Offices

Action 99: Continue to develop and promote the Local Enterprise Offices as the first-stop-shop providing advice and supports to entrepreneurs and new business in the micro and small sector.

Q4 Measure: Strengthen customer service by rolling out of training programme and reviewing Protocols with other agencies. (EI, LEOs)

Update: Complete

Since the establishment of the LEOs in April, 2014, the focus has been on the development of enhanced customer service, seamless continuity of services, and the installation of oversight structures.

The 2015, APJ placed a particular focus on Enterprise Capacity Building across the 31 LEOs. This involved further developing and promoting the LEOs as the conduit to provide information, support and advice to micro and small businesses on, inter alia, access to finance issues. The means of achieving this objective is via appropriate training, mentoring and provision of information based on the availability of up-to-date information and training from the appropriate third-party sources.

Enterprise Ireland conducted a LEO client survey in May 2015. The results of the survey were mainly positive. EI will use the results to inform/ enhance the training programmes developed specifically to support LEO clients and the challenges they face.

Trading Online

Action 100: Following the national launch of the scheme in 2014, complete the rollout of 2,000 Trading Online Vouchers (1,450 in 2015) through the Local Enterprise Office Network.

Q4 Measure: Complete the distribution of vouchers in 2015. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

The distribution of vouchers by the 31 LEOs under the Trading Online Voucher Scheme, while delayed, is ongoing and will continue in 2016.

At the end of December 2015, some 1,747 vouchers had been awarded by LEOs to successful small businesses in the period since July 2014. Of these, some 1,461 businesses had completed, or were in the process of completing, their trading online projects. In addition, at least 3,205 businesses benefitted from advice and peer-to-peer support through their participation in one of the 143 information sessions delivered by the LEOs nationwide under the scheme. Preliminary data suggests that for every business which is benefiting from the financial incentive, at least 3 more have had some interaction with a LEO on the TOVS.

The rollout of vouchers is ongoing and funding has been made available to provide a further 1,000 vouchers under the Action Plan for Jobs 2016.

Trading Online Vouchers are attracting small businesses from across a wide range of sectors including: retail, manufacturing, food, craft/design, leisure and professional services. In July 2015, the outcome of a survey of participants of the Scheme was published. It revealed that businesses that moved online experienced an average increase in sales of 21%. Some 40% of businesses had customer interactions from new markets, the most important export markets being the UK, USA and Northern Ireland. Over 70% said that they expect to recruit new staff as a result. With the potential creation of an average 1.4 new jobs per company – in businesses that employ ten staff or less – it shows that trading online can make a tangible impact on jobs and economic activity in Ireland. A further measurement of the impact of the scheme and its operation will be undertaken early in 2016.

JobsPlus

Action 101: As part of Pathways to Work, a new JobsPlus strand for young people will be available in 2015 under the Youth Guarantee.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DSP)

Update: Complete

JobsPlus Youth was launched on 4 February 2015. The qualifying period for employing young people under the scheme is reduced from 12 months to 4 months. Eligible young unemployed jobseekers are identified using the jobseeker profiling tool developed with the ESRI, the application of which is now a standard feature of the Intreo process. It is anticipated that these enhancements to JobsPlus for young people will support an additional 1,500 jobs for under 25s with high barriers to employment in its first year.

Finance for Growth

Effective Implementation to Maximise Benefits to SMEs

Action 104: Collate and monitor data, including Central Bank data, on lending to SMEs from both bank and non-bank sources, including the full range of state sponsored initiatives and report on this issue to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs twice yearly.

Q4 Measure: Report to CCERJ on SME lending. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

The SME State Bodies Group provided input to a document containing recent data pertaining to SME lending and State sponsored schemes, this was submitted to the CCERJ on SME lending on the 7th of December.

Action 105: Detailed data from AIB and Bank of Ireland will be collated and examined, on a monthly basis ensuring a more informed understanding of the SME bank lending environment, with a particular focus on new lending.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance, Credit Review Office)

Update: Complete

Latest monthly and quarterly figures received from AIB and Bank of Ireland. Quarterly

meetings held with both banks.

Action 108: Survey the SME demand for credit.

Q4 Measure: Undertake two further SME Credit and Demand Surveys. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

The Department of Finance SME Credit Demand Survey (October 2014 – March 2015) was carried out and published in April 2015. The SME Credit Demand Survey (April – September 2015) has been carried out and published on the Department of Finance website 9 November 2015.

Increasing Activation of the Unemployed

Action 127: Continue the development and reform of the State's public employment services to help ensure that the number of people on the Live Register is reduced as the economy recovers and that the labour market responds flexibly and efficiently to employment growth.

Q4 Measure: Evaluate the effectiveness of labour market programmes (e.g. JobBridge, JobsPlus, Back to Work Enterprise Allowance etc.) to ensure more effective engagement with unemployed people under Strand 2 of Pathways to Work. (DSP)

Update: Complete

The Pathways to Work 2015 strategy committed to conducting a range of process and programme evaluations of PtW reforms. A counterfactual impact evaluation of the of the Back to Education Allowance scheme was published on 3 November 2015 and recommendations made by the LMC on foot of the results of this evaluation are now being implemented by the Department of Social Protection. A Jobseekers satisfaction survey of Intreo services has been conducted and results are expected by end year. A counterfactual impact evaluation of Intreo reforms will be starting by end year/early Q1 2016. A mixed-methods evaluation will be initiated by end November of the effectiveness, suitability and relevance of the JobBridge, through a counterfactual impact evaluation; an economic evaluation; and a survey of participants and host organisations.

Q4 Measure: Work more closely with employers to increase their awareness of employment supports by establishing a professional account management and sales capability under Strand 1 of Pathways to Work. (DSP)

Update: Complete

As per update for Action 23 above.

Action 130: Promote and assist, as appropriate, the progression of relevant actions in National Youth Strategy which support youth employment and youth employability initiatives, including skills development and experiential learning opportunities for young people and the provision of valuable volunteer opportunities

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Complete

The National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 has been published and action is underway to support its implementation including the introduction of a Youth Employability Initiative to provide funding to voluntary youth organisation to support innovative projects that enhance young people's employability. Action Complete

Action 132: Progress work on implementing the EU Recommendation on Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning in consultation with relevant Government Departments and other stakeholders.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Complete

This action has been incorporated into the new National Youth Strategy. 2015-2020 and action is underway to support its implementation including support for the youth work sector (National Youth Council of Ireland) for development work to support the objectives of the EU Recommendation.

Action 134: Continue to promote mobility and learning opportunities in the youth work sector and the take-up of EU funding mechanisms available such as the new Erasmus+ Programme.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Complete

The action will be ongoing throughout the Erasmus Programme period to 2020. Arrangements are in place with Leargas to promote the relevant schemes to the youth services. A number of youth services are engaged in initiatives that have been successful in

securing Erasmus +funding.

Growing Irish Enterprise and Foreign Direct Investment

Action 136: Implement the EI Strategy to target the creation of 13,000 new fulltime permanent jobs and to support clients to achieve €19bn in exports in 2015.

Q4 Measure: Target the creation of 13,000 new fulltime permanent jobs. (DFAT, DJEI,DAFM and EI)

Update: Complete

From the outset, the Action Plan for Jobs has pursued an export-led approach to dealing with the jobs crisis which existed at that time. The foreign earnings that accrue from the export of goods and services from firms based in Ireland provide the revenue to ensure those businesses thrive, provide the payroll to the workers they employ which in turn circulates in shops and businesses in every community, and contribute to the revenue allocated by the State to deliver vital services to our citizens. In short, increasing sales and exports was and is at the heart of what it is the Action Plan aims to achieve.

Exporting firms, supported by State agencies, are important job creators and their successes are the base upon which continued economic growth and sustainable employment creation across the country will be built. Enterprise Ireland supported companies created 19,705 gross new jobs in 2014, resulting in a net increase of almost 8,476 in the Enterprise Ireland client base. Exports Sales in Enterprise Ireland supported companies, the highest in the history of the agency, reached €18.6 billion in 2014 an increase of 9.9% on 2013 figures.

In 2015, the State will continue to directly and indirectly support potential and existing exporters through the suite of actions set out in this section of Action Plan for Jobs 2015, targeting the creation of new jobs and to support firms to achieve strong exports performance in 2015. Whether it is via our work to grow and embed foreign direct investment here or our actions to strengthen and promote our world-class export base, the measures outlined below will ensure that every potential and existing exporting business in every part of Ireland receives the support they need to establish and prosper.

Enterprise Ireland, the Government agency responsible for developing Irish business globally, reported the creation of 21,118 new jobs by client companies in 2015.

This translates into a net increase of 10,169 jobs for 2015 (taking account of job losses) in Enterprise Ireland supported businesses and brings total employment in these companies to 192,223 - a record high for the agency. Almost two thirds of the new jobs created were outside Dublin and all of the regions recorded increases in full-time employment over the period.

Enterprise Ireland attributes this strong performance by Irish businesses to an improving

entrepreneurial climate for start-ups, dynamic Irish companies innovating and scaling up in key sectors such as Food, Fintech and Business Process Outsourcing and improving international economic conditions.

Q4 Measure: Support clients to achieve €19bn in exports in 2015. (EI)

Update: Complete

Following the publication of the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs Enterprise Ireland revised its projected clients' Export target upwards from €19bn to €20bn. The Outturns for 2015 will not be available until the Annual Business Review (ABR) has been completed. The ABR has yet to commence.

Action 138: Potential Exporters: Hold 9 Potential Exporter Awareness Events and 9 Potential Exporter Workshops across the country and target over 700 companies to have significant engagement with the EI Potential Exporter Division.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

In 2015, the State has continued to directly and indirectly support potential and existing exporters through the suite of actions set out in section 6 of Action Plan for Jobs 2015, targeting the creation of new jobs and to support firms to achieve strong exports performance in 2015. Whether it is via our work to grow and embed foreign direct investment here or our actions to strengthen and promote our world-class export base, the measures outlined within section 6 of the Action plan will ensure that very potential and existing exporting business in every part of Ireland receives the support they need to establish and prosper.

Export Awareness events and the more intensive Export Awareness workshops help companies understand the steps they need to take to develop their export potential. At these events, Enterprise Ireland outlines a range of supports to help companies prepare to export and win new business overseas, successful Irish exporters talk about their exporting journey and participants have the opportunity to discuss their export plans with Enterprise Ireland executives.

During 2015, eight Export Awareness Events were held nationally covering all geographic locations. A further export awareness event was due to be held in Dublin in December but this clashed with an ISME organised event in which EI participated which took place on December 9th 2015 in the Red Cow Hotel, Naas Road. To date, Enterprise Ireland has held six Exploring Exporting Workshops nationally – two others did not proceed. The first in Dundalk was due to be held in early October but clashed with DJEI's Taking Care of Business Event in Drogheda on October 8th. Enterprise Ireland spoke and exhibited at the event. A workshop for Waterford was scheduled for November but was deferred due to the

unexpected unavailability of the service provider. This is being rescheduled for the new year.

To date there have been 470 participants at the Export Awareness Events and over 110 participated in Enterprise Ireland's one day Exploring Exporting Workshops. Enterprise Ireland's Potential Exporter Division had significant engagement with over 550 companies during 2015. This is defined as engagements where detailed discussions around the developmental and export needs of potential and existing clients are held, advocates and mentors are assigned and companies participate on Enterprise Ireland workshops.

Action 139: Implement the Review of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy, published in February 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT, EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Government Departments and State agencies continued to implement the Review of the Government Trade Tourism and Investment Strategy. The Review set out sectoral priorities and focused on how Departments and State agencies can co-ordinate better overseas, recognising that actions to improve the domestic enabling environment were being comprehensively addressed through the Action Plan for Jobs process. Local Market Teams in our twenty seven priority markets, together with a further seven high potential and exploratory markets, comprised of representatives of the Embassy and the relevant State agencies, have submitted implementation reports for 2015 and their annual plans for 2016, which will be reviewed by the Export Trade Council in early 2016.

Action 140: Continue to implement the Africa Strategy, which provides a comprehensive framework for the development and management of Ireland's official engagement with Africa, and use such initiatives as the Africa Ireland Economic Forum to identify new opportunities for investment and trade and enable Irish-based companies to play a greater role in Africa.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT, EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has continued, in collaboration with other Departments, State Agencies, private sector representative groups and our African partners, to implement the Africa Strategy and deepen and broaden our relations with Africa. In particular this work has focused on facilitating the pursuit of economic opportunities for Irish businesses in Africa, supporting the creation of jobs in Ireland. This

objective of the strategy formed the backdrop to the successful trade mission led by Minister Simon Coveney T.D. to Nigeria and Ghana in Q4 2015. The Africa Ireland Economic Forum was reviewed in 2015 and a forum with a sectoral focus will take place in Q2 2016.

Action 141: Progress implementation of the agreed Global Sourcing Strategy across EI and IDA Ireland to increase global sourcing sales by EI client companies by €100m over 3 years and €30m in 2015.

Q4 Measure: Continue to support the achievement, during 2015, of the €100m EI Global Sourcing target by 2016. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

In 2015, the State has continued to directly and indirectly support potential and existing exporters through the suite of actions set out in this section of Action Plan for Jobs 2015, targeting the creation of new jobs and to support firms to achieve strong exports performance in 2015. Whether it is via our work to grow and embed foreign direct investment here or our actions to strengthen and promote our world-class export base, the measures outlined below will ensure that every potential and existing exporting business in every part of Ireland receives the support they need to establish and prosper.

In addition to taking decisive action on an annual basis, we now look over the longer term to set out the vision for Ireland's enterprise policy over the coming decade. To this end we have set out the overarching framework and strategic actions needed to ensure that Ireland's enterprise policy is sufficiently robust in the context of a changing competitive environment and intensified global competition for trade, investment and people in order to deliver on Government's ambition to have 2.1 million people in employment in 2018 and to ensure sustained growth over the coming decade to 2025.

One such strategic action was the development and implementation of the Global Sourcing Strategy. Under this strategy IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland will work to secure an additional €30 million in sub-supply and sourcing contracts for Irish based firms to foreign subsidiaries in 2015, building on the progress since 2011.

The outturn for the global sourcing sales by EI client companies in 2015 will not be available until the Annual Business Review has been completed.

Q4 Measure: IDA and EI will jointly review and explore further opportunities for partnerships between Irish SMEs and MNCs. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland have been working together to implement the agencies' joint Global Sourcing Strategy with the objective of increasing global sourcing sales by

Enterprise Ireland client companies. As part of this Enterprise Ireland organised a Trade & Investment Mission in Ireland 14th and 15 October, 2015. This event was attended by 126 Enterprise Ireland clients and 69 IDA Ireland companies representing MedTech, Engineering, Food, ICT and Pharma Sectors.

In addition Enterprise Ireland also organised several other partnership events with multinationals which included e.g. Apple Data Centre Supplier Summit and Lloyds Pharmacy Workshop. The Apple Data Centre Supplier Summit involved invitations from Apple to 70 Enterprise Ireland clients to attend one to one meetings. The Lloyds Pharmacy workshop comprised a presentation by the company on their supplier needs to 25 Enterprise Ireland clients' and one to one meetings with Lloyds Pharmacy buyers. The aim of these events is to increase sales from Irish companies to Ireland based multinationals.

Q4 Measure: In addition to targets for the attraction of Emerging Businesses (28) and Overseas Entrepreneurs (15), EI and IDA will deepen their collaboration including by:

- more structured sharing of information on the offers from competing locations
- trialling better ways of social media collaboration. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

The overall objective is to increase the number of Internationally Mobile Entrepreneurs in Ireland. Both Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland are committed to ensuring that effective processes are in place to deliver optimally on this objective, which includes more structured sharing of information on the offers from competing locations, and trialling better ways of social media collaboration.

- a) In the case of structured sharing of information on the competitive advantages of global locations, the main tools being utilised by the agencies are:
- Feedback from agency personnel/teams as part of agency networks overseas.
 - Collaborative approach to establishing key marketing messages in this area, which necessarily involves review of and differentiation from alternative locations.
 - Participation by both agencies (individually and through the operation of the Joint Enterprise Ireland IDA Ireland Senior Management team) in submitting inputs to the Government's Enterprise 2025: Innovative, Agile, Connected Strategy which sets out a range of areas for focus.

- b) In respect of trialling social media collaboration, it has been agreed to pilot on an overall basis a targeted joint approach to promotional efforts in a specific market of interest. The outcomes from the pilot will inform more broad based strategies, including the best use of social media on a collaborative basis. It should be noted that both organisations make extensive use of social media marketing as part of their ongoing strategy and operations, and this relies primarily on the strength of Ireland as an excellent location to do business. A

strong and shared understanding of the key marketing messages has been an outcome resulting from respective teams in Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland joint work on the attraction of overseas entrepreneurs to Ireland.

Q4 Measure: EI and IDA will develop a framework for all future joint sector strategies to be completed by Q2 2015 and will progress the programme of joint sectoral strategies in 2015. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland have developed a framework for all future joint sector strategies and the agencies initiated the Payments Strategy in 2015.

Action 142: Implement tailored mentoring programmes for the benefit of more than 300 EI clients in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Our recovery since 2011 is founded on a deliberate policy of driving export growth across the economy and supporting successful Irish based enterprises in international markets. Enterprise Ireland through its programmes and overseas office network will target support clients to achieve €19 billion in exports in 2015. To support this Enterprise Ireland in 2015 will provide over 300 tailored mentoring programmes to support growing enterprises.

Enterprise Ireland's customised programmes, delivered in collaboration with leading international providers, aims to inspire business leaders, to equip them with the tools and techniques to operate more effectively and to build international scale. These programmes help build the capabilities companies need and deliver real and lasting impact, and results, for businesses.

Enterprise Ireland's client companies can request the appointment of a Mentor from the Enterprise Ireland Mentor Network to advise on issues relating to developing and executing an international sales strategy and other key business issues. Mentors are successful senior executives who volunteer to advise clients based on their own business experience. The Network has over 400 active mentors who make a real contribution in our client companies, bringing about change, removing barriers to growth and enabling strategic success.

In 2015, Enterprise Ireland Implemented a number of tailored mentoring programmes to more than 300 Enterprise Ireland clients. In addition, a number of assignments have been implemented with mentors from Microsoft.

Action 143: Build on Phase One of the Pilot Industry-led clustering initiative involving fifty companies by implementing the recommendations of the clustering Review carried out in 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD, in 2012 launched a €2million programme to encourage groups of businesses to collaborate to achieve specific business objectives, improve competitive advantage, create mutual financial gain – and ultimately create jobs.

The programme, based on international best practice, was supported jointly by Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs - formerly known as the City and County Enterprise Boards). The programme represented a new departure in industrial policy by encouraging businesses to cooperate with each other to develop clusters of strength.

Collaboration and clustering is a proven strategy providing potential for economies of scale and access to opportunities that would be outside the capability or scope of a business working alone. Some of Ireland's major industrial success stories – e.g. pharmaceuticals, medical devices – are based on the establishment of clusters, and this initiative is aimed at attempting to replicate that success in other sectors.

The benefits of clustering are many, and by engaging in collaborative activities, companies can ultimately improve their productivity; compete more effectively on the regional, national and international stages; Increase company income; Increase market share; benefit from greater innovation and knowledge transfer, and Enhanced capability.

Update: Phase 2 with fifty companies is ongoing and will continue in 2016. The review continues to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the full Pilot Cluster Programme. Improvements and lessons learned continue to be implemented for the existing Phase 2 approvals.

Action 144: Develop and implement a programme of trade missions and other trade, tourism, investment and education events focused on key target markets, including exploratory and high potential markets as defined under the Review of the Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy. A substantial number of these missions and related events will be led at Ministerial level.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, DFAT with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

23 Ministerial led Trade Missions and events took place in 2015. This included substantive trade missions to the US, China, India, South Africa, Nigeria and the Gulf, in order to promote a range of export orientated sectors which are intrinsic to growth and job creation.

Action 145: EI to develop a series of collaborative initiatives to drive exports and investment in priority markets in partnership with IDA Ireland, Bord Bia, Science Foundation Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, DFAT, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has under the Action Plan for jobs been focused on developing a series of collaborative initiatives to drive exports and investment in priority markets in partnership with IDA Ireland, Bord Bia, Science Foundation Ireland and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Enterprise Ireland was involved in a number of collaborative initiatives with agencies and DFAT. Key among these initiatives were Trade Events and Trade Missions to key markets. The key reason(s) for conducting these Events and Missions continues to be client focused namely;

- Generate Contacts, Introductions and New Business for Agency clients.
- Promote Ireland as a World Source of Goods, Services and Solutions.
- Assist Enterprise Ireland Clients Maintain and Develop Existing Client Relations.

Among some of the events undertaken were The Arab Irish Forum with Bord Bia SFI and DFAT highlighting how business is done and won in those markets, Gulf Mission to Qatar and India in conjunction with IDA Ireland the Enterprise Ireland Focus been on Education and Water/Waste Water Sectors, Trade Missions to South Africa and West Africa with Bord Bia and DFAT and China with Bord Bia, IDA Ireland where Enterprise Ireland Clients signed contracts in the Education, Construction Services and ICT.

Action 146: Implement a targeted programme to attract senior level key Inward Buyer Visits from key companies to match Irish supply capability in key sectors.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

From the onset, the Action Plan for Jobs has pursued an export-led approach to dealing with the jobs crisis which existed at that time. The foreign earnings that accrue from the export of goods and services from firms based in Ireland provide the revenue to ensure those businesses thrive, provide the payroll to the workers they employ, which in turn circulates in shops and businesses in every community, and contribute to the revenue allocated by the State to deliver vital services to our citizens. In short, increasing sales and exports was and is at the heart of what it is the Action Plan aims to achieve.

Attracting key Inward Buyers from key companies to match Irish supply capability in key sectors is an important element in securing future export sales.

Enterprise Ireland attracted over 820 buyers from markets and sectors around the globe. Clients continue to rate this service as one of the most beneficial in terms of generating business leads. To support its inward buyer activity, EI has a range of programmes to support client preparation to ensure maximum benefit from these introductions. Enterprise Ireland undertook in excess of inward programmes, which included sectors such as Consumer (Showcase Ireland), Medical (Med in Ireland), The Internet of Things (Web Summit), Sports Technology, Construction through our Building Information Modelling Programme, Water/Waste Water(Turkish Utilities), Bio Pharma, Engineering, Semi-Conductor, and Pet Food.

Action 148: Target 14,000 new gross jobs yielding approximately 7,000 net new jobs in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

In 2015, IDA Ireland's client companies created just under 19,000 (18,983) jobs across a range of sectors, with every region of Ireland posting net gains in jobs. Net jobs were 11,833 compared to 7,131 in the same period last year – representing a year on year rise of 66%. Total employment at IDA client companies now stands at 187,056, the highest level on record. The performance was achieved against a background of global economic uncertainty, intense competition from other jurisdictions and a changing global taxation

landscape.

Action 150: Work to win another 160 new FDI investment projects in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

The number of investments secured in 2015 was 213, up from 197 in the previous year. These investments came from (1) New Name companies, locating in Ireland for the first time, (2) Existing companies expanding their operations in Ireland and (3) companies undertaking R&D activities in Ireland.

The number of new name investments went to 94 from 88 in the previous year. The strong net job creation performance is a result of a very strong pipeline of new investments and fewer job losses within the employment portfolio. Working with companies to transform their activities to higher value in Ireland is a key part of IDA's strategy.

Action 151: Continue to win investments from High Growth and Emerging Markets together with new forms of FDI, the focus of which will be in IDA's new strategy to be launched in Q1 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

IDA established a new Division (Emerging Business Division) in 2010, designed to focus on securing investments from early stage, fast growth companies. Since then, IDA has approved over 120 new investments. In 2015, 34 investments were secured.

2015 was a very positive year for the Growth Markets Division, as the nature and scale of investments from these geographies broadened and deepened. 20 investments were secured, representing a 25% increase from 2014.

In January 2015, IDA established a new Division (New Forms of Investment Division) focused on securing investment from areas where IDA had not previously been engaged. i.e. Staff recruitment and training was initiated in January 2015 and executives are now in place in Dublin, London and Boston. Recruitment is ongoing in California. A work programme has been approved by the IDA Executive Committee, and the investment opportunity areas being explored include Property, Arts & Culture, New technology areas, and Marine.

Action 153: Continue to develop the coordinated approach to international reputation-building efforts across Government, including through the regular updating of key messages on Ireland's economic progress and trade, tourism and investment strengths and their communication by Ireland's Embassy Network.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DFAT, D/Taoiseach with relevant Department and agencies)

Update: Complete

Work to protect and enhance Ireland's reputation overseas continued through 2015. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) works on an ongoing basis with other Departments and State Agencies to ensure that key messages on Ireland's economic recovery are kept up-to-date and relevant. The Embassy network continues to be active in communicating these messages to international audiences, through engagement with the international media and influential decision-makers overseas. Over the St Patrick's Day period alone, there were 29 trade-focussed visits led by the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Ministers to 70 cities in 26 countries. The Taoiseach, the Tánaiste, Ministers and Irish diplomats participated in 149 high-level political meetings over the period, during which key messages were communicated. Key messages were also incorporated into Government remarks and speeches at 148 dedicated business events, attended by almost 18,000 Irish and international company representatives, as well as in engagements with over 500 representatives of international media over the period. The Government also took advantage of opportunities for messaging on Ireland's economic recovery and our trade, tourism and investment strengths during visits abroad by the President, the Taoiseach and Ministers throughout 2015.

Action 156: Implement the policies and actions outlined the International Education Strategy.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DES and EI)

Update: Complete

The policies and actions outlined the International Education Strategy (2010-2015) have been implemented insofar as was possible. These along with other relevant policies and actions will continue to be developed and implemented as appropriate in the new International Education Strategy (2016-2020) which is expected to be published in Quarter 1 of 2016.

Action 157: Establish and implement four new market initiatives to target specific end-

market opportunities matched to the Irish supply capabilities.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has implemented initiatives to target specific sectoral end-market opportunities to match the Irish supply capabilities in the Construction, precast concrete, waste water, and ocean energy sectors.

Action 159: Support Irish companies seeking to participate in procurement overseas through engagements for SMEs with International Financial Institutions.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Public procurement will continue to provide important opportunities in the domestic market for Irish companies, with an annual spend by the Government sector of €8 billion on goods and services. Supporting the participation of Irish firms in procurement overseas will provide an opportunity for innovative firms to win contracts, which can serve as reference points for competing in overseas markets.

Enterprise Ireland has assisted companies in seeking to participate in overseas procurement via a series of events with Enterprise Ireland clients and the Asian Development Bank and World Bank respectively. In addition, Enterprise Ireland has supported the work of Consulting Ireland, which provides ongoing supports for companies competing to win international contracts with IFIs.

Action 161: Develop metrics to assess the market during the procurement process to improve future procurement competitions.

Q4 Measure: Develop a technical solution to collect external market and supplier information. (DPER/OGP)

Update: Complete

The technical solution (SAS – Business Intelligence Solution) which was completed in Q4 has enabled the OGP to analyse massive amounts of data at high speeds. It also empowers users to visually explore data to uncover new insights.

Action 164: Grow the capacity and capability of Irish enterprises to successfully tender for

public procurement contracts, through the continued delivery of Meet the Buyer, Go-2-Tender, Advanced Go-2-Tender and Consortia building.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (InterTrade Ireland)

Update: Complete

InterTrade Ireland organised a series of conferences, workshops, seminars and other sessions during 2015 to assist companies in pursuing public procurement contracts. The two most significant events, in Belfast and Dublin, attracted a total of 1,200 potential suppliers.

Action 166: Examine ways of improving the supply of innovative products and services, where appropriate, in public procurement.

Q4 Measure: Assess innovation practices in public procurement other countries with a view to establishing potential learnings for Ireland. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland's Public Procurement Unit is continuously mapping the progress of the UK models of Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales) across all sectors and noting emerging trends as well as success stories. The definitive US SBIR programme with its 30 year plus history is a great source of learning in terms of enhancing SBIR Ireland.*

**SBIR Ireland is the dedicated national programme which enables public sector bodies to connect with innovative ideas and technology businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific Public Sector challenges and needs.

Action 169: Continue to undertake independent evaluations of enterprise agency programmes and initiatives including, for example, an evaluation of the LEAN Transform programme to start in Q4 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

Over the period 2012-2014, Fórfas - and subsequently the Strategic Policy Division of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) - completed a comprehensive programme of evaluations of supports provided by the State Enterprise Agencies across three thematic areas: Supports for Start Up and Entrepreneurship (2012); Supports for Research, Development and Innovation (2012-2013); and Supports for Business

Development (2013-2014).

In July 2015, DJEI published a report synthesising the overall findings from these evaluations with a view to drawing together the recommendations for future evaluations, learning's for future enterprise policy and considerations for optimum resource allocation. The report is available at: <https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Evaluations-of-State-Supports-for-Enterprise-Synthesis-Report-and-Conclusions.html#sthash.HbGlyPys.dpuf>

The evaluation of the LEAN Transform programme was re-scheduled to 2016 but was replaced in Q4 by the commencement of an ex-post evaluation of the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Research & Innovation (FP7), and an ex-ante evaluation of Horizon 2020.

Action 175: Continue to support the expansion and development of an international aviation services centre at Shannon.

Q4 Measure: Regeneration of Shannon Commercial Enterprise (formerly Shannon Development) properties as an enabler to attract new enterprises. (DTTAS)

Update: Complete

Shannon Commercial Enterprises (SCE) has completed some re-developments of existing properties for clients in the Shannon Free Zone and further similar work for other clients is on-going. New builds are also planned that will enhance SCE's property portfolio and attract new clients to the Zone.

Action 176: Explore with DJEI the development of a technical guidance service for business on standardisation and regulatory matters delivered through the Enterprise Development Agencies, Industry and Business Associations, and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) network.

Q4 Measure: Develop and implement a programme of engagements with LEO's to promote and support awareness of the business benefits of standards and standardization within the LEO network and their client companies. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

During the early part of 2015 NSAI provided a number of information sessions on standards and certification to the LEOs. DEJI, the LEOs and NSAI jointly produced and disseminated information on the steps to CE marking for steel fabricators when products became subject to mandatory compliance with European standards through the Construction Products Regulation. NSAI developed and provided information on the CE Marking for windows and doors to the relevant mandatory European standard and through the LEO network is promoting the NSAI training course on visual strength grading of structural timber to be

held next year. The course is aimed at those working in sawmills, timber merchants, builders providers, roof truss and timber frame manufacturers to become familiar with the standard and to provide for qualifications to grade structural timber and affix the CE marking. Based on these experiences, in 2016 NSAI will consider with Enterprise Ireland how best to strengthen future engagement with the LEOs.

Action 177: Commencing 2015 the NSAI will implement a 3 year development strategy with objectives to develop:

- capacity to adequately service large multinational Medical Device companies with a presence in Ireland
- capacity to adequately service indigenous Irish companies emerging within the industry
- a significant contributor to the advancement of patient safety within the European Union healthcare system through timely access for patients to safe new technology Medical Devices.

Q4 Measure: Provide local technical presence in the Galway regional office. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

NSAI has recruited two medical devices clinical assessors who are currently in training in the Dublin office with a view to their locating in Galway in early 2016.

Entrepreneurship

Progressing Entrepreneurship Policy Statement

Action 179: Examine the Entrepreneurship in the Schools activity in each LEO area and develop strategies to increase participation and impact.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, LEOs, DJEI)

Update: Complete

One of the key priorities for Ireland is to continue to grow our entrepreneurial base. To this end Ireland continues to promote the benefits of entrepreneurship and creating the right environment for entrepreneurial development has increased in importance.

A key focus of Enterprise Ireland is to drive and support the development of a seedbed of new vibrant Irish enterprises by successfully harnessing the creativity and innovation of home grown entrepreneurs.

State support for entrepreneurship, through Enterprise Ireland, is clearly focused on the ongoing creation of new entrepreneur led business entities with a solid base in innovation, intellectual capital and a capability of becoming internationally competitive within a short period of time.

To this end we need to broaden and deepen the engagement with schools across the country to encourage students to consider entrepreneurship as future career path.

The LEO Centre of excellence has conducted a strategic review of the entrepreneurship in schools programmes run by the LEOs this review has been undertaken in collaboration with the LEOs and a draft report to be issued shortly to DJEI for consideration. The report will outline key learning's and make a number of recommendations regarding the future of the programme.

Action 180: Continue to support female entrepreneurship via promotional and support programmes.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Overall Enterprise Ireland financial and advisory supports are equally available to both men and women. However, state development agencies have a role to play in supporting female entrepreneurs who wish to grow their businesses. In the past the overall landscape of support for female entrepreneurship was run through non tangible methods of support such as conferences and networking meetings.

Conferences and networking have proven and continue to be invaluable within the context of examination of the role female entrepreneurs in economic development. Allied to conferences and networks, there has been a move in recent years for more action oriented support mechanisms for women in business, to develop sustainable businesses.

In 2015 Enterprise Ireland is on track to support a record number of start-ups with female entrepreneurs in a lead role. This includes over 20 High Potential Start-ups (final year-end figures not yet available) and 38 winners of Competitive Start Fund Investments in 2015. This is an increase over 2014, which was itself a record year.

Action 181: Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur: Building on the successful launch and response to the IBYE (Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur) Programme during 2014, assess the impact and outcomes and develop an appropriate 2015 Programme.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI/LEOs)

Update: Complete

Programmes such as the IBYE (Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur) Programme aim to encourage this seedbed of new entrepreneurs to develop their ideas into viable businesses.

Supported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation through Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices, the Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE) competition is designed to seek out and support entrepreneurial talent across the country. Now in its second year, the competition was opened up this year to include young Irish entrepreneurs based abroad, looking to set up operations in Ireland. The competition had an overall investment fund of €2 million awarded to county winners and national winners. There were 31 local finals and eight regional finals involving 1,400 competitors, the 24 finalists, all aged between 18 and 30.

The 2015 finals, held at Google's European Headquarters in Dublin on Sunday, December 6th attended by 360 guests, came at the end of an eight month search, launched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. and Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation Mr. Richard Bruton T.D. through the Local Enterprise Offices. Through the course of this year's IBYE competition, 450 young entrepreneurs have participated in business boot camps, 92 local winners have won 'game changing' investments of between €10,000 and €20,000 for their businesses and hundreds more have been offered training and mentoring opportunities.

At the final event the Minister Richard Bruton T.D. named James Foody of Ayda as Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur (IBYE), winning a €50,000 investment fund for his business through Local Enterprise Office South Cork.

Foody, whose business is based in Glanmire and San Francisco, co-founded Ayda, a Female Health Tech company in 2015 after finishing his Masters in Biomedical Engineering Research. The company's mobile phone app is being designed to help women track fertility levels and a wearable fertility tracker solution is also being developed, for launch mid-2016. The Health Tech entrepreneur, who is supported by Local Enterprise Office South Cork, also took the 'Best Start Up' award at the competition.

Minister Bruton also announced the two other category winners at this year's awards: the 'Best New Idea' award and €20,000 investment prize went to Blaine Doyle of GlowDX in Kilkenny and the 'Best Established Business' award and €30,000 investment prize went to James Keogh from Rathwood in Wicklow.

Action 183: Support entrepreneurship by training more scientists in SFI supported research teams to launch their own businesses and supporting translation of research to commercial opportunities.

Q4 Measure: Arrange workshop promoting entrepreneurship in conjunction with the SFI

Research Centres. (SFI)

Update: Complete

A Founders' Forum was held in Dublin as part of the Start-Up Gathering. This was organised as a "think-in" for SFI Research Centre researchers and also researchers who have founded or co-founded an Irish spinout enterprise to share their experiences and discuss policies and challenges for start-ups in Ireland. Representatives from the research community who have been heavily involved in spinning out companies spent time in sharing ideas that could help to capitalise on successes in the innovation space. The forum focused on two main topics of discussion – 'Embedding Entrepreneurial Thinking in the Irish Research Ecosystem' and 'Enabling Entrepreneurial Endeavour'. This event marked the beginning of Startup Gathering 2015, helping to showcase Ireland's innovation ecosystem to the world.

SFI also organized an intellectual property workshop, bringing together a number of SFI Research Centre researchers and Irish investigators who had been successful in protecting intellectual property arising from research. An informal, invitation only informal workshop was assembled, including individuals who were identified as the top patent filers, and individuals who had a track record in commercializing research, from amongst the Irish HEI research community. The aim of the event was to learn from those with first-hand experience as to what does and does not work in the current research environment. Suggestions for change were also solicited. SFI considered the event to be an extremely successful exploration of IP expertise.

The Irish Photonic Integration SFI Research Centre (IPIC) in partnership with the NDRC is running a pre-accelerator Boot Camp. This will provide future photonics entrepreneurs with the opportunity to start exploring the commercial potential of their technology or idea with an experienced team of venture acceleration specialists and mentors. This pilot scheme may be picked up by other SFI Research Centres in 2016.

Q4 Measure: Fund Technology Innovation Development Awards to support research translation. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The TIDA course is designed to assist budding scientific entrepreneurs with the commercialization of a product. TIDA funding runs for a year and also supplies funding to attend the "Get Started Technology Programme"; a nine day course run by the DCU Ryan academy that covers entrepreneurial skills/mindsets, access to funding (venture capital, bank loans etc), IP and licensing, legal aspects of setting up a start-up, shareholdings, project management and associated plans, pitching your idea to investors, sales etc. Two courses were run this year, both in September. 39 TIDA awards were made in 2015, with grants initiating in 2016. Over 60 TIDA awards were made in 2014, with grants initiating in 2015.

Action 189: Support 130 new Entrepreneurs via the New Frontiers programme.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, LEOs, DSP)

Update: Complete

The **New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme** is Enterprise Ireland's national entrepreneur development programme for innovative, early-stage start-ups. Based in 14 campus incubation centres across the country this is a three-phased programme.

The first phase is focused in validating the market potential of the business idea. This is followed by phase 2 which is focused on business planning. Those businesses that emerge from phase 2 will in phase 3 be guided to the most relevant government supports that can best help them at their particular stage of development. Further incubation facilities and support may be available to participants for a limited period, in conjunction with ongoing support from the Incubation Centre Management team.

The programme is open to applications from a diversity of sectors including; food & consumer products, information & communication technology, engineering & electronics, medical devices, biotechnology, pharma, digital media, Cleantech/renewable energy and eligible internationally traded services.

In 2015 New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development programme (phase 2) supported 150 start-ups.

Action 190: Provide business development and financial supports to 185 High potential and early stage Startups.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Government's ambition is for Ireland to be among the most entrepreneurial nations in the world and acknowledged as a world-class environment in which to start and grow a business, growing the number of entrepreneurs and start-ups is hugely important for Ireland's economic development and the creation of jobs.

Two thirds of all new jobs come from start-ups in the first five years of existence, according to Central Bank data. That is why we have put start-ups right at the centre of our jobs plan – in Ireland we have great entrepreneurs and start-ups, we just don't have enough of them.

This action supports the national strategy on entrepreneurship as set out in the 2015 Action plan for jobs.

While final figures are not yet available it is already clear that the numbers of start-ups will exceed the target of 185 and a record number of start-ups will have received investment in

2015. Already the number of HPSUs* Supported exceeds the 2014 outturn. 2014 was in itself a record year.

* HPSUs are start-up businesses with the potential to develop an innovative product or service for sale on international markets and the potential to create 10 jobs and €1m in sales within 3 to 4 years of starting up.

Action 193: Under the new pilot Entrepreneur Partnering Programme, match founders and startups with leading enterprises in a region, which will act as hosts and mentors for up to one year to bring budding businesses to the next level of success.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, LEOs)

Update: Complete

The 2015 Action Plan for Jobs sets out a comprehensive range of measures to support entrepreneurship, SMEs and the self-employed in the areas of education and research, business environment and supports, innovation and access to finance, networks and mentoring, and, access to markets. Increasing entrepreneurial activity is a Disruptive Reform in the Action Plan for Jobs for 2015. Our key priority is driving implementation of the actions in the National Entrepreneurship Statement, which was published in October last year and to achieve the ambitious targets set out for a 25% increase in the number of start-ups and in the scaling and sustainability of new enterprises. The launch of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) was a major reform delivered in 2014 and the clients of the LEOs increased employment by 4,012 last year to 31,326 jobs throughout the country.

In 2015 the LEOs developed ambitious and robust county strategies and targets for start-ups, enterprise engagements and supports to be effective first-stop-shops for enterprise information and supports.

The launch of the Entrepreneur Partnering Programme was one of the actions undertaken in 2015. The aim of this programme is to match an early stage enterprise with an established company who will mentor and support the early stage start-up company through its initial development phase.

Action 194: Support a further cohort of new food entrepreneurs under Food Works 3 and promote market outlets for food start-up companies.

Q4 Measure: Food Works – Recruitment nationwide. (Board Bia/ EI/ Teagasc)

Update: Complete

Q4 activity has focused on the conclusion of the FW3 programme. Recruitment for FW4 will not be undertaken until 2016.

FW3 Update

Nine enterprises from an original eighteen progressed to the final phase of the programme which finished in early December. During quarter four, 5 workshops were delivered by experts on a wide range of topics from marketing, business, finance and technology and included experienced industry speakers. Each enterprise had a number of 1:1 meetings with their business advisor.

Highlights from this quarter –

- September visit to a food manufacturing plant in Dublin
- September visit to Food Technology Expo Milan Italy to include 5 Store visits
- October meetings with 2 major retail buyers in Dublin and Cork
- November meetings with a range of financial and investment institutions
- December presentation of business plans to a panel which includes external business experts

An independent review was completed on the 3 pilot Programmes and Food Works 2016 is currently being developed.

16 Foodworks Feasibility Projects approved as at 24/11/2015.

Q4 Measure: Food Academy - Delivery of programme. (Board Bia/ EI/ Teagasc)

Update: Complete

To date there have been over 500 participants on Food Academy Start, with 196 of these currently live within SuperValu stores on 120 bespoke Food Academy in-store fixtures. SuperValu estimates the value of sales through the Food Academy fixture at €14 million in 2015 and accounting for over 900 jobs.

Action 199: Develop an action programme of support for pre-investment HPSUs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

This action supports the national strategy on entrepreneurship as set out in the 2015 Action plan for jobs.

A new program of supports, called HPSU Start, is being introduced on a pilot basis during 2015. It includes a new business development program, SPRINT, which is provided in partnership with Dublin Business Innovation Centre. The first SPRINT program was piloted during Q4 and a number of programmes are planned for 2016.

Action 200: Develop an action programme of support for scaling post-investment HPSUs

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

This action supports the national strategy on entrepreneurship as set out in the 2015 Action plan for jobs.

Enterprise Ireland has launched a new 'Accelerate' programme to support newly funded HPSU's to develop and scale their businesses over the crucial first two years. The programme comprises Master classes, Interactive Founder learning groups, Clinics on areas of specific need and interest and an online peer to peer platform. The first cohort of 25 clients commenced the inaugural programme on November 2015.

Action 201: Promote Ireland internationally as a startup location and attract 15 new overseas startups to establish their business here.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

This action supports the national strategy on entrepreneurship as set out in the 2015 Action plan for jobs.

The program to attract international entrepreneurs and start-ups has moved up a notch during 2015, with a program to market Ireland as a great start up destination. The target of 15 new HPSU investments may be achieved (pending decisions at the final investment committee of the year), but will certainly be a record and an increase on the numbers in 2014.

In addition, for the first time, we launched a Competitive Start Fund (CSF) competition aimed at overseas entrepreneurs. It attracted high numbers of applicants for the ten investments available. Twenty start-ups were brought to Ireland to pitch and explore the start-up environment here to coincide with the Start-up Gathering. This pilot CSF program

for International Start-ups was deemed to be a success and it is planned to launch two competitions during 2016.

Action 202: Drive the establishment of 15 spin-out companies that are of EI HPSU quality.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

This action supports the national strategy on entrepreneurship as set out in the 2015 Action plan for jobs.

The Irish Knowledge Transfer system, developed by Enterprise Ireland, has been ranked first in Europe by the European Commission in its ability to generate commercial outputs from state funded research. Since its inception in 2007, and with specific commercialisation support from Enterprise Ireland, there has been a fivefold increase in the number of spin-out companies created annually (to around 30 p.a.). While the number of spin-out companies has increased substantially in recent years, and is now at internationally high levels, it is reasonable to expect that a significant proportion should be of a very high quality with excellent competitive advantages and strong export and employment prospects.

Enterprise Ireland's overarching goal with regard to spin-outs is to increase the number of these companies achieving High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) status so that they are in a position to achieve as much economic impact as possible.

Action 203: Devise an implementation plan following recommendations from the evaluation of European Space Agency Membership.

Target 5 new high performance entrant companies for European Space Agency (ESA) engagement.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Ireland has been a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) since its foundation in 1975. Irish industry is benefiting from Ireland's ESA membership through supporting in-company product development for the space market and commercial spin-out of space technologies into non-space markets.

Under the 2014 Action Plan For Jobs Enterprise Ireland commenced the development of an ESA Business Incubation Centre (BIC) in Ireland to provide an important opportunity to develop new companies in this economical advantageous area. Additional benefits to Irish industry by an ESA BIC include:

- Access to knowledge resources within ESA, knowledge of technical standards, system specifications as well as highly specific market knowledge of the space sector, including linkages to space system integrators;
- Access to finance to start-up companies.
- Allowing firms exploit the profile and enhanced credibility of being associated with ESA and “space”.

An implementation plan relating to the recommendations from the evaluation of European Space Agency membership has been devised. The target of 5 new entrant companies for ESA engagement will be exceeded in 2015.

Action 204: In collaboration with the European Space Agency manage the initialisation of the European Space Agency (ESA) Incubator.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The process to manage the European Space Agency incubator in Ireland has been initialised with a consortium selected, the necessary elements of funding in place, and the European Space Agency tendering process currently underway. The implementation is subject to the outcome of the European Space Agency tender evaluation board.

Action 205: SFI will target 34 licences and 6 spinouts from the twelve SFI Research Centres in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The Centres have generated 56 licences and 8 spin-out companies to end of H1 2015.

Action 210: Launch 6 Competitive Start Funds to support 85 Startups.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland’s Competitive Start Fund aims to accelerate the growth of start-up companies that have the capability to succeed in global markets. The fund is designed to enable those companies reach key commercial and technical milestones, for example:

Evaluate overseas market opportunities and reach firm conclusions regarding the viability of the proposed business; Build a prototype; Secure a reference site; Develop a market entry plan for exploiting international opportunities; Secure partnership deal or strategic alliance; Identify suitable channels to international markets, and Secure third party investment e.g. business angel, Venture Capital. All applications to the Competitive Start Fund must be made via the Enterprise Ireland's online application system during call open dates.

Nine CSF competitions were run during 2015 as follows; 3 open calls, one call for each of the following; Regions, Graduates, Female entrepreneurs, Design, Manufacturing and Agri-tech, Overseas.

Action 211: Build on the success achieved to date on the Competitive Feasibility Funds and launch 4 targeted funds during the year in the West, Midlands, MidEast, and one sectoral fund.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Action Plan for Jobs supports enterprise growth and job creation in every region of the country. The pace of progress in the regions, especially those with the highest unemployment levels, needs to be accelerated through targeted supports for enterprise and job creation. Vibrant and competitive regions are important, not just from an economic perspective, but also from a societal point of view. Growing the economic base of regions supports social cohesion and provides opportunities for young people in particular to continue to live and work in their local communities.

Enterprise Ireland regularly offers feasibility funding for business start-ups in various sectors and geographic regions. The objective of the Competitive Feasibility Funds is 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 (HPSU). The purpose of the Feasibility Grant is to enable the applicant and Enterprise Ireland to reach firm conclusions regarding the project's viability and set out investor-ready plans and financials associated with developing and commercialising the product or service on international markets. The Fund is open to manufacturing and internationally traded services business and designed to enable start-up companies reach key commercial and technical milestones.

During 2015 Enterprise Ireland ran 4 targeted Competitive Feasibility Funds one each in the following regions: North West; West, Midlands/Mid-East along with one sectoral fund focused on the Agri-sector. The latter, which was built on the success of the regionally targeted Competitive Feasibility Funds, was aimed at companies that produce products and

services directed for sale to the wider Agricultural Sector.

The Competitive Feasibility Fund for the West Region received 37 eligible applications of which 17 applicants were invited to 'Pitch' to a Panel of Enterprise Ireland & Industry Experts. In total 13 applicants were considered and approved funding. North West region 8 eligible applications, of which 5 were invited to 'pitch' their idea to a panel of Industry experts of which 3 were approved funding. Similarly the AgriFund CFF received 24 eligible applications of which 11 were invited to 'pitch' their idea to a panel of Industry experts, Teagasc and Enterprise Ireland. In total 6 were approved for funding. The Midlands / Mid-East Fund launched mid-December 2015 are currently underway with the final approvals due early in 2016.

Action 213: Increase the level of start up support in Ireland by supporting commercially managed accelerators.

Q4 Measure: In light of this examination, maximise the supports available through viable accelerators. (EI)

Update: Complete

The national policy statement on entrepreneurship sets out six key elements that make up the ecosystem for entrepreneurship in Ireland one of which is Networks and mentoring. It is under this element that Action 213(ii) will support the development and strengthening of the entrepreneurship environment.

Enterprise Ireland is awaiting formal confirmation of approval from the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. On receipt of this approval Enterprise Ireland will issue a call for expressions of interest. This may be progressed until early January.

Action 216: Implement a structured programme to support new HPSU's to access new overseas markets and customers.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Context: This action supports the national strategy on entrepreneurship as set out in the 2015 Action plan for jobs.

A structured engagement process has been implemented for HPSU's targeting the UK and US as their initial target markets (95% + of HPSU's). The engagement comprises quarterly progress review meetings with overseas Marketing Advisors where actions for

the company and EI are agreed and committed to. Both parties work in partnership to ensure that the companies' market and customer development goals are achieved

Competitiveness

Easier to do Business

Action 223: Introduce an on-line Private Security Authority licence renewal and payment facility for businesses.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Justice and Equality)

Update: Complete

The PSA has advised that work on the online system is ongoing.

Action 225: Roll out the mandatory filing of financial statements that accompany tax returns inline eXtensible Business Reporting Language (iXBRL).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Revenue is rolling out mandatory filing of iXBRL Financial Statements for Corporation Tax Payers in stages.

Phase1 effective 1 October 2013: The first group, cases dealt with in the Revenue's Large Cases Division (LCD), are required to file iXBRL Financial Statements in respect of all Corporation tax returns submitted on or after 1 October 2013.

Phase 2 effective 1 October 2014: This extended iXBRL mandatory filing to all Corporation Tax Payers other than those meeting all three of the criteria below.

To be excluded from Phase 2 filing obligation, corporation tax filers have to meet all three of the following criteria:

- The Balance Sheet Total of the company does not exceed €4.4 million;
- The amount of the turnover of the company does not exceed €8.8 million; and
- The average number of persons employed by the company does not exceed 50.

Preliminary figures show that to date Revenue have received around 14,000 iXBRL returns for accounting periods ending in 2014. The bulk of these returns were filed in September and October 2015 (by companies whose accounting period ended on Dec 31st last year). We are in the process of reviewing this information. Further analysis is required before a

decision is made on whether to further extend the iXBRL filing obligation.

Action 229: Develop and introduce new e-filing functionality in the designs area which will make it easier for business to apply to register industrial designs in Ireland and will be in line with best international practice.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, Patents Office)

Update: Complete

In recent years the Patents Office has been actively engaged in improving its online services to the public and to Irish business. Design e-filing which was launched in December 2015, followed on from the introduction of Trade Mark e filing, TM View and Design View in 2014. All are user friendly online tools which make it easier for the public and business to search Trade mark and Design Registers and to file trade mark and design applications online via the Patents Office website. All these tools have been developed in line with best international practice and have been implemented in co-operation with OHIM (the EU Trade Mark and designs Office) and with assistance from the OHIM co-operation fund

Action 230: Develop an e-learning module, and work directly with SMEs on their chemicals exposure assessments and marketing.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HSA)

Update: Complete

The introductory module will be available on the E-learning website in January 2016 and covers the basic concepts of carrying out a chemical risk assessment, with a particular focus on identifying chemical hazards in the workplace using hazard labels and safety data sheets (SDS) as sources of information. This is part of a range of supports to SMEs to enable them to use chemicals safely and better advise their customers on the specific chemical hazards and exposure risks.

Action 231: Extend the number of HSA health and safety e-learning modules and increase user numbers, providing more cost effective solutions to the training of employees, managers and students.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HSA)

Update: Complete

Chemical Safety in the Workplace' (as per above Action 230) is on schedule to go live in January 2016. 'Managing Bullying complaints at Work for managers' is on schedule to go live in January 2016. 'Workplace Transport Safety: Driving for Work - for Employers' is under development. All actions planned for 2016 are complete.

Action 238: Use the HSA Chemicals' Helpdesk which is focused toward SME support to offer a broader array of supports including hands-on advice.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HSA)

Update: Complete

The Chemicals Help Desk provided a workshop for the SME sector on chemical supply, use and transport in Athlone on Nov 26th. Over 100 participants attended and feedback on usefulness of the event was extremely positive. Plans are underway to hold further events in Cork and possibly Dublin in 2016.

Action 239: Extend BeSMART to the construction and agriculture sectors, facilitating the planned employment growth in these sectors by reducing the administrative cost of compliance and making a real impact, on reducing accidents, increasing compliance but also cost savings.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HSA)

Update: Complete

The construction module of BeSMART was launched in May 2015. The agribusiness module had its initial launch to the Agribusiness sector on November 16th and the Farm Safety Partnership on December 9th. Minister Nash will formally launch the agribusiness module on January 27th 2016.

Action 244: Create a national IT based Road Management and Utility System, which when deployed will deliver:

- A streamlined road opening licence application processes;
- Significant potential for cost reductions both for local authorities and industry;
- More efficient rollout of utility infrastructure including broadband; and
- More efficient road management.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DTTAS, RMO, LGMA, Las)

Update: Complete

An IT-based Road Management System (MapRoad) has been developed. This is a centralised web based system which allows utility companies (and other organisations) to apply on-line for road opening licenses and road works permits. With the exception of Irish Water, all utility applications are now online rather than paper based. Discussions are ongoing with Irish Water.

Institutionalising the Drive for Competitiveness

Action 246: Following on from the action in 2014 to institutionalise the drive for competitiveness, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, and other Cabinet Committees as appropriate, will continue to monitor progress on competitiveness issues identified by the National Competitiveness Council and others and consider further actions to improve Ireland's international competitiveness and consider initiatives to make it easier to do business in Ireland. The Cabinet Committee(s) will be supported by the relevant Senior Officials Group and the APJ Monitoring Committee in this work.

Q4 Measure: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, and other Cabinet Committees as appropriate, will monitor progress on competitiveness issues, and consider actions to improve Ireland's performance. (Department of Taoiseach, All Departments)

Update: Complete

The National Competitiveness Council briefed the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs at its December meeting.

Enhancing Firm-level Productivity

Action 248: Support 760 participants on short course Management Development Programmes and 185 on long course Management Development Programmes.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

As part of the Disruptive Reform entitled Increasing Entrepreneurial Activity a number of sector specific programmes have been progressed in 2015. Enterprise Ireland suite of long and short customised management development programmes, delivered in collaboration with leading international providers, aim to inspire business leaders, to equip them with the tools and techniques to operate more effectively, and to achieve real business results in international markets.

Total participants on Management Development Programmes is on target to be achieved. Enterprise Ireland exceeded the long course target with 156% achieved and achieved 90% of short term target. Programmes commenced and concluded during the year include Leadership for Growth, Innovation for Growth, Platform for Growth, Leadership for Growth for CFOs, International Selling Programme, Sprint, Accelerate, Access Silicon Valley, Excel at Exporting series of workshops, and a number of workshops around family business, boards in SME companies, venture funding and strategy.

Action 249: Complete the pilot Platform 4 Growth online learning management development programme involving 100 companies and roll out a revised offering to participants in 2015. (Numbers will be subject to analysis of the Pilot).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

In order to maximise the reach of Enterprise Ireland's management development programmes, Enterprise Ireland, in 2015, piloted the Platform 4 Growth blended learning management development programme involving 130 participants. Enterprise Ireland has reviewed the impact of this blended learning programme and is now developing a revised offer for roll out in early 2016, incorporating the lessons learned from the pilot. It will form a key part of Enterprise Ireland's strategy to cascade out the management and development training to a wider set of clients.

Platform 4 Growth is a management development programme specifically designed to challenge SME's to scale and provides support to Irish companies that are serious about growing their business. Platform4Growth offers a combination of online and face to face delivery which gives companies the flexibility to undertake a growth journey to meet their specific requirements at a given time.

Platform 4 Growth is centred on six Growth Modules and delivered via a combination of online content and virtual classrooms as well as face to face learning in a group situation. Participants are also supported by significant peer learning and access to Growth Advisors to assist in completing a Growth Action Plan

Action 250: Provide Innovation 4 Growth program to 15 companies in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland ran Phase 2 of the Innovation 4 Growth programme with 19 companies

and 55 participants over the course of 2015. This followed on from a Phase 1 I4G programme in the latter part of 2014.

The Innovation 4 Growth Programme is specifically designed to meet the needs of ambitious and entrepreneurial Irish companies seeking to use innovation as a way to unlock opportunities in the marketplace. Targeting management teams, this development programme will fast-track companies through an end-to-end innovation learning and practice journey and support the delivery of one or more innovation initiatives in each participating company. Programme participants will be assigned a business adviser coach for the duration of the programme who will support the development of each company's innovation initiative from concept to execution.

Action 251: To support the ongoing growth and transformation of foreign subsidiaries in Ireland provide IDA clients with access to significant EI Management Development Programs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA, EI)

Update: Complete

IDA Ireland clients are provided with access to significant Enterprise Ireland Management Development Programmes. To date in 2015 two IDA Ireland clients have participated on Enterprise Ireland programmes, such as Leadership for Growth and International Selling Programme.

Action 252: Establish a Working Group to produce proposals aimed at firms in Ireland maximising the advantages of Irish, European or International Standards and Certification in order to strengthen their management capability and international competitiveness.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

NSAI established an internal working group which programmed a series of road shows/morning briefings to take place countrywide to promote the benefits for business of using the new updated ISO quality management standards, ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015. Nearly 800 people attended the events, which were held from June to November, in Limerick, Cork (2), Waterford, Galway (2), Sligo and Dublin (3).

Action 253: To support Construction Sector Productivity, implement a Building Information

Modelling (BIM) staged development programme to support companies advancing to Level-2-BIM capability leading to increased business performance, productivity and competitiveness improvements and facilitate access to emerging international opportunities.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

An economy's productivity performance is the ultimate determinant of success and productivity offers significant potential to enhance competitiveness and living standards as it allows for sustainable pay increases without eroding cost competitiveness. The ramping up of world trade as we move on from the global economic crisis presents the potential for Ireland's productivity performance to be boosted by the increased competition and the diffusion of technology and skills.

Enhancing Firm-level Productivity at a sectoral level will strengthen Ireland's overall economy's productivity performance. To support Construction Sector Productivity Enterprise Ireland has implemented a Building Information Modelling (BIM) staged development programme to support companies advancing to Level-2-BIM capability leading to increased business performance, productivity and competitiveness improvements and facilitate access to emerging international opportunities.

Building Information Modelling (BIM) client offers (BIM Enable and BIM Implement) were officially launched in December 2014. The pre-populated pipeline of clients has been informed and applications have been submitted and processed (BIM Enable: x 14; BIM Implement x 5). There is a healthy pipeline of queries from client in relation to both support programmes and department Development Advisors are communicating BIM offers to the relevant client base on a per-case basis.

Decreasing the Cost of Doing Business

Action 262: Review the regulatory framework for airport charges.

Q4 Measure: Completion of Review. (DTTAS)

Update: Complete

The consultant's independent report was completed in December 2015. Following on from the report DTTAS will, in 2016, undertake a public consultation, finalise and publish a policy on airport charges regulation and make preparations for any necessary changes to legislation.

Regulating for a Better Future

Action 265: Continue the implementation of actions outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation in the Energy, Communications and Broadcasting sectors.

Q4 Measure: Initiate process to introduce legislative changes to provide for the setting of a hierarchy of policy objectives (with national objectives prioritised), regulatory mandate reviews and revised performance and accountability frameworks (in the case of the e. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

In the Energy sector, the Government's White Paper commits to review the legal and institutional framework for the regulation of electricity and natural gas markets including the CER's mandate, in line with ongoing Government sectoral economic regulation requirements.

In the Broadcasting sector, it should be noted that the Broadcasting Act 2009 already makes the following provision:

- Section 30(1) of the Broadcasting Act 2009 provides that: 'In the interests of the proper and effective regulation of the broadcasting sector and the formulation of policy applicable to such proper and effective regulation, the Minister may issue such policy communications to the Authority as he or she considers appropriate to be followed by the Authority in the performance of its functions. The Authority in performing its functions shall have regard to any such communications.'
- Section 29 (f) of the 2009 Act also obliges the BAI, when drawing up its Statement of Strategy, to take account of any policy communication under s. 30.

These provisions provide the necessary mechanism for the setting of a hierarchy of policy objectives that may result from any Ministerial review of sectoral policy.

In the Communications sector, the European Commission is shortly embarking on a major review of the existing EU Telecoms Regulatory Framework. This is expected to involve significant potential changes to current regulatory rules and will likely include consequential changes to the mandate of national regulatory authorities and how they operate.

DCENR has finalised a review of National Spectrum Policy and this will be published shortly.

In relation to **performance and accountability frameworks**, the Commission for Energy Regulation, ComReg and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland all produce Strategy Statements and Annual Reports which are laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas. Details are provided below:

In the Energy sector, the CER Strategic Plan 2014-2018 was published on the 1st October

2014. It sets out the CER's proposed new vision, mission and strategic goals for the period. A statutory footing in the Electricity Regulation Act for this requirement will be provided for at the next suitable legislative opportunity.

Under Schedule 1, Section 25 (b), of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999, as amended, CER is obliged to present its annual report and audited accounts within 6 months of the end of the year to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the report of the Commission in relation to its functions to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

Under Section 25 (c) of Schedule 1 of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 the Commission must "not later than 30 November in each year make a report to the Minister in relation to its proposed work programme for the following year and the Minister shall cause copies of the report to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas as soon as practicable".

In the Communications sector, the Communications Regulations Act 2002, as amended, makes the following provision:

11.—Subject to this Act, the Commission shall be independent in the exercise of its functions

31.—(1) The Commission shall draw up and adopt a strategy statement reflecting its statutory functions.

(2) In drawing up a strategy statement under *subsection (1)*, the Commission shall distinguish between its functions in relation to electronic communications, management of radio frequency spectrum and postal services.

(3) A strategy statement shall—

(a) be adopted within 6 months of the establishment day and every 2 years thereafter, and

(b) take into account the objectives set out in [section 12](#) and any directions under [section 13](#).

(4) The Commission shall present a copy of a strategy statement to the Minister and to such committees of either or both Houses of the Oireachtas as the Minister may, from time to time, direct.

(5) Prior to the adoption of a strategy statement and its presentation to the Minister, the Commission shall undertake a public consultation process on a draft of the strategy statement.

31B.—(1) Before the end of each financial year of the Commission, the Commission shall—

(a) prepare an action plan setting out the principal activities that it proposes to undertake

during the ensuing financial year, and

(b) present the plan to the Minister and arrange for a copy of the plan to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

(2) The action plan shall segregate the relevant activities according to the Commission's functions relating to—

(a) regulating electronic communications,

and

(b) managing the radio frequency spectrum,

and

(c) regulating postal services.

(3) In preparing the action plan, the Commission shall have regard to its current strategy statement.

(4) As soon as practicable after preparing an action plan, the Commission shall publish it in a form and manner that will enable members of the public to have access to it.

31C.—(1) Before the end of each financial year of the Commission, the Commission shall—

(a) prepare a financial forecast showing estimates of the Commission's revenue and expenditure for the ensuing financial year in relation to the activities referred to in the Commission's action plan for that year, and

(b) present the forecast to the Minister.

(2) In preparing its annual financial forecast, the Commission shall estimate the amounts of revenue expected to be derived, and the amount of expenditure expected to be made, in respect of each of its functions relating to electronic communications, managing the radio frequency spectrum and postal services.

(3) As soon as practicable after preparing its annual financial forecast, the Commission shall publish it in a form and manner that will enable members of the public to have access to it.”.

34.—(1) The chairperson of the Commission shall, whenever required by a Committee of Dáil Éireann established under the Standing Orders of Dáil Éireann to examine and report to Dáil Éireann on the appropriation accounts and reports of the Comptroller and Auditor

General, give evidence to that Committee on—

- (a) the regularity and propriety of the transactions recorded or required to be recorded in any book or other record of account subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General which the Commission is required by or under statute to prepare,
- (b) the economy and efficiency of the Commission in the use of its resources,
- (c) the systems, procedures and practices employed by the Commission for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of its operations, and
- (d) any matter affecting the Commission referred to in a special report of the Comptroller and Auditor General under [section 11](#) (2) of the [Comptroller and Auditor General \(Amendment\) Act, 1993](#) , or in any other report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (in so far as it relates to a matter specified in *paragraph (a), (b) or (c)*) that is laid before Dáil Éireann.

(2) From time to time, and whenever so requested, the Commission shall account for the performance of its functions to a Committee of one or both Houses of the Oireachtas.

In the [Broadcasting](#) sector, Section 38 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 requires an annual report to be drawn up, which must be laid before the Houses. Subsection (7) states that the Annual Report shall include information in such form and regarding such matters as the Minister may direct.

Section 30 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 allows for policy communications to be made and laid before the Houses.

Q4 Measure: Review of Progress. (D/Taoiseach)

Update: Complete

Work has continued on implementing the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation under the aegis of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Infrastructure and Climate Change.

Some key sectoral developments highlighted include;

- The publication of the National Aviation Policy;
- The publication of the Energy White Paper;
- Agreement of Memorandum of Understanding on Shared Services between BAI and ComReg

Research, Development and Innovation

Action 269: Support 825 Industry-Led Collaborative research projects.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland supports businesses to identify and engage with collaborative research partners and industry networks to encourage all parties to work with other like-minded companies or exploring what knowledge exists in Higher Education Institutes which can enrich their business.

Enterprise Ireland supported in excess of 870 Industry-Led Collaborative research projects in 2015.

Enterprise Ireland's Industry led collaboration supports helps companies to find other companies with similar research agendas and help them to collaborate to share resources and knowledge. The programmes Enterprise Ireland offers to support collaborative research with other companies include:

Technology Centres: The investment in Technology Centres is a joint initiative between Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland allowing Irish companies and multinationals to work together on research projects in collaboration with research institutions.

Technology Centres are collaborative entities established and led by industry. They are resourced by highly-qualified researchers associated with research institutions who are empowered to undertake market focussed strategic R&D for the benefit of industry.

Enterprise Ireland R&D Fund: Under the R&D Fund companies can get a collaboration bonus of up to 15% where there is collaboration between two companies on an R&D project.

Knowledge Transfer Ireland which enables business to leverage the commercial potential of Irish research and innovation. Using the KTI web portal, companies can more easily find technology, expertise, IP and facilities available in Ireland's higher education institutions and State research organisations. They can also find information about how to engage with these institutions including access to resources such as Practical Guides and Model Agreements.

Action 270: Pilot scheme for the extension of innovation vouchers for food companies.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

Pilot scheme being progressed and expected to be launched in 2016.

Action 271: Further scale up of SFI Research Centres through the SFI Spokes Programme. Target one or more funded spokes with at least €1 million industry cash contributions.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Nine SFI Research Centre Spokes awards have been made prior to and within 2015, to a cumulative value of €22.9m

Action 273: Expand the SFI Partnerships scheme to further develop industry and research collaboration in key areas.

Q4 Measure: Develop additional public-private partnerships and initiate a jointly funded activity of scale with a major industry. (SFI)

Update: Complete

SFI partnerships take two broad forms; the strategic partnerships where companies and academic groups submit a joint proposal to SFI for funding (Strategic Partnership Programme), and the Competitive Joint Partnership Programme, where a company, in collaboration with SFI, puts out a call to the scientific community to address specific problems. Pfizer and SFI put out a Competitive Joint Partnership call in 2014, from which 5 projects were funded. Another joint call was issued in 2015; proposals have been reviewed and it is anticipated that approximately 3 awards may be made very shortly. Pfizer is also keen to engage in subsequent programmatic calls of this nature, which may relate to their ambitious development of R&D facilities and manufacturing of novel biologics at Pfizer's Grange Castle site. This scheme was shortlisted for the Pharma Innovation Award in 2014, and is cited globally within Pfizer as an outstanding initiative.

Four Strategic Partnership awards were announced at the end of 2015. These are:

- 1) ESIPP, Professor Mark O'Malley, UCD, Energy Systems Integration. Industry consortium (Eirgrid, ESB, Glen Dimplex, Ervia, AIB) and a philanthropic donation, plus a €7.1m award from SFI (>€11m total).
- 2) Prof Shane O'Mara, TCD and NUIG: Role of opioid system in aetiology of psychiatric disorders. Industry partner: Alkermes, €1.06m award from SFI
- 3) Prof Kingston Mills, TCD, Immunology, Industry partner: Abbvie, €600k award from SFI
- 4) Prof. Orla Hardiman, TCD, and the TCD Foundation (philanthropic): Project MinE Ireland:

sequencing and analysis of 1,050 Irish genomes to identify the causes of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. €1.05m

Q4 Measure: Explore opportunities to allow Irish Scientists in SFI Research Centres to work with international research centres of repute to strengthen international competitiveness. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Two strategic partnerships of this sort have been funded via the US-Ireland partnership. The first award is between Connect and IPIC in the ROI, the University of Ulster in NI and the NSF engineering research centre CIAN in the USA. The second involves SSPC and UL partnering the pharmaceutical research centre CSOPS (Rutgers University in the US) and the Queen's University Belfast School of Pharmacy. The research Centres have secured a cumulative €57m in H2020 / EU funding to date, consisting of 76 participations and 23 co-ordinations in major EU initiatives. Many EU awards are internationally collaborative in nature and consist of multiple cross-EU partnerships.

Action 277: Develop research skills and capacity in key areas of opportunity or need including Sustainable Food, Energy and Manufacturing to improve Irish competitiveness.

Q4 Measure: Explore means of funding medium scale research groups, to act as a feeder mechanism for SFI Research Centres programme. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Sustainable Food: Four awards in the areas of Food for Health and/or Sustainable Food Production have start dates of 2015; these comprise two Spokes awards (APC and INFANT), an ERC development award and an Investigator grant, with a cumulative value of €9.7m.

Energy: The SFI funded MaREI (Marine Renewable Energy Ireland) research centre has been in operation since 2013. MaREI has played a pivotal role in setting up the Galway Bay Cabled Ocean Energy Testbed & Observatory (partners: MaREI/UCC, SEAI, SmartBay, DCU). This test bed was launched in July 2015; more details are available via the SmartBay website: (<http://www.smartbay.ie/Home.aspx>).

MaREI has been awarded €587k as Co-Coordinator on an H2020 grant (INNOWAVE; in collaboration between the Centre for Ocean Energy Research, NUIM (part of MaREI) and Aquamarine Power (Edinburgh, Belfast, European Marine Energy Centre, Orkney).

MaREI was awarded a Spoke grant in 2015: OM-MaREI; Observation and Monitoring of Marine Renewable Energy Infrastructure (partners: SFPC, CIL, BCB Int. Ltd, IAA, Aer Lingus, Brickman Consult, IMGs, RPS Ltd, value: €4.7m).

Partnership awards in 2015 include the Energy Systems Integration Partnership (ESIPP)

which has a total value of greater than €11m (SFI contribution €7.1m; the remainder is to be contributed by an industry consortium (Eirgrid, ESB, Glen Dimplex, Ervia, AIB) and a philanthropic donation. Since the launch of the US-Ireland partnership, 6 awards have been made in the area of Energy and Sustainability.

25 awards have been initiated in the Energy area in 2015; these comprise 15 TIDA awards, 3 Investigator awards, 3 Industry Fellowships, an Advance award, the Centres Programme award to iCrag, a Spokes award to MaREI and an ERC Development award. The cumulative value of these awards is €35.5m. Many of these awards, particularly the Investigator, TIDA, ERC Development and US-Ireland schemes, have the capacity to foster the growth of medium scale research groups, which can then feed into the SFI Research Centres programme, for which a further call is to be made in 2016.

Advanced Manufacturing: An award was offered in the area of Advanced Manufacturing, under the Research Professorships Scheme, in November 2015.

Seven awards in the area of Advanced Manufacturing (a US-Ireland Partnership planning grant, 2 TIDA awards and 4 Industry Fellowships) have a start date of 2015; their cumulative value is €484k.

Q4 Measure: Support and develop early-career research leaders through the 2015 Career Development Award (CDA), Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG) & President of Ireland Young Researcher Award (PIYRA) programmes. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The 2015 CDA call has been launched; the deadline for submission of full proposals was December 10th, 2015. Three CDA proposals awarded in previous calls were initiated in 2015; these had a cumulative value of €1.8m. The 2015 SIRG call for full proposals was 26th November, 2015. Three SIRG proposals and two SIRG supplements awarded previously were started in 2015; these had a cumulative value of €1.6m. PIYRA currently operates on a rolling call basis, but is closed for future applications on December 21st, 2015. It will be replaced in Q1, 2016 by the Future Research Leaders programme.

Action 278: Enhance Industry Engagement with Ireland's Research System to increase national competitiveness.

Q4 Measure: Establish potential for MNCs based in Ireland to engage in new opportunities for industry-academic research collaboration in keeping with the Government's economic priorities. (SFI, IDA, EI)

Update: Complete

A number of different schemes are relevant in this regard; SFI are enabling current MNC-

academic research collaborations. The Competitive Joint Partnership between Pfizer (MNC) and SFI in 2015 resulted in a number of proposals being reviewed; it is anticipated that approximately 3 awards may be made very shortly. 5 awards made in 2014 are currently also active. This scheme was shortlisted for the Pharma Innovation Award in 2014, and is cited globally within Pfizer as an outstanding initiative. Pfizer is keen to engage in subsequent programmatic calls of this nature, which may relate to the further development and manufacturing of novel biologics at Pfizer's Grange Castle site. It is anticipated that successful relationships established between Pfizer and various researchers as a result of these awards will develop further in future years.

Similarly, the following Strategic Partnerships have been funded in 2015; all involve MNC partners:

- 1) ESIPP, Professor Mark O'Malley, UCD, Energy Systems Integration. Industry consortium (Eirgrid, ESB, Glen Dimplex, Ervia, AIB) and a philanthropic donation, plus a €7.1m award from SFI (>€11m total).
- 2) Prof Shane O'Mara, TCD and NUIG: Role of opioid system in aetiology of psychiatric disorders. Industry partner: Alkermes, €1.05m award from SFI
- 3) Prof Kingston Mills, TCD, Immunology, Industry partner: Abbvie, €600k award from SFI
- 4) Prof. Orla Hardiman and the TCD Foundation; Project MinE Ireland: sequencing and analysis of 1,050 Irish genomes to identify the causes of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. €1.05m

With respect to the 12 SFI centres, 112 contracts signed by the Centres and industry partners are in collaboration with MNCs.

Five Spokes awards, involving collaborations between the Centres and industry partners, were started in 2015, with a total SFI input of €13.2m. A further award of approximately €650,000 will be made to INFANT before the end of 2015. The 5 Spokes already funded involved the following SFI Centres; the APC Institute, INFANT, an APC/INFANT collaboration, MaREI and SSPC; industry and other partners included Rusal-Aughinish, Johnson & Johnson, Mead Johnson, SFPC, CIL, BCB Int. Ltd, IAA, Aer Lingus, Brickman Consult, IMGS, RPS Ltd, Lincor Solutions, UCL Institute of Child Health and AbbVie.

Finally, 34 Industry Fellowships, which allow individual researchers to work within industry for 1-2 years, were made in 2015. Approximately 60 of these awards have been made in total to date, involving approximately 50 companies.

A restructuring within SFI has created a Partnership Division which focuses specifically on partnerships with industry. This team proactively and reactively engage with industry to increase industry-academic applications, awards, and collaborations.

Action 280: Host a large research collaboration and spin-out investor event (e.g. Innovation Showcase /Big Ideas).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The ultimate goal of the Showcase is to achieve significant economic impacts through increased engagement between the public research system and industry.

The second Innovation Showcase took place on the Tuesday 8th December in the Convention Centre Dublin. There were in excess of 70 entities exhibiting on the day and some 2,000 delegates attended, which provided a major boost to the national effort to enable commercial collaborations between industry and research teams in HEIs. This DJEI event was led by Enterprise Ireland in consultation with Science Foundation Ireland and IDA Ireland. The strap line this year was “discover the supports to grow your business”.

Following on from last year’s successful event, the event included the following;

- Delegates/Industry discovered the wide range of supports available for collaboration with the research community.
- 3 keynote industry speakers from Ceramicx, Accenture and IBM discussed how their use of supports for research and innovation has improved their businesses.
- 12 spin-out companies from research supported by Enterprise Ireland presented their “Big Ideas” centre stage, illustrating the high quality of research happening in Ireland’s Higher Education Institutions.
- A newly updated version of the Directory of Research Centres and Technology Centres, detailing the range of supports available to facilitate collaboration with the research community, was launched at the event.
- Government announced the new “Innovation 2020” strategy at the event

The ultimate goal of the 2015 event was to increase the number and quality of applications to State funded programmes for innovation and R&D from companies based in Ireland and to promote and support investment opportunities for Enterprise Ireland HPSUs from research.

Action 284: Drive the national Horizon 2020 European engagement agenda.

Q4 Measure: Win €150m in research funding for Ireland under EU Horizon 2020 in 2015. (National Support Network for H2020, HLG H2020, Government Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

Final data for 2015 will not be available until mid-2016. Based on the most recently available data released by the EU Commission, Ireland had up to May 2015 achieved success to a value of €180 million. The cumulative target for 2014 and 2015 is €250 million, we are on track to meet this target

Q4 Measure: Identify opportunities for greater Irish participation in ESFRI projects. (SFI, IRC, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The ESFRI Roadmap was launched in 2014, with submissions to the scheme open until March 31st, 2015. The marine infrastructure and therapeutics manufacturing areas were selected with regard to submission to the ESFRI Roadmap; these proposals are currently under review.

The first proposal, Research Infrastructure in Therapeutics Manufacture - IgNITE, is co-ordinated by the SSPC SFI Research Centre, with NIBRT and PMTC. The network comprises partners from 7 member states (Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, UK and Ireland) and is intended to provide multi-scale facilities as test-beds for pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical (therapeutics) manufacturing. The proposal addresses the complete manufacturing process - scientific, engineering, regulatory and supply chain. The second network; Marine Renewables Infrastructure Network for Emerging Energy Technologies – MARINERG-I, is co-ordinated by the MaREI Centre, with partners from 6 member states (Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, UK, Germany). This proposal is intended to improve testing facilities to accelerate the development of marine renewable energy, including wave energy and tidal energy facilities, water turbine test centres and data archive facilities. Submissions with respect to smart farming (precision agriculture) are also under consideration.

SFI has committed to supporting H2020 wins through Joint Transnational Initiatives and ‘Big Bids’ fund, and a Brussels Events Fund of up to €50,000, run through the Conferences and Workshops Scheme. The Investigators programme in 2015 was aligned in areas of common interest with H2020; these proposals are currently under review. SFI anticipates making approximately 65 H2020 Catalyst awards in Q4 2015; these are intended to support preliminary activities that seek to create future strategies, build consortia & teams for future H2020 applications, including those to infrastructure schemes. Preliminary activities include workshops, symposia and face-to-face meetings with potential consortium partners.

Other updates of relevance to Ireland’s participation in H2020 include the fact that four Irish

universities have been listed amongst the top 50 H2020 performers for the first time (<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20151029192346710#.Vjcl55ka3bl.email>). Similarly, Ireland's success in H2020 bids to date has exceeded successes in FP7, at least in monetary terms; current drawdown rates average €2.8M per week, whereas FP7 drawdown rates averaged €1m per week (first interim report_H2020).

Action 285: Develop initiatives to support researcher careers and enhance applications to Horizon 2020.

Q4 Measure: Launch a 'New Horizons' funding initiative to enable researchers develop the track record required for success in the ERC and Societal Challenges dimensions of Horizon 2020 - outcomes. (Irish Research Council)

Update: Complete

Call implemented and outcome announced in November. 17 awards totalling some €2m awarded, comprising 11 Starting Grants (primer for future ERC success) and 6 interdisciplinary awards (primer for future bids to Horizon2020 Societal Challenges)

Action 286: Explore joint funding opportunities with UK funding agencies, including Research Councils UK, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs UK, and others. This action will build complementary research competence for Ireland and Irish companies.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFI)

Update: Complete

3 prestigious early career fellowships were made in 2015, under the SFI-Royal Society University Research Fellowship scheme. Similarly, 3 awards were made under the SFI-HRB-Wellcome Trust Partnership, which has been extended for another 5 years, and now incorporates investigator, seed and collaborative awards, and the WT Centres scheme. A new partnership has been established with the BBSRC, a call will be issued in January 2016. The Investigators Programme has been opened to include partnerships with the Department for Employment and Learning NI: 7 awards out of 23 were made in conjunction with partners in Northern Ireland. A partnership with EPSRC is under discussion, as are partnerships between SFI, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland, and the USDA.

Action 287: Engage with relevant industry sectors and public sector bodies to maximise the downstream commercial opportunities of the EU Copernicus Programme.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland co-ordinates Ireland's industrial and research participation in the programmes of the European Space Agency (ESA). ESA promotes co-operation among European States in space research, technology and applications. Enterprise Ireland's role in relation to ESA is to assist Irish companies to successfully bid for ESA contracts. It provides a source of expertise for Irish companies in developing and executing space strategies, as well as being a point of reference for the international space industry when they want to identify relevant sources of space-related expertise within Ireland.

Ireland's membership of ESA permits Irish companies and research teams to bid for ESA contract development work in a range of space programmes including the Copernicus programme, previously known as GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security), which is the European Programme for the establishment of a European capacity for Earth Observation.

Irish industrial participation, in relation to ESA programmes, is primarily in the engineering, aerospace, software, electronics, optoelectronics and telecommunications sectors. Opportunities also exist in developing products for the related ground segment systems as well as end user equipment, services and applications which utilise space based systems.

The primary deliverable of this action was the presentation of a proposal for the establishment of an Earth Observation Research Centre in response to a published Science Foundation Ireland call early in 2015.

The submission was, unfortunately, unsuccessful but the consortium made up of representatives from the academic, industrial and public sector communities has stayed together and is currently scoping out commercially attractive opportunities to be supported using ESA funding mechanisms.

The backbone of the Research, Development & Innovation activities will be the establishment of the European Space Agency's climate and Sentinel data repository in The Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC).

We also note the activation of the Copernicus Emergency Management Service to map and monitor the current flooding events across affected regions of Ireland.

Action 288: Building on the experience with previous co-fund applications, the Irish Research Council will submit a co-fund application under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action

aimed at Post-Doctoral researchers.

Q4 Measure: Submission of the application under Horizon 2020. (IRC)

Update: Complete

Proposal for 50 International Postdoctoral Research Fellowships submitted to EU MSCA Co-Fund. Proposal entitled 'Caroline'. Outcome to be known in Spring 2016. Proposal is endorsed by a range of stakeholders, including Irish and International NGOs, intergovernmental organisations and higher education institutions.

Action 289: Maintain the enhanced participation of SMEs and micro-businesses in the IRC Enterprise Partnership Scheme (EPS) and thus cultivate enterprise focused researchers in the formative years of their research careers.

Q4 Measure: Assessment of applications under Scheme complete. (Irish Research Council)

Update: Complete

EPS 2015 Call launched and 63 funding awards offered (includes 15 postdoctoral award offers). This quantum represents an increase in participation in the scheme as compared with last year.

Action 291: Address national societal challenges by partnering on research with government entities and civic society.

Q4 Measure: Launch a pilot 'Research for Policy' initiative in partnership with a number of government departments and agencies - outcomes. (Irish Research Council)

Update: Complete

2015 Pilot Call launched with 7 Government Dept/Agency strategic funding partners. Proposals sought across 8 distinct strands. Following independent peer assessment, a proposal has been recommended for funding for 6 of the 8 strands. Notification of outcome being made.

Stimulating the Domestic Economy

Agri-food

Action 295: EI to support 28 significant food and drink industry investments, five of which will be FDI projects.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has supported in excess of 28 significant food & drink investments of which 2 were Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects.

Enterprise Ireland provides a range of funding supports and programmes for established small & medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and large companies in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sectors, which includes those companies in the food and drink sector.

Enterprise Ireland in 2015 has been working with companies in the food and drink sector to support them undertaking of significant Food projects. Enterprise Ireland will exceed the target set out in the action plan for jobs in relation to the number of significant food and drink industry investments made during the year. A number of significant projects approved and announced in 2015 included; a €20m investment by the Boyne Brewhouse in its Boann Distillery & Visitor Centre Drogheda creating 80- jobs and a €10m investment by The Connacht Whiskey Company in Ballina creating 40 jobs. The Distillery will also feature a Visitor Centre.

Enterprise Ireland is also engaged in attracting Foreign Direct Investment Food projects. Ireland competes internationally to attract these projects to Ireland. Enterprise Ireland secured two such projects in 2015. The environment for mobile food investment is extremely competitive and challenging however we continue to target investment in mobile food projects and there are a number of pipeline projects which were delayed in 2015 and are now expected to be approved in early 2016.

Action 296: EI to introduce a new Graduate Development Programme with a target of 10 graduates into the Food SME sector to improve company financial and technical capability.

Q4 Measure: as per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Developing graduates at an early stage of their careers is an investment in creating a future pool of skilled managers who will support sustainable growth in Irish industry into the

future.

In 2015, Enterprise Ireland introduced a new Graduate Programme, the Graduate Business Growth Initiative, to improve company capability across all aspects of business. In total some 70 graduates from across all sectors participated in this programme which included 4 graduates into the Food SME sector.

The objective of Graduates 4 International Growth (Graduate Development Programme), a second graduate programme, is to assist companies with ambitious growth plans in key markets to acquire a graduate market research resource and possible future business development capability. Companies that are supported create one or more entry level graduate market researcher position(s).

Action 299: Implement the new Seafood Development Programme 2014-2020 (EMFF).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: On Schedule

DAFM as Managing Authority has concluded negotiations with the EU Commission in relation to the EMFF OP 2014-2020. EU approval was given in early December 2015 to allow for full implementation of the EMFF OP 2014-2020 in 2016.

Action 300: Attract graduate talent into the sector through the Bord Bia Marketing Fellowship and Strategic Growth Programme to improve export sales.

Q4 Measure: Strategic Growth. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete

The 6th Strategic growth Programme commenced in December 2015 with 31 participants. It will involve 14 days of executive education concluding in June 2016.

Action 302: Develop strategic alliances with Irish food processing companies to target science based innovations for job creation.

Q4 Measure: Continue to develop strategic alliances with Irish food processing companies. Metrics will include number of alliances formed and number of new products/processes commercialised. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

A new research programme has been agreed with major Irish dairy processor. The key scientific areas have been identified and collaborative project work is underway.

In addition an ongoing research programme has been expanded with a second Irish company.

Action 303: Implement the key initiatives agreed under the Prepared Consumer Foods Strategy.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM/DJEI)

Update: Complete

An Enterprise Ireland feasibility study to assess the viability of establishing a PCF focused Innovation hub is underway. Interviews have taken place with companies across a number of PCF sub sectors regarding the most challenging and critical R&D plus innovation needs and the remaining interviews will be completed in the next week. The next step will be to draw up an industry led strategic research agenda.

Action 305: Support the expansion of the craft brewing industry, which has the potential to become a major element in the Irish drinks industry.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

Budget 2015 increased the amount of beer that micro-breweries could produce and still qualify for excise relief. To further assist their development, Budget 2016 provides that the relief will now be available upfront thus reducing the cash-flow burden of the current rebate scheme.

Action 306: Continuation of the food competitiveness fund (FCF).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

8 Competitive Start Fund projects approved as at 26/11/2015.

Action 310: Develop Options Plus programme to facilitate information sharing to farm families in relation to off-farm employment, business development and training and attract graduate talent into the sector through the Teagasc Walsh Fellowship to improve analytical

and innovation capacity in sector.

Q4 Measure: Development of pilot ICT infrastructure to notify farms of off-farm employment, business development and training opportunities. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

Pilot 'Opt-In' website set up for Limerick and Tipperary to cross promote training opportunities between organisations.

Action 311: Put in place the legal framework to recognise beef producer organisations in order to rebalance bargaining power in the sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

DAFM is currently drafting the necessary SI to give effect to the legal framework recognising beef POs. DAFM is also drafting guidelines for new PO's as well as application forms and administrative facilities to be finalised. A tender for facilitators to assist in formation of new groups is also being prepared.

Marine

Action 315: Implement a new National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM, MAPD)

Update: Complete

Following completion of publication consultation, SEA and Appropriate Assessment, the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development was approved in October 2015 and submitted to the Commission. The Plan will be published after being submitted to Government.

Tourism

Action 317: Dublin, as the capital city, is the primary driver of Ireland's tourism industry. Fáilte Ireland will work with industry and agency partners to grow the city's international appeal.

Q4 Measure: Activating a suite of festivals to drive tourism business in the off-peak season,

e.g., St Patrick's Festival in March, Bram Stoker in October, and New Year's. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Complete

A suite of festivals were funded by Fáilte Ireland including national festivals such as St Patrick's Festival, Temple Bar Tradfest, the Dublin Horse Show and 28 other smaller festivals adding to the city's international appeal.

Action 321: Develop further heritage tourism initiatives, including a programme of trailway development in National Parks and Nature Reserves, in partnership with key stakeholders. Collaborate with the relevant Departments and Agencies to ensure that National Parks, Nature Reserves, National Monuments and historic buildings contribute as signature experiences along the Wild Atlantic Way, in particular through the development of a national park trails network, so as to add to the attractiveness of these areas for tourists.

Q4 Measure: Develop plan to deliver initiatives. (DAHG, Fáilte Ireland, National Trails Office)

Update: Complete

Trail Audit, Visitor Experience Audit and Digital Audit have been completed. A Cultural Tourism Steering Group chaired by Dr. Michael Ryan including representatives from D/AHG, FTTS, OPW and Fáilte Ireland has been and is developing a work programme to be presented to the Tourism Leader Group in Q1 of 2016. D/AHG has commenced targeted upgrading works along a number of trails, including the White Route in Wicklow Mountains National Park and the Diamond in Connemara National Park. An inter-agency group on outdoor recreation, chaired by D/AHG and including representatives from Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Bord na Mona, OPW, NPWS and the National Monuments Service has been developed.

Action 322: Support a range of projects through the Heritage Management Grant Scheme 2015 that apply good heritage practice to the management of places, collections or objects, including buildings.

Q4 Measure: Complete draw down of grants to a range of private projects. (Heritage Council, DAHG)

Update: Complete

Overall, €1,171,000 was offered in grant assistance to heritage projects in 2015 with €547,000 offered in Grant assistance to 197 projects throughout the country under the Heritage Council Management Grants Scheme and €624,000 dispensed, via Local Authorities to 26 projects under the Structures at Risk fund.

Retail

Action 328: Following the national launch of the scheme in 2014, complete the rollout of 2,000 Trading Online Vouchers (1,450 in 2015) through the Local Enterprise Office Network (see also Section 3.7).

Q4 Measure: Complete the distribution of vouchers in 2015. (DCENR, LEOs, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme, launched in July 2014, operates through the national network of 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEO). Over 1740 vouchers have been awarded by LEOs to small businesses under the Scheme. The Scheme is attracting small businesses from across a wide range of sectors including: retail, manufacturing, food, and professional services. Trading Online Vouchers are attracting small businesses from across a wide range of sectors including: retail, manufacturing, food, craft/design, leisure and professional services. In July last, the outcome of a survey of participants of the Scheme was published. It revealed that businesses that moved online experienced an average increase in sales of 21%. Some 40% of businesses had customer interactions from new markets, the most important export markets being the UK, USA and Northern Ireland. Over 70% said that they expect to recruit new staff as a result. With the potential creation of an average 1.4 new jobs per company – in businesses that employ ten staff or less – it shows that trading online can make a tangible impact on jobs and economic activity in Ireland. A further measurement of the impact of the scheme will be undertaken early in 2016.

Construction and Housing

Action 336: Implement Construction 2020 so as to deliver a dynamic, competitive and sustainable construction sector, capable of contributing to economic growth and job creation, and equipped to meet the future infrastructure needs of the country, including addressing the challenges in housing supply.

Q4 Measure: Work with industry organisations to promote the use of Building Information Modelling and develop the appropriate technical skills amongst Irish construction sector firms so that they can successfully compete in markets where BIM is widely adopted or a requirement (EI).

Update: Complete

In 2014 the Government launched Construction 2020, a strategy for a renewed construction sector to deliver a dynamic, competitive and sustainable construction sector, capable of contributing to economic growth and job creation, and equipped to meet the future

infrastructure needs of the country, including addressing the challenges in housing supply.

After a public tendering process and associated due diligence, CITA Ltd have been appointed to deliver the BIM Innovation Capability Programme (BICP). The programme is designed to map, assess and align all relevant stakeholder agencies in relation to BIM with a view to developing a unified position for the optimal deployment of BIM across industry. The programme will commence in Q1 2016.

The BICP will have four elements, namely: Information Gathering (National and International); Industry Consultation; In-depth Analysis of Results; Dissemination of Findings through Provincial Events and Central Conference.

Action 341: Maintain and deliver employment opportunities through recruitment of recruits and cadets to the Defence Forces.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Defence)

Update: Complete

The Defence Forces held a General Service Recruitment Competition in 2015. Successful applicants from this competition will be inducted in 2016. A General Service Competition is planned for 2016 also.

Up to 31 December 2015, 50 Army, Air Corps & Naval Cadets, 307 General Service Army & Navy recruits, and 48 other personnel including apprentices, instrumentalist and doctors were inducted into the Defence Forces.

New Sources of Growth

Growing Sales Through Leadership in Design

Action 345: Promote enterprise opportunities in universal design working with key stakeholders including NSAI, professional bodies, education sector and industry.

Q4 Measure: Collaboration in delivering an international conference on Universal Design in Education and a Universal Design Challenge in partnership with ID 2015 (Year of Irish Design). (National Disability Authority's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland provided 2 grant awards of €15k each to the winner and runner-up of the Universal Design Grand Challenge 2015 to support a feasibility study and work towards commercialisation of designs with the NDA's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. It is recognised that Universal Design (UD) is important to meeting consumer needs.

A very successful conference took place on 11 and 12 November, which also combined a design challenge called Hackathon, and involved collaboration with NSAI, plus support from Enterprise Ireland for continuing with sponsorship for the universal design grand challenge for 2015 and 2016.

Action 346: Develop a series of National Design Enterprise and Education initiatives including design hubs, design networks, startup and investment platforms, cross-sectoral collaborations, design challenges and funded design development programmes.

Q4 Measure: Establish sectoral and regional design networks across the island of Ireland to stimulate economic growth and encourage investment and collaboration in the design sector. (DCCoI, ID2015)

Update: Complete

The agreed programme of enterprise and education initiatives has been successfully delivered in accordance with agreed calendar. 8 new Regional and sectoral design networks have been established including the Midlands Design network, Salt Network Sligo and Creative Digital Design Network Cork.

Q4 Measure: Support a range of design-led initiatives across the regions through a match funded design innovation fund exploring, promoting and celebrating Irish design and designers through events and activities. (DCCoI, ID2015)

Update: Complete

The agreed programme of regional design-led initiatives has been successfully delivered on schedule. Over 500 projects and events have been delivered throughout the island of Ireland, reaching an audience in excess of 500,000.

Q4 Measure: Establish a start-up and investment platform for creative industry entrepreneurs, aimed at accelerating some of the country's most promising designers from a range of design disciplines. (DCCoI, ID2015)

Update: Complete

A call for applications for a pilot programme to develop and support expert business skills within the design sector was launched in Q4. The *Design and Innovation New Business Development Programme* is a pilot project being delivered by The Ignite Academy, offering training, mentoring and networking support to 20 high potential design graduates. This programme complements the €250k *Competitive Start Fund – Design* launched earlier in 2015 in partnership with EI as well as *Design 4 Growth*, the pilot scheme to aid small enterprises on utilising strategic design to improve their business being delivered by Dublin City Local Enterprise Office (LEO) on behalf of the four Dublin LEO offices and PIVOT Dublin, Dublin City Council.

Q4 Measure: Develop design case studies to educate and support the SME sector and to enhance design capability and confidence in investing in design. (DCCoI, ID2015)

Update: Complete

Case studies have been created as part of the research undertaken into the design intensive and non-design intensive sectors, led by DJEI in collaboration with ID2015/DCCoI, EI, SFI and IDA, which will be published in Q1 2016. The resulting case studies, together with leading international research, clearly demonstrate the benefits of design-led innovation.

Action 347: Establish a Steering Group of relevant Stakeholders to evaluate the design and craft sector with a view to devising a Strategy for the sector.

Q4 Measure: Complete Evaluation and Strategy for the development of the sector. (DCCoI, ID2015, DJEI)

Update: Complete

An evaluation of the sector has been conducted and consultation has been undertaken with key industry stakeholders through the research steering committee and through the

establishment of disciplinary industry working groups with a view to devising long term plans for the strategic development of the sector.

Action 348: Devise a strategy to ensure longer-term development of the design sector and business investment in design as part of the legacy of ID2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCCoI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

A number of actions, building on the impact and legacy of ID2015 have been included in the Action Plan for Jobs 2016, based on the findings emerging from the research study 'Economic Impact of Design Across All Sectors of the Economy' which was completed in December 2015.

Internet of Things

Action 352: The Task Force on Big Data will review the opportunities for Ireland arising from the Internet of Things and develop specific policy actions to develop those opportunities.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (Task Force on Big Data, DJEI and IDA)

Update: Complete

The terms of reference for the Task Force were expanded to include the "Internet of Things" with the creation of a sub-group in Q2 2015. A Work Programme was agreed which included Building a Value Proposition, development of an IoT Innovation Cluster and the identification of Key Areas of focus. A number of projects involving collaboration between industry and academia were presented to the Taskforce. This programme will be progressed further during 2016.

Evaluations and reviews to inform future policy development

Action 366: Develop a strategy to investigate new market opportunities in 4 high growth

markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Investigating new market opportunities in high growth markets will provide valuable information which in turn will assist companies considering exporting to these high growth markets. The findings of the review are used to develop regional plan supporting the aim of developing sustainable exports into new and existing markets.

Update: Enterprise Ireland has undertaken reviews or reviews are in progress of its strategy for High Growth Markets in South America (Brazil, Colombia and Mexico) China, India and Russia. The outcomes of these reviews are incorporated in the plans for these regions for Plan 2016.

Action 367: Review attitudes to flexible working arrangements to promote greater participation by fathers in family leaves.

Q4 Measure: To progress proposals for consideration by Government. (D/Justice and Equality and other relevant Departments)

Update: Complete

Introduction of 2 weeks' paternity leave approved by Government - to be in place by September 2016

Action 368: Develop an implementation strategy for a Better Energy Finance Scheme in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Strategy implementation. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

DCENR is working with stakeholders on analysing the most viable approaches to support those consumers who want to upgrade the energy efficiency of their home.

Action 372: Continue to systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of the Springboard initiative to further strengthen the contribution of the programme to supporting job creation and retention, reducing unemployment and meeting the skills needs of emerging industries.

Q4 Measure: Most up-to-date evaluation findings published. (HEA)

Update: Complete

A third trend analysis of Springboard employment outcomes 2011 – 2015 was published in June 2015

Action 374: Examine the recommendation included in the Review of the EPA regarding the introduction of a partial licence review mechanism.

Q4 Measure: Consultation between EPA, DECLG and stakeholders to determine whether application time for environmental licences can be reduced without compromising environmental protection. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

Following Consultation between EPA, DECLG and relevant stakeholders, it was determined that partial reviews are not possible without amendments to Primary legislation. Subsequently a decision was made in consultation with IBEC and the EPA to develop an electronic Alterations Requests Tool which was rolled out in 2015 to minimise delays for Licensees in carrying out changes to their site operations.

Work is on-going to reduce application times through the development of on-line application systems and analysis of the processes & workflows and this will be included in the new EPA Strategy. Evolving Case Law around EIA and AA legislation continues to cause delays in processing of applications.

Action 378: Complete research to identify clusters/sectoral ecosystems on an all-island basis with the opportunity to grow jobs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (InterTrade Ireland)

Update: Complete

This research by InterTrade Ireland was completed and the report has been published. A formal launch took place by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and his Northern Ireland counterpart, Minister Jonathan Bell MLA on 2 December, 2015.

Action 379: Conduct a mid-term review of the New Frontiers programme with a view to determining the nature of future support for entrepreneurship training.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Context: By undertaking Evaluations and reviews of APJ initiatives, the Government aims to

continuously improve performance in as appropriate and economically viable.

One of the reviews to be undertaken is a Mid-term review of the New Frontiers programme. The New Frontiers Entrepreneur Development Programme is Enterprise Ireland's national programme for innovative, early-stage start-ups. It is a three-phased programme, based in 14 campus incubation centres across the country. Each year, New Frontiers funds 150 companies.

This national programme is co-ordinated by Enterprise Ireland Enterprise Ireland. Enterprise Ireland working in partnership with the Institutes of Technology aims to ensure that the participants create sustainable businesses, jobs and economic stability in regional locations.

The core element of New Frontiers is a six-month intensive programme focused on developing the person's entrepreneurial abilities, equipping them with the skills they need to run, and crucially to develop, sustainable businesses. By giving the individuals the skills they need to successfully set up and run a company, they will be capable of replicating that success with other ideas in the future. It is expected that the programme will produce a pipeline of companies eligible for Enterprise Ireland's high-potential start-up (HPSU) supports.

Update: The review has been completed and the design of the next generation of the programme has commenced. A proposal for funding this from 2016 is being drafted for consideration by the Board of Enterprise Ireland in Q4.

Note: This action was reported on as a Q3 deliverable.

Action 382: Develop a strategy to improve the performance of Irish business in relation to securing contracts with International Financial Institutions.

Q4 Measure: Deliver a report with recommendations. (EI, Public Sector Group)

Update: Complete

The APJ sets out a number of evaluations and reviews to be undertaken in 2015, the results of which will help inform future policy development. One area of interest in this context is the performance of Irish business in relation to securing contracts with International Financial Institutions. Successful firms will benefit from the opportunity afforded by these contracts which can serve as reference points for competing in overseas markets, in addition they will serve to raise awareness of the capabilities within innovate Irish firms to deliver at international level.

Update: The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Finance and private sector representatives having agreed "terms of reference" for a research report, in Q4, 2015 initiated the process to appoint an appropriate consultant to carry out the

Research report.

The successful tenderer will be selected early in 2016 with the delivery of the report is expected within three months of the consultant's appointment.

The learning's and recommendation of the report will inform the development of a strategy to improve the performance of Irish business in relation to securing contracts with International Financial Institutions.

Ongoing Measures

Disruptive Reforms

National Talent Drive

Action 8: Step up collaboration between government, industry and education through Smart Futures to raise awareness of STEM career opportunities for post-primary students, in line with the agreed 2014-16 strategy.

Q4 Measure: SFI will support the production of STEM programming during the peak schedule of a national broadcaster. (SFI)

Update: Complete

An SFI/RTE partnership has been put in place, at the cost of approximately €500,000. Three TV series are attributable to this, most notably *Insiders*, which is airing at 5pm on Wednesdays and aimed towards young people. ‘*Insiders*’ explores the “wow science behind the cool events and venues that kids love”.

Action 33: Invest in educational, health, justice, recreational and other social infrastructure, as part of the €3.619 billion Public Capital Programme in 2015 to make Ireland a great place to live and work.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DES)

Update: Complete

€530m was allocated in capital funding in 2015 which includes the delivery of an additional 16,000 permanent school places for primary students and 3,000 permanent school places for second level students. The investment will also support the provision of enhanced or replacement facilities for 2,000 primary school students and 4,000 second level students and the advancement of a range of projects in the higher education sector, including the DIT Grangegorman project. It is estimated that the allocation of €530m will support 4,500 direct and 900 indirect jobs in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Health)

Update: Complete

The Programme for Government sets out a clear vision for health services which is community based and responsive and accessible to patients. Projects which are central to the development of a reformed health service are being prioritised and the current projected schedules including those for the larger projects remain appropriate.

The capital allocation for the multi-annual period 2016 to 2021 (6 years) is €3,061m - an increase of €568m – principally over the period 2019-2021. Within this, the health infrastructure programme will invest €2,559m (inclusive of the €200m special lottery

allocation for the new children's hospital), and investment of €412m will be made in ICT

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Justice and Equality)

Update: Complete

Infrastructural investment on various projects, in An Garda Síochána, Irish Prison Service, Courts Service and other Justice agencies to a total value of €106.9m is continuing in 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DTTAS)

Update: Complete

The exchequer funding allocation for public transport projects in 2015 under the capital plan is approx. €279m. The focus of this expenditure has been the renewal and maintenance of the public transport network and fleet to maintain safety standards and to tackle growing congestion. It has also facilitated progress on key projects such LUAS Cross City which add value to the existing network

Insofar as Public Roads Investment is concerned the main focus of the 2015 programme is on maintenance of existing network. Major schemes of note in 2015 included

- Opening of the M11 Arklow to Rathnew
- Commencement of 57km Construction work commenced on the 57 km M/W / Dual Carriageway scheme from Gort to Tuam
- Financial close was reached on the M11 Gorey to Enniscorthy scheme

A number of noteworthy tourism capital works were completed including

- Garnish Island House and Gardens completed and
- Derrynane House and Gardens completed

Investment was also made in the development of projects like

- Wild Atlantic Way
- Ireland's Ancient East
- Killarney House and Gardens

Investment in the National Cycle Network continued in 2015. The main project to note was the opening of the 40km Mullingar – Athlone section of the Galway – Dublin Greenway. Work progressed on another 13 projects that should open in 2016. The Coke Zero Regional Bikes Scheme opened in Cork, Limerick and Galway.

Under the Regional Airports Programme, by end year 2015, we expect to spend €2.1m in relation to safety and security related projects at Donegal, Ireland west Airport Knock (IWAK), Kerry and Waterford Airports to ensure connectivity for balanced regional development.”

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAHG)

Update: Complete

€62m was invested in capital funding in 2015, which includes the protection of archaeological and built heritage, the management and operation of six national parks and 78 nature reserves and funds conservation, provided 23 island ferry services with 400,000 passenger journeys, and will develop a cultural centre at Teach an Phiarsaigh (Pearse's Cottage).

Delivering Regional Potential

Action 34: Develop and publish a suite of Regional Enterprise Strategies, based on consultation with key stakeholders at regional level and on the analysis of the strengths of each region, commencing with the publication of strategies for the Midlands and South East regions. The strategies will include a series of specific actions and targets for delivery by a range of public bodies to support enterprise growth and job creation in the regions and will complement the statutory Plans to be developed as part of Local Government reform

Q4 Measure: Roll out consultation process on a phased basis to develop Enterprise Strategies for further regions. (DJEI, EI, IDA, other relevant Departments and public bodies)

Update: Complete

On 11 February 2015, the Taoiseach and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation announced details of the Regional Enterprise Strategies initiative - to be known as Action Plan for Jobs: Regional - to develop the potential of the regions to support enterprise growth and job creation. All 8 Regional Plans have now been published, and are available here: <https://djei.ie/en/What-We-Do/Jobs-Workplace-and-Skills/Action-Plan-for-Jobs/>

The objective of the Plans is to strengthen and develop regional collaboration by encouraging local authorities, regional bodies, higher education institutions, the private sector and communities to come forward with innovative ideas to boost job creation.

Each Action Plan was developed with the committed involvement of the region's public bodies, enterprises and people.

Progress on the actions in these Plans will be monitored on a six monthly basis by an Implementation Committee and Progress Reports will be published twice each year.

Action 35: Ringfence up to €25 million for competitive regional funds in support of the Regional Enterprise strategies.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, EI, IDA, LEOs)

Update: Complete

To support regional enterprise development, the Government announced that it would provide up to €250 million over the next five years to support Regional Action Plan process. €150 million of this funding is to be made available to IDA Ireland for a property programme. The intention is that a further sum of up to €100 million will be made available through Enterprise Ireland over the next five years to support innovative and collaborative approaches to support job creation across the regions.

Included in the Enterprise Ireland funding are three regional competitive calls:

- A €5m Community Enterprise Initiative, to stimulate and support enterprise and job creation throughout the country at local, community and regional level. This competitive call has closed and applications are currently being assessed.
- A €5m fund open to groups of Local Enterprise Offices who come together to bid for funding for projects to support job-creation initiatives in their areas. This competitive call has closed and applications are currently being assessed.
- A third, broader, competitive regional call will support significant projects or initiatives to improve or leverage identified enterprise capability in the regions. An Expressions of Interest phase for this call has concluded and is informing the development of the competitive call to be launched as soon as possible. There has been significant level of interest from across all regions in this Expressions of Interest phase.

Action 39: Create a minimum of 500 new jobs and continue to support existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post-research/pre-commercialisation units in the Life Sciences, Food and Business Support Services and Creative Enterprises sectors, and ongoing support for community development initiatives.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (ÚnaG)

Update: Complete

The target of 500 new jobs has been achieved. In addition, the Agency continues to fund a range of community and local development programmes which have as their objective the creation of greater skills and capacity at community level in a range of enterprise and language planning initiatives.

Action 43: Údarás na Gaeltachta will implement measures to support early stage business development with a particular focus on regional competitive advantage in specific sectors, including cultural tourism, audio-visual and digital technology, marine resources, niche manufacturing, food & beverages and creative language-based services.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (ÚnaG)

Update: Complete

An tÚdarás continues to focus on the provision and promotion of supports for indigenous start-ups and early stage business development.

Action 44: Following the progress made in Athlone, Waterford and Letterkenny in 2014, continue a programme of identifying specific locations where the private sector is not currently providing property solutions, to help to support the attraction/embedding of Foreign Direct Investment in those locations.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

In 2015, IDA selected three locations, Sligo, Castlebar and Tralee for the delivery of Advanced Technology Buildings to support FDI clients. Consultants have been appointed to design facilities for all three locations. In the case of Sligo and Castlebar, planning has been granted, tenders are completed and contractors are about to be appointed pending funding availability. Tralee is scheduled for on-site commencement in Quarter 2 2016.

Action 45: Continue to work to attract Foreign Direct Investment in areas outside of Dublin and Cork.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

IDA has set itself ambitious targets via its five year strategy, Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019, in relation to regional dispersal of FDI investments. The investments to be delivered under the strategy will be a combination of new name investments, expansions from existing companies in Ireland and R&D investments. This strategy was launched in the first quarter of 2015 and the 2015 employment survey shows all regions making gains.

In 2015, 53% of all jobs created by IDA clients were based outside of Dublin, compared to 49% in 2014.

While there is a global trend towards FDI favouring large urban centres, IDA statistics continue to show the strength and resilience of FDI in regional locations. For example, IDA clients based outside of Dublin account for 59% (109,812 people) of total IDA client employment.

Action 46: Growing on the successful strategy of providing property solutions in regional locations, continue a building and refurbishment programme to help to support the attraction/expansion of Foreign Direct & Indigenous Investment in regional/rural locations in the Gaeltacht.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (ÚnaG)

Update: Complete

An tÚdarás continues to focus on a range of support initiatives with an emphasis on capacity building and capital investment to facilitate property solutions in the above sectors and An tÚdarás continues to focus on attracting Foreign Direct and Indigenous investment to the Gaeltacht regions.

Action 49: Implement the new Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 following agreement of the Programme with the European Commission.

Q4 Measure: Provision of the training and support necessary to Local Action Groups on the relevant management and coordination systems in place for the RDP 2014-2020. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

Training has been provided. 12 information sessions / capacity building sessions were held in 2015.

Q4 Measure: On-going management and support for the implementation of LEADER Local Development Strategies. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

Training and support has been provided. 12 information sessions / capacity building sessions were held in 2015.

Action 50: Continue to review and progress recommendations of the CEDRA report to

promote rural development, including through the piloting of Rural Economic Development Zones.

Q4 Measure: Support the work of the interdepartmental group (IDG) established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of CEDRA. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

DECLG is continuing to provide support to the CEDRA IDG on an on-going basis.

Europe's Energy Innovation Hub

Action 65: As part of the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Action to expedite the achievement of the 33% Energy Efficiency target for the Public Sector, work with public sector organisations with an annual energy spend of €500,000 or more, to go to the market to identify solutions for the delivery of energy reduction services.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR, Public Body)

Update: Complete

A comprehensive Public Sector Energy Efficiency Action Plan will be finalised in Q1 of 2016. This plan will set out the specific actions that will be progressed to ensure the Public Sector achieves its ambitious energy savings target. The Action Plan will be accompanied by a new Circular which will require all public sector bodies to undertake energy efficiency actions.

The first Annual Report on Public Sector Energy Efficiency performance published by SEAI shows that the sector is nearing halfway to its target and savings of €74 million achieved in 2013.

Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland

Action 66: Implement the SBCI Business Plan for SME lending over the course of 2015, including achieving key milestones as set out in the SBCI plan of: first lending to SMEs and roll-out of products in Q1 2015; bringing new non-bank lenders to the market in Q2/Q3 2015; and bringing a pipeline of other banks and non-bank lenders on board by Q4 2015 and beyond.

Q4 Measure: Begin the process of providing €800m of additional funding to the SME sector through on-lending institutions targeting deployment over a 24 month period. (SBCI)

Update: Complete

Strong progress continues in relation to deploying funding to the SMEs via On Lending

partners. AIB and Bank of Ireland have continued to deploy funding, and the new non-bank lenders, Finance Ireland (FI) and Merrion Fleet Management (MFM) have commenced operations since November, albeit on a small scale to date. It is expected that FI and MFM will significantly increase their level of transactions in the January, reflecting the opportunity to fund new vehicles. It is anticipated that a new funding agreement was be signed with AIB in December, thereby committing a further €200m. A further drawdown of funding by Bank of Ireland is expected within Q1 2016.

Intellectual Property in Enterprise

Action 71: Continue to support IP activity e.g. patenting, industrial designs within firms.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Within the Action Plan for Jobs 2015 there are 6 new Disruptive Reforms. These are discrete projects within the APJ framework. They are proposed as having the potential to break out of conventional structures and to generate impact across a range of sectors and thereby give Ireland a lead, or build self-sustaining growth.

Actions 70 - 78 form part of the Intellectual Property in Enterprise reform which aims, inter alia, to double the number of patents, industrial designs registered and other IP management activities of firms. The objective of the overarching reform is to achieve best in class in the EU by enhancing support for firms, drive commercialisation and to ensure the tax environment is optimised for innovative enterprises located here. The Action Plan for Jobs 2015 has set out 9 key actions with 10 deliverables to ensure the achievement of this reform's objectives

Enterprise Ireland continues to support IP activities (e.g. patenting, industrial designs within firms) amongst its client companies. As part of a wider projects Enterprise Ireland's R&D fund may provide support towards costs associated with the development of a company's own patents or towards buying in technology licences for further development. Enterprise Ireland also co-ordinates* the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), a non-financial support to assist SMEs become more innovative. The EEN helps companies in identifying licensable technologies, helps with the licensing out of clients' proprietary technology and provides advice on best practice for Intellectual Property (IP) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) management and through the EU-IPR helpdesk / Ambassador Scheme.

The EEN services are specifically designed for SMEs but are also available to all businesses, research centres and Universities.

Enterprise Ireland in cooperation with EU-IPR Helpdesk organised a seminar in November

for SMEs and the Research Community on the topic of International IP and the Impact & Innovation in Horizon 2020, there were 70 participants at this event.

* In partnership with the Local Enterprise Offices and the Chambers in Dublin & Cork.

Progressing Disruptive Reforms from 2013 & 2014 Action Plans

Competitive Ecosystem for Big Data

Action 88: Monitor progress annually, based on the KPIs, and produce a report updating/revising the main actions.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (Task Force on Big Data, DJEI)

Update: Complete

A set of KPIs were developed in 2015 to monitor progress for the adoption of Big Data in Ireland. Reporting on progress will take place in 2016 when both domestic and international reference figures become available.

Action 89: Oversee the implementation of the actions arising from the IDC review which sought to identify additional or revised policy actions in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (Task Force on Big Data, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The terms of reference for the Task Force were renewed to oversee progress towards a more focused vision for Big Data which has also been expanded to include the “Internet of Things” with the creation of a sub-group in Q2 2015.

Action 93: Strengthen the resources of the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODP)

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Justice and Equality, DPER)

Update: On Schedule

The 2015 budget allocation for the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner has been doubled (now €3.647m). Additional staffing resources have been sanctioned at Clerical Officer, Executive Officer, Higher Executive Officer, Assistant Principal and Principal Officer level. Arrangements to fill these posts are at an advanced stage, with some assignments already made and others to be put in place before end Q2. Arrangements for filling of specialist posts including ICT and investigative roles are also at an advanced stage.

Action 95: Engage intensively with EU partners and stakeholders in relation to ongoing negotiations on Data Protection regulation.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Justice and Equality)

Update: Complete

Ireland is proactively involved in the ongoing negotiations on the Proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation. The Presidency aims to reach a general approach on the Proposal at the June JHA Council after which Trialogues with the European Parliament will commence.

Winning Abroad

Action 97: Through the Culture Ireland programme, build further opportunities internationally for emerging and established Irish companies and artists by presenting their work at strategically important global arts markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAHG/Culture Ireland)

Update: Complete

In 2015 Culture Ireland supported over 300 projects by Irish artists worldwide, generating the equivalent of approximately 160 FTE jobs for Irish artists globally and reaching an audience number of over 3 million. For example, the Venice Biennale, which took place from May to November, 2015, saw Sean Lynch and his exhibition *Adventure: Capital* represent Ireland, attracted over 400,000 visitors. Culture Ireland also supported more than 100 performances by Irish artists over the four weeks of the Edinburgh Festivals in August 2015.

Integrated Licensing Application Service

Action 98: Roll out the Integrated Licensing Application Service and seek feedback from the Retail Consultation Forum.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI and Relevant Bodies)

Update: Complete

The introduction of an Integrated Licence Application Service (ILAS) was a disruptive reform in the Action Plan for Jobs 2013 with the delivery of such a service to the retail sector in the first instance.

This ambitious and transformative initiative will reduce dramatically the amount of time businesses spend applying for licences thereby reducing the administrative burden and it will change how businesses and licensing bodies interact.

A Steering Group with membership from the key licensing authorities with a remit for retail licensing was established to oversee the process. The Steering Group considered options for delivering this service either through an extension of an existing platform within the

State sector or an outsourced provision of the solution. In the absence of additional exchequer funding, the Steering Group agreed to progress the option of an outsourced provision, through a finance-design-build-operate model.

After a competitive tendering process An Post, with Escher (an Irish software company) as their technology partner, have been appointed as the Service Provider for ILAS under a single vendor framework agreement on a finance-design-build-operate-market model.

The design and system build work for licences.ie is complete and the Service is now available for all Licensing Authorities to use as their online application process and also available for all businesses to apply for, renew and pay for their licences (those that are available on the Service) through www.licences.ie

Currently there is a pilot number of licensing authorities using this Service which is now being expanded to include other licences of key sectors of the economy and to involve other licensing authorities as the Integrated Licensing Application System is rolled out.

Effective Implementation to Maximise Benefits to SMEs

Action 102: Implementation of the SBCI Business Plan for SME lending over the course of 2015.

Q4 Measure: See Chapter 2: Disruptive Reforms. (SBCI)

Update: Complete

Strong progress continues in relation to deploying funding to the SMEs via On Lending partners. AIB and Bank of Ireland have continued to deploy funding, and the new non-bank lenders, Finance Ireland (FI) and Merrion Fleet Management (MFM) have commenced operations since November, albeit on a small scale to date. It is expected that FI and MFM will significantly increase their level of transactions in January, reflecting the opportunity to fund new vehicles. It is anticipated that a new funding agreement was to be signed with AIB in December, thereby committing a further €200m. A further drawdown of funding by Bank of Ireland is expected within Q1 2016.

Communications – Raising awareness amongst SMEs and Entrepreneurs of supports

Action 109: Deliver the next phase of an integrated communication strategy.

Q4 Measure: Maintain regular dialogue with main SME representative bodies and BPFI with a view to furthering communication around the Supporting SMEs Online Tool. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

Engaging with SME representative bodies and receiving requests for speakers on SME supports around the country.

Q4 Measure: Continue to upgrade the Supporting SMEs Online Tool, in particular with a view to including the business supports provided by Local Authorities. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

Quarterly updates received and progressing the inclusion of Local Authorities supports onto the Online Tool.

Q4 Measure: Have a presence at key events across the country to engage with SMEs and increase their knowledge of the range of supports available. (SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

Supporting SMEs campaign attended c.60 events in 2015. 85 civil servants from 15 Government Departments and Agencies completed training on the Supporting SME Online Tool in 2015. This training enables them to meet members of the public at events across the country and inform them about the range of Government business supports available. Packs of 200 Supporting SMEs leaflets were sent to 827 locations in 26 counties, including libraries, Citizen Information Centres, Local Enterprise Offices, Intreo Centres, and Community Enterprise Centres.

Action 110: Launch www.actionplanforjobs.ie and supporting advertising campaign to leverage support for and drive utilisation of the 'Supporting SMEs' online tool and increase awareness of the existence of State supports for business.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The one year campaign was formally launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mr. Richard Burton, T.D., and the Minister for Business and Employment, Mr. Ged Nash, T.D., on 16th February, 2015. Phase 3 of campaign was completed on 11 November, 2015.

Engagement with International Funding Institutions

Action 111: The SBCI to participate in the EIB Taskforce of National Promotional Banks.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SBCI)

Update: Complete

There have been no further meetings of this Taskforce, but bilateral communications have continued with EIB on potential products to be delivered under EFSI and how they might be adapted to the Irish market.

Action 112: Examine the potential for closer cooperation with other National Promotional Bank's (NPBs) in developing initiatives to promote the financing of growth in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SBCI, D/Finance)

Update: Complete

SBCI have continued to build relationships with key national promotional entities leveraging on their experience in products and platforms not commonly available in Ireland. SBCI has become a member of two NPB/I network groups - ELTIA and NEFI. SBCI recently attended the ELTIA Annual conference of all members where key issues facing National Promotional entities were considered and also attended NEFI's specialist workshop on guarantees.

Action 113: Further increase our engagement with the EIB and EIF in developing and implementing mechanisms designed to maximise the provision of enhanced financing to SMEs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SCBI, D/Finance, DJEI, EI)

Update: Complete

The Department of Finance continues to engage actively with EIB counterparts at all levels. The most recent Board of Directors meeting took place in Luxembourg on 15 December. The first draft of the Operational Plan for 2016-2018 was expected to feature on agenda. The EIB InnovFin Seminar took place in Dublin on 23 October and provided an excellent engagement opportunity for project promoters. In addition, recent signatures for the SBCI (€200m) and Dublin Port (€100m) took place in October, with the EIF and Bank of Ireland announcing the provision of €100m for innovative SMEs through the Innovfin programme

SBCI has commenced discussions with EIF on the use of EU Guarantee programmes for SMEs. SBCI has submitted a draft application for use of a COSME Guarantee structure as part of its proposed risk sharing capacity in the Irish market. This is considered an early

stage of an iterative application process in their provision of a COSME guarantee to the SBCI. This will be part of the required support in conjunction with the proposed expansion of the CGS to provide counter guarantees to the SBCI to develop risk sharing capacity and capability. SBCI has opened discussions with an on-lender bank with regard to creating a pilot program for a guaranteed loan product. Alternative platforms for the delivery of risk sharing are also being considered. The timeline to market is under review.

Action 114: Maximise our engagement with the relevant elements of the Multiannual Financial Framework – e.g. the Horizon 2020, COSME - so as to ensure there are no untapped or underutilised sources of framework or other funding available to SME sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SBCI, D/Finance, djei)

Update: Complete

SBCI continues to keep in touch with all developments in this sphere, while seeking to address the best approach to put the necessary conduit framework in place to optimise funding and risk capital available under these programmes. SBCI has participated with other agencies (New ERA and ISIF) in cross departmental meetings chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach on optimising Ireland's access to all such sources of funding.

The LEOs Network – Enterprise Capacity Building

Action 116: The LEOs network to play a key role providing information, support and advice to small businesses on access to finance issues, via appropriate training, mentoring and provision of information, based on the availability of up-to-date information or training from the appropriate third-party sources.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, LEOs, Revenue, MFI)

Update: Complete

Access to finance is a critical for all businesses. Since 2011 Government policy has focused on supporting SMEs in accessing an appropriate supply of financing from both bank and non-bank sources. SME skills and strategic vision are a key ingredient of any attempt to diversify the source of financing, particularly alternative non-bank financing. Improving SMEs awareness and knowledge of the financing options that are available, including state sponsored supports is essential.

However, in addition to enhancing knowledge about the range of bank and non-bank financing instruments that may be available, there is also a need to support SMEs in

developing a more strategic approach to business financing. This will enable them to have a better understanding of how different instruments could serve their financing needs at specific stages of the life cycle, the advantages and risks associated with them, and how best to leverage these different sources including the potential synergies between different financial instruments. This necessitates a stronger emphasis on the integration of SME capability building, guidance and financing measures.

The 2015 APJ places a particular focus on Enterprise Capacity Building within the LEO network. This involves further developing and promoting the new Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) Network as the conduit providing information, support and advice to small businesses on, inter alia, access to finance issues. The means of achieving this objective is via appropriate training, mentoring and provision of information based on the availability of up-to-date information or training from the appropriate third-party sources. This ongoing activity is one of the two actions under this reform within the 2015 APJ.

Training has since been provided by Revenue, Department of Social Protection and Microfinance Ireland (MFI), to ensure that the LEOs are in a position to play a key role in the provision of information, support and advice to small businesses on access to finance issues.

The LEOs are now playing a key role providing information, support and advice to small businesses on access to finance issues. The LEOs are the primary provider of information to early stage entrepreneurs on the new Startup Refunds for Entrepreneurs (SURE) incentive scheme*.

**Under the SURE incentive scheme capital funding invested by entrepreneurs in the establishment of their new companies, which must be engaged in a qualifying trading activity (or activities), may be eligible for an income tax refund of up to 41%. Depending on the size of the investment the entrepreneur may be entitled to a refund of income tax paid over the 6 years prior to year in which their invest was made.*

Increasing Activation of the Unemployed

Action 127: Continue the development and reform of the State's public employment services to help ensure that the number of people on the Live Register is reduced as the economy recovers and that the labour market responds flexibly and efficiently to employment growth.

Q4 Measure: Continue to ensure the effectiveness of referral from Intreo to further education and training under Strand 5 of Pathway to Work. (DSP/DES/SOLAS)

Update: Complete

Referral protocols are agreed and in place at Regional level between Intreo and the ETBs.

Oversight arrangements are also in place between DSP, DES and SOLAS. DSP and SOLAS are working closely to align the development of their activation/case management system (ACM) and course catalogue and scheduling system (PLSS). DSP is also represented on the Steering Group established for the purpose of framing a new National Skills Strategy.

Growing Irish Enterprise and Foreign Direct Investment

Action 141: Progress implementation of the agreed Global Sourcing Strategy across EI and IDA Ireland to increase global sourcing sales by EI client companies by €100m over 3 years and €30m in 2015.

Q4 Measure: In 2015 IDA to introduce new name approvals to EI as part of the Global Sourcing initiative. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland continue to work together on the Global Sourcing initiative, which sees IDA Ireland introducing its newly approved clients/projects to Enterprise Ireland client companies. The objective of these introductions is to support the drive to increase global sourcing sales by Enterprise Ireland client companies by €100m over three years and €30m in 2015.

IDA Ireland has also initiated a process for sharing new approvals with Enterprise Ireland Global Sourcing. In 2015, information on 25 new approvals was received and the Global Sourcing team is working through them to follow up as appropriate. As a result of the Apple Athenry Data Centre announcement, for example, an Apple Supplier Summit was organised by Apple in partnership with Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland. Similarly, as part of the Enterprise Ireland organised Trade & Investment Mission in Ireland (14th – 15th October), West Pharma attended the event and took one-to-one meetings with Enterprise Ireland client companies

Q4 Measure: IDA will work to assist EI clients engage with MNCs on identified global sourcing opportunities (20). (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Together IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland have developed an initiative which sees IDA Ireland supporting the engagement of Enterprise Ireland clients' with MNCs exploiting global sourcing opportunities identified by EI clients. As part of this initiative Enterprise Ireland has developed criteria for identifying a pipeline of potential participant clients. The two agencies have worked together to assist 20 Enterprise Ireland clients to engage with MNCs on identified global sourcing opportunities.

Action 149: Roll out the delivery of Winning Abroad (see earlier section 3.4).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

In APJ 2014, additional funding was allocated to the enterprise agencies to increase their focus and footprint in high growth and emerging markets and new areas of opportunities for exports and inward investment.

The increased investment through IDA Ireland in overseas offices is targeting the creation of an additional 10,000 new jobs (6,000 direct and 4,000 indirect) over 5 years through an investment programme that will see the provision of additional resources to IDA Ireland to be deployed overseas including in emerging markets, intensifying FDI employment growth.

All roles have been filled with the exception of three in North America (Atlanta, Mountain View and Irvine). These roles remain unfilled despite an ongoing recruitment process. There will be a refreshed recruitment effort in Quarter 1 2016 to ensure these roles are filled.

Action 160: Engage with SME representative bodies, DJEI, EI and Inter-trade Ireland through the SME working group to identify further measures to assist public sector procurement.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DPER/OGP)

Update: Complete

The SME Working Group, made up of representatives from DJEI, Enterprise Ireland, InterTrade Ireland and industry bodies i.e. IBEC, ISME, CIF, SFA, met on 2 occasions. The work of the Group contributed to areas such as the training and up-skilling of SMEs via Meet the Buyer events; refinements to the eTenders system to encourage SMEs to access public procurement; and the introduction and ongoing monitoring of the pilot Tender Advisory Service.

Action 162: Publish pipelines of procurement activities on www.procurement.ie to inform SMEs of opportunities that will arise during the year.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DPER/OGP)

Update: Complete

The OGP Pipeline/Schedule of Frameworks is updated on a quarterly basis so that a rolling nine month forward view is always visible. The Schedule is available to download from www.procurement.ie. This advanced notice of forthcoming tendering processes can assist

SMEs in planning and preparing to compete in public procurement contracts.

Action 166: Examine ways of improving the supply of innovative products and services, where appropriate, in public procurement.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, DJEI, relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

Public procurement will continue to provide an important opportunity in the domestic market for Irish companies, with an annual spend by the Government sector of €13.4 billion on goods and services.

Public procurement also provides an opportunity for innovative firms to win contracts at home acting as reference sites which can facilitate and accelerate the generation of sales in overseas markets.

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Ireland* in collaboration with Enterprise Ireland, ESB and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) continues to examine ways of improving the supply of innovative products and services, where appropriate, in public procurement.

Following a competitive EU wide tender a cohort of 4 SMEs were selected to drive innovation through a collaborative action between ESB eCars, SEAI and Enterprise Ireland in the area of electric vehicle multi user charging. Phase 1 of the project commenced in Q1 2015 and focused on the production of a technical feasibility report, which has now been completed. The evaluation of Phase 1 is imminent and the learning's from the project will inform SBIR and the other agencies in relation to means of improving the supply of innovative products and services in public procurement. Phase 2 (Demonstrator phase) is due to commence in early 2016.

The second SBIR project, launched in October 2015, centres on SBIR Smart Technology Solution for Homeowner Utilisation, Presentation, or Interpretation of Building Energy Rating (BER) datasets – a joint effort between Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and Enterprise Ireland. Thirteen proposals have been received and Phase 1 evaluation is scheduled for January 2016.

A 3rd project is being readied currently with Dublin City Council (DCC) addressing public bicycle security against theft and is due for release in early 2016.

An SBIR awareness campaign is ongoing with the aim of reaching out to as many Public Sector organisations as possible so that the benefits to SBIR participation can be highlighted.

*SBIR Ireland is the dedicated national programme which enables public sector bodies to

connect with innovative ideas and technology businesses to provide innovative solutions to specific Public Sector challenges and needs.

Action 172: Take steps to establish a national biobanking system and support infrastructure by 2016.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Health)

Update: Complete

In 2015 the Health Research Board (HRB) continued to work on progressing the APJ action relating to biobanking. This included engaging with the relevant agencies on the initiative and considering international developments on the matter. The HRB will continue to pursue this action in 2016.

Action 173: Work with IFB and other agencies to explore the capacity to expand the industry. Increase fulltime employment equivalents in the film and audiovisual sector by 1,000 jobs by supporting the Irish Film Board to fund at least 15-20 Irish feature films and developing creative co-production feature film opportunities for 5-10 creative co-productions. Overall, over 40 projects will be supported, including feature documentaries, animation, TV Drama and short films.

Q4 Measure: Implementation of recommendations in Creative Capital Report. (DAHG, Irish Film Board)

Update: Complete

Some 1,000 jobs were created through funding Irish feature films, other projects including feature documentaries, animation, TV Drama and short films and through developing creative co-production feature film opportunities.

Action 174: Continue to support a range of Irish language arts, publishing, creative writing, training and other schemes, as well as festivals and drama companies by providing funding for existing programmes and activities.

Q4 Measure: Provide funding for existing programmes and activities. (DAHG)

Update: Complete

Multi-annual funding programmes covering the period 2015-17 approved for An Taibhdhearc, the national Irish language theatre company, and for An Cumann

Scoildrámaíochta, the Irish-medium schools drama organisation. Funding provided to Foras na Gaeilge is also directed towards activities in this sector.

Entrepreneurship

Progressing Entrepreneurship Policy Statement

Action 185: Map relevant entrepreneurship activities in higher education institutions as part of the overall strategy for higher education engagement with enterprise and embed entrepreneurship support within the HEI System Performance Framework.

Q4 Measure: Enterprise Engagement Strategy is being finalised and Strategic Dialogue process is underway for 2015. (DES, HEA)

Update: Complete

Ireland is participating in an OECD and EU Commission-led HEInnovate country review of entrepreneurship in higher education. The review commenced in April 2015 and a study visit was completed in October 2015. Leadership and students surveys have been issued and results are being compiled. A country report will be finalised early in 2016 and a dissemination event is planned for Q2 2016.

Collaborating for talent and growth: Strategy for Higher Education-Enterprise Engagement 2020 was published in June 2015. The Strategic Dialogue process was completed in Autumn 2015 and will feed into the development of the System Performance Framework report in 2016.

Action 187: Set out performance indicators and measures to benchmark entrepreneurial activity in Irish higher education.

Q4 Measure: Enterprise Engagement Strategy is being finalised and Strategic Dialogue process is underway for 2015. (DES, HEA)

Update: Complete

Collaborating for talent and growth: Strategy for Higher Education-Enterprise Engagement 2020 was published in June 2015. The Strategic Dialogue process was completed in Autumn 2015 and will feed into the development of the System Performance Framework report in 2016.

Action 188: Work with the Department of Social Protection to promote the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, and support these startups with appropriate interventions e.g. mentoring, micro-loans.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, LEOs, DSP)

Update: Complete

There are six elements that make up the ecosystem for entrepreneurship in Ireland: Culture, human capital and education; Business environment and supports; Innovation; Access to finance; Networks and mentoring; and Access to markets. For the entrepreneurship environment to be truly effective they must be mutually reinforced to form a coherent whole and support entrepreneurs throughout the entrepreneurship lifecycle.

To ensure businesses can develop and grow we need to ensure that those returning to the workplace with entrepreneurial ambitions are supported with appropriate interventions e.g. mentoring, micro-loans.

Enterprise Ireland continues to work with the Department of Social Protection to promote the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, and support these start-ups with appropriate interventions e.g. mentoring, micro-loans forms part of the ongoing work programme of the LEOs.

As part of this a review of the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Programme was undertaken and a committee with representatives from Enterprise Ireland; the LEOs; DJEI and Dept. Social Protection will use the findings of this review to assess the impact of the allowance; possible Improvements to the scheme and its promotion.

There are six elements that make up the ecosystem for entrepreneurship in Ireland: Culture, human capital and education; Business environment and supports; Innovation; Access to finance; Networks and mentoring; and Access to markets. For the entrepreneurship environment to be truly effective they must be mutually reinforced to form a coherent whole and support entrepreneurs throughout the entrepreneurship lifecycle.

To ensure businesses can develop and grow we need to ensure that those returning to the workplace with entrepreneurial ambitions are supported with appropriate interventions e.g. mentoring, micro-loans.

Enterprise Ireland continues to work with the Department of Social Protection to promote the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, and support these start-ups with appropriate interventions e.g. mentoring, micro-loans forms part of the ongoing work programme of the LEOs.

As part of this a review of the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Programme was undertaken and a committee with representatives from Enterprise Ireland; the LEOs; DJEI and Dept. Social Protection will use the findings of this review to assess the impact of the

allowance; possible Improvements to the scheme and its promotion.

Action 207: Develop advanced property solutions for innovative companies seeking to move from the incubator phase to market. Units will be suitable for specific sectors, including Life Sciences & Food as well as further property solutions for Business Support Services and Creative Enterprises.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (ÚnaG)

Update: Complete

An tÚdarás continues to focus a range of support initiatives with an emphasis on capacity building and capital investment to facilitate property solutions in the above sectors.

The Startup Gathering – 5 Days – 5 Cities – 5 Industries

Action 217: Develop and rollout the successful delivery of the Startup Gathering 2015.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Start Up Gathering was a national week-long initiative, from 5-10th October. It featured over 400 business events, held over 5 days in 5 cities, with associated regional events in a total of 22 counties. DJEI is now engaging with the organisers on an Exit Report.

Action 218: Encourage potential high growth startups and mobile entrepreneurs to come to Ireland during the 5 days for the events that are aligned with their industry sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

As in previous reporting Action 217 & 218 both relate to the same goal, i.e. The Start Up Gathering. DJEI is now engaging with the organisers on an Exit Report.

Competitiveness

Easier to do Business

Action 222: Introduce an end-to-end online application system for environmental licences at EPA.

Q4 Measure: Phased development of system. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

Team in place in EPA, and working with IT and Business Analysts to progress this with completion by 2017. Applications for Transfer of licence and Requests for change to IE/IPC/Waste licenses now on-line.

Action 227: Increase level of online applications and computerised applications and payment systems to reduce compliance burden for farmers from 56 per cent to in excess of 60 per cent for 2014 Single Payment Scheme applications.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

133,151 applications were received in 2015 for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) of which 70% were received online. Estimates are currently being finalised in respect of 2016 BPS Online applications.

Action 228: Further encourage e-submissions for the Annual Employment Survey (AES) and Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact (ABSEI) over the upcoming survey cycle.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The ABSEI is now administered on the basis that the online response is the default option over postal, e-mail or fax returns. Consultants appointed to administer the ABSEI have presided over the migration of response rates from postal returns (5% electronically in 2006/07) to electronic returns (95% electronically in 2013/14). We will continue to promote the use of secure online response portal in 2016 and beyond.

A new Employment Survey System is being developed to facilitate the capturing of responses to the AES via an online portal. This project is currently out to tender and it is hoped that the online response portal will be available for the 2016 survey, commencing

September 2016.

Action 240: Provide information to increase firms' ease of doing business in ecodesign and compliance.

Q4 Measure: Pre-inspections to facilitate business reaching compliance with Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Directives. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

Inspections are being conducted as planned and feedback is being provided to businesses on their compliance obligations and performance.

Q4 Measure: National Broadband Plan. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

Procurement was launched in December 2015, tender documents will issue in Q2 2016.

Q4 Measure: National Digital Strategy. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme, launched in July 2014, operates through the national network of 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEO). Over 900 vouchers have been awarded by LEOs to small businesses under the Scheme. The Scheme is attracting small businesses from across a wide range of sectors including: retail, manufacturing, food, and professional services. Recent survey findings of the impact of the Scheme on Growth, Jobs, and Exports will be the subject of a short report, expected to be published in the coming weeks. The results indicate that small Irish businesses which invest in their trading online presence can expect to see positive returns.

Action 241: Further streamline cost of meat inspection service where costs have already reduced from €42m in 2008 to around €28m in 2013.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

On track to streamline the operations of the meat inspection service. It is envisaged that the cost reduction and cost recovery has plateaued as the number of hours worked by Temporary Veterinary Inspectors to provide essential services increased in 2014 and to date in 2015. The Dept is working on maintaining the effectiveness of the service while minimising costs to industry. Provisional expenditure for 2015 is €17.6 million.

Action 242: A Memorandum of Understanding covering enhanced data cooperation

between Revenue and the CSO to produce wider and deeper statistical analyses will reduce the administrative burden on businesses arising from CSO surveys.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

The MoU between Revenue and CSO is in place and has been updated in recent years, furthermore a high level CSO-Revenue Liaison Group meets regularly. As a result of this ongoing engagement, the statistical use of administrative data by the CSO has been enhanced, providing new statistical analyses while minimising the burden on enterprises

Supporting Competitiveness through Corporate Social Responsibility

Action 255: Through the CSR Stakeholder Forum and its sub-groups, progress the objectives of the National Plan on CSR, and specifically: Develop an awareness campaign to increase awareness of CSR and its value to business and to society; Encourage enterprises to develop and implement CSR policies and practices; Develop CSR resources tailored to the need of SMEs; and Develop a series of actions to anchor CSR in the public sector.

Q4 Measure: as per headline action. (DJEI, CSR Stakeholder Forum)

Update: Complete

The CSR Stakeholder Forum established four sub-groups to progress the objectives of the National Plan on CSR. These sub-groups are focusing on four key objectives of the Plan specifically: Develop an awareness campaign to increase awareness of CSR and its value to business and to society; Encourage enterprises to develop and implement CSR policies and practices; Develop CSR resources tailored to the need of SMEs; and Develop a series of actions to anchor CSR in the public sector.

AS part of the objective to increase awareness of CSR, a strategic communications strategy targeted at business has been developed to raise awareness of the benefits of CSR. A key resource central to this strategy was the development of a website, www.csrhub.ie, which was launched in 2015 and provides a central repository of CSR resources in Ireland including useful organisations, policies and guidance documents. It also highlights best practice case studies in both the public and private sector critical to raising awareness and signposts to relevant EU and international CSR standards. The portal represents an important tool to encourage and support enterprises and public sector bodies who wish to develop and implement CSR policies.

To support SMEs interested in building CSR capacity the Forum is currently developing an interactive “entry level” CSR tool.

Decreasing the Cost of Doing Business

Action 257: Provide €39 million in Exchequer supports to further stimulate energy saving activity in the residential and community sectors.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

Increased funding of €43m has been committed to stimulate energy saving activity in the residential and community sectors in 2015. In March 2015, Minister White announced a 25-50% boost in the grant levels available under the Better Energy Homes scheme. This has led to an 80% increase in applications for the scheme, demonstrating that there is significant consumer demand for grant-assisted energy efficiency works.

Action 258: Invest €3.619 billion Public Capital Programme in 2015 to make doing business easier, reduce the cost of doing business, and invest in educational, health, justice, recreational and other social infrastructure to ensure Ireland is a great place to live and work.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (All Departments)

Update: Complete

DPER have overseen the allocation of €11 billion of Capital funding for the period 2015 to 2017. In September, the Minister announced an Exchequer investment of €27 billion over six years focusing on enterprise, education, transport and healthcare.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (All Departments)

Update: Complete

The actions outlined in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan are being progressed by DCENR, working with all the various stakeholders involved.

Action 259: Implementation of the Energy Efficiency Action Plan.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

The actions outlined in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan are being progressed by DCENR, working with all the various stakeholders involved.

Action 260: Review and update the National Energy Services Framework.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

To ensure that the document is relevant and useful to businesses, the National Energy Services Framework is a live document that is updated on a regular basis by the NESF Steering Group, led by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland.

Action 264: With the Film Board, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is continuing to work to create a more competitive environment to grow the film, television and audio visual content production sectors here and advance the targets set in the Creative Capital Report adopted by Government in 2011.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAHG)

Update: Complete

Changes in Section 481 which provides tax relief towards the cost of film production were announced in Budget 2015. A number of enhancements to Section 481 came into effect in January 2015; the scheme has been extended until the end of 2020 and the value of Section 481 increased to 32% of qualifying expenditure, from its previous value of 28%. The cap for eligible expenditure was increased in Budget 2016 to €70 million, up from its previous level of €50 million.

In Q4 Minister Humphreys announced that an additional €550,000 funding was secured for the Irish Film Board in 2015. In addition, the 2016 allocation to the IFB represents a €500,000 increase on its initial 2015 allocation.

Regulating for a Better Future

Action 265: Continue the implementation of actions outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation in the Energy, Communications and Broadcasting sectors.

Q4 Measure: Facilitate the development and final agreement of Memoranda of Understanding between regulatory organisations to share their front and back office administrative functions. (DCENR, DTTAS)

Update: Complete

In the Broadcasting/Communications, on December 15, 2015 BAI and ComReg signed a Memorandum of Understanding on shared services.

In the Energy sector, the establishment of an independent economic regulatory function for water services within the Commission for Energy Regulation is presented as a ‘model for which will be used by Government when establishing new independent regulatory functions in the various sectors’.

In relation to outsourcing, the CER has contracted its IT Operations to an external service provider. This service provider supports all day-to-day operations of IT. CER also outsources day-to-day handling of customer complaints with energy suppliers and network operators. This allows CER to concentrate on more complex complaints between customers and supplier/network operators.

The CER interacts with a number of other governmental bodies for which it has Memoranda of Understanding including:

- Irish Competition Authority,
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
- Health and Safety Authority (25 June 08 – revised 26 Feb 2014)).
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)(3 Sept 13)
- An Bord Pleanála (8 Feb 13)
- Commissioner for Irish Lights (15 April 2013)
- Irish Aviation Authority (26 Feb 2014)
- Air Accident Investigation Unit (7 Feb 2013)
- Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (7 Feb 2013)
- Marine Casualty Investigation Board (15 April 2013)
- National Standards Authority of Ireland (16 April 2013)
- Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation on Common Arrangements for

Gas(5 Feb 2008)

- Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation on Single Electricity Market (23 August 2004)
- The Electro-Technical Council of Ireland Limited (ETCI) (30 April 2009)

Q4 Measure: Following outcome of EU discussions on the proposed Single Telecommunications Market, initiate Communications Policy/Regulatory Review. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

The EU Commission's STM proposals (Roaming and Net Neutrality) continue to be the subject of intensive discussions between the Council, Commission and Parliament. The Latvian Presidency remains hopeful that a deal can be struck before the end of June but large differences remain between the parties, particularly in relation to the abolition of Roaming.

Research, Development and Innovation

Action 266: Continue to drive implementation of Research Prioritisation through the Government's Prioritisation Action Group and complete the review of the Independent Panel established to review progress.

Q4 Measure: Monitor implementation of Prioritisation Action Plans on a quarterly basis. (DJEI, Research Prioritisation Action Group)

Update: Complete

A cumulative total of 251 actions had key milestones over the period from the launch of Research Prioritisation in 2013 to Q4 2015. Considerable progress was made by the Government Departments and State Agencies represented on the Prioritisation Action Group during Q3 and Q4 2015 in closing out actions delayed or deferred from earlier quarters. As a result of this concerted effort, 246 of these 251 actions are now substantially complete.

Significant progress has been recorded for another 3 actions. However, some additional work is required in order to bring them to completion. The remaining 2 actions due by Q4 2015 are delayed.

Action 278: Enhance Industry Engagement with Ireland’s Research System to increase national competitiveness.

Q4 Measure: Arrange showcase opportunities in Ireland for industry engagement with Ireland’s research system. (SFI, EI, IDA, DJEI)

Update: Complete

A number of industry engagements have been held this year. SFI is supporting the Innovation Showcase 2015, which is to be held with EI and IDA in the Convention Centre on December the 8th. The Showcase is intended to highlight the wide range of supports available for engagement with Irish researchers. Industry speakers will outline how engagement with researchers helped their businesses, while 12 spinout companies will discuss their Big Ideas. An updated Directory of Research Centres and Technology Centres, detailing the range of supports available to facilitate collaboration with the research community, will be launched.

The ultimate goal of the Showcase is to achieve significant economic impacts through increased engagement between the public research system and industry. The Steering Committee for Innovation Showcase 2015 has held the inaugural meeting to initiate the planning process for the 2015 Showcase which will be held on December 8th. SFI has committed to contributing to the event in terms of budget share and resourcing to host the event. SFI continues to participate on the Innovation Showcase Steering Committee as a key partner in the implementation of this large scale event.

SFI was a key stakeholder in Startup Gathering 2015 in October 2015. The agency hosted two events, the TIDA Pitch off and the SFI Founders Forum. SFI also provided considerable support to the initiative through its membership on the National Steering Group and Communications Steering Committee. The “Pitch-Off” competition for SFI funded entrepreneurs was won by Lisa Helen, who is involved in developing a “smart needle”, designed to avoid nerve damage during surgical intervention. Judges represented various representatives of investors and industry; results were widely publicised in the national media

The Founders Forum was organised as a “think-in” for researchers who have founded or co-founded an Irish spinout enterprise to share their experiences and discuss policies and challenges for start-ups in Ireland. Representatives from the research community who have been heavily involved in spinning out companies spent time in sharing ideas that could help to capitalise on successes in the innovation space. The forum focused on two main topics of discussion – ‘Embedding Entrepreneurial Thinking in the Irish Research Ecosystem’ and ‘Enabling Entrepreneurial Endeavour’. This event marked the beginning of Startup Gathering 2015, helping to showcase Ireland’s innovation ecosystem to the world.

SFI also organized an intellectual property workshop, bringing together a number of Irish investigators who had been successful in protecting intellectual property arising from

research. An informal, invitation only informal workshop was assembled, including individuals who were identified as the top patent filers, and individuals who had a track record in commercializing research, from amongst the Irish HEI research community. The aim of the event was to learn from those with first-hand experience as to what does and does not work in the current research environment. Suggestions for change were also solicited. SFI considered the event to be an extremely successful exploration of IP expertise.

A number of additional events are listed below

- In April 2015 SFI, in partnership with the Irish Software Innovation Network (ISIN), delivered a briefing session on SFI research and the SFI funding mechanisms available to support collaboration between industry and academia at IBEC offices. The event was attended by ISIN members and other industry representative bodies.
- SFI provided a briefing session on SFI research and the SFI funding mechanisms available to support collaboration between industry and academia to members of the Microelectronics Industry Association (MIDAS) on March 26th
- A briefing session for members of the Professional Services was hosted by SFI in October. This session informed attendees on SFI funded research and industry facing programmes which may be of interest to the audience's clients.
- SFI had a presence at two key conferences during October and November – Enterprise Ireland's Med in Ireland which took place in October and the IRDG annual conference which took place in November.
- SFI hosted a Research and Innovation session focusing on challenge based research funding during the Global Irish Economic Forum. This event was attended by C level industry representatives who are members of the diaspora as well as strategically important Irish based industry contacts.
- A briefing session on the Longitude Prize was hosted by SFI in November. The Longitude prize encourages collaboration between industry and academia and this event presented an opportunity to bring members of the academic community working in the scientific area associated with the prize together with industry reps and clinicians.

Q4 Measure: Complement and support IDA/EI promotion abroad of Ireland's research offering to existing and prospective clients, including through Ministerial investment missions, St. Patrick's Day activities and other specific showcase events. (SFI, DJEI, DFAT, D/Taoiseach)

Update: Complete

SFI is working closely with IDA on a number of specific upcoming itineraries into Ireland by high profile companies over the coming months. SFI continues to work with IDA on an ongoing basis on incoming itineraries. The agency also supports the EI/IDA overseas offices through the provision of briefing material on research strengths and introductions to

targeted contacts.

SFI, as part of the St. Patrick's Day programme of activities in Washington D.C. hosted an event to showcase research in Ireland. The event was attended by all 12 SFI Research Centre Directors who delivered short pitches on their research. SFI worked in strong partnership with Enterprise Ireland for the event which was aligned to the Business Leaders Lunch to which SFI invited over 100 guests, many of whom were key industry contacts and targets for the Research Centres. The event also provided an opportunity to develop Centre to Centre opportunities between SFI Research Centres and NSF Engineering Research Centres under the US Ireland R&D Partnership Programme.

The initial planning stages for the St. Patrick's Day Programme in Washington D.C. have commenced. It is SFI's intention that the programme will provide a platform to showcase research in Ireland again at the 2016 events.

SFI participated on the St. Patrick's Day programme in Copenhagen which included attendance at Ministerial meetings and the Ambassador's reception.

The SFI St. Patrick's Day Medal is awarded annually to a distinguished Irish scientist, engineer or technology leader living and working in the USA. Awards are made to distinguished scientists in the US who have demonstrably assisted researchers in Ireland in academia or industry. Prof. Kate Fitzgerald, an immunologist and Professor of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts, was awarded this medal in 2015. The medal is normally awarded by An Taoiseach or a senior Minister on the St Patrick's Day trip to the US.

Action 294: Use the standardisation system intelligently to expedite the commercialisation of new technology and to reduce the risk of project failure.

Q4 Measure: Provide information on Innovation management standards to use of relevant standards to all Innovation Centres (Located in the Universities) including Knowledge Transfer Ireland and the Technology Transfer Offices. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

NSAI has provided information on Innovation standards to all of the 3rd level Innovation centres and the network of Knowledge Transfer Ireland offices. The Irish launch of the suite of European Innovation Management Standards took place as part of the Innovation Management Standards Industry Forum held on 21st October in Dublin Castle which was attended by innovation entrepreneurs, the research community and 3rd level education Sector.

Stimulating the Domestic Economy

Agri-food

Action 307: A trade marketing campaign targeting current and new customers for Origin Green suppliers will be escalated in Europe to enhance the reputation of Irish food on global markets showcasing Irish leadership on sustainability and building on the success of Origin Green.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

International Communications drives continuous awareness and engagement for Origin Green in key markets. This is amplified via the Origin Green media campaign in trade and broadsheet publications across key markets, inward journalist visits (IJV), strategic online communications via Twitter and LinkedIn and Origin Green's partnership with the Guardian Sustainable Business (GSB) which now has a global reach of 7.1 million unique browsers and 600,00 unique monthly users. The Food Hub is still one of the most popular sections on GSB commanding 521,000 page views per month and 371,000 unique users since its launch in May 2014.

<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/origin-green-ireland-partner-zone>

IJV: Through our sustainability agency networks and Overseas Managers, media engagement and IJVs for 2015 was across 10 international publications. Notable coverage has appeared in lead broadsheets Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (GER) and Trouw (NL), leading trade publications Molkerei Industrie (GER), Lineaires (FR) and FoodMagazine (NL)

Origin Green at Milan Expo: Final coverage from Milan Expo has been catalogued, analysed and measured for reach and value. A total editorial value of €1m has been achieved from our PR effort for publicising Origin Green at the Expo.

Action 309: Sustainable Food Systems Ireland will identify opportunities and develop commercial project proposals, with the relevant government agencies, to address requests for assistance in the Agri-food sector from international customers including government agencies, international organisations or international private sector companies.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

Full executive team now in place. Two projects delivered with business development activities underway which have been generating leads directly for SFSI and for the Irish food

and agri-tech sector.

Action 312: Continue to pursue appropriate measures at national and EU level with the banks to respond to price volatility in the dairy and other commodity sectors.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

Regular meetings have taken place between the Minister for DAFM and the CEOs of the main banks to discuss issues relating to the sector, particularly price volatility.

As well as the offerings from the main banks, the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) was established by the Government to deliver lower cost, long-term, innovative and accessible funding to Irish SMEs. Products include 'Agriculture Investment Loans', available for investment by agricultural SMEs, including farmers. Almost one third of SBCI loans to date have been accessed by the agricultural sector.

Tourism

Action 318: The Arts Council will increase the numbers of individuals and organisations supported across a wide range of arts venues, festivals, arts organisations and touring initiatives around Ireland in 2015 to some 350 individuals and 500 organisations.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (Arts Council of Ireland, DAHG)

Update: Complete

The Arts Council funded a total of 426 individuals and recipients in 2015 with over 537 organisations receiving awards in 2015.

Action 319: Continue to develop cultural digitisation initiatives in order to enhance Ireland's roots tourism offering.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAHG, GRO, National Library and National Archives)

Update: Complete

Progress has been made by both the National Library of Ireland and the National Archives both of whom have made additional collections available on-line in 2015.

Action 320: Develop self-guiding tours/trails based on apps and cultural and artistic collections either on Europeana or other websites in order to enhance our tourism offering to visitors from both home and abroad.

Q4 Measure: Obtain private and matching funding. (DAHG, NCIs, philanthropic supporter and technical experts)

Update: Complete

The National Archives successfully secured funding from the Wellcome Fund in 2015.

Action 323: Support the development of a project to digitise the National Folklore Collection of Ireland. The initial phase of the project will advance the digitisation of a significant part of the Schools' Collection in time for the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

Q4 Measure: Recruitment and contract placement. (DAHG, UCD, DCU)

Update: Complete

Recruitment and contract placement complete. Material relating to each county being placed on-line as its digitization is completed. Project on schedule for overall completion by autumn 2016.

Retail

Action 324: Review the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee report on Town Centre retailing; develop an action plan to advance recommendations which are considered feasible for delivery, and monitor progress in implementing those recommendations through the Retail Consultation Forum.

Q4 Measure: Monitor progress in delivering the action plan. (Retail Consultation Forum)

Update: Complete

A special meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum was held in West Court Hotel, Drogheda, on 27th April 2015 to consider the report of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, *"Policy Options to Support Business Growth and Job Creation and Retention in Town and Village Centres"* which was published in March.

The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Business and Employment, Ged Nash, T.D. The Retail Consultation Forum comprises members from retail representative bodies, retail practitioners and relevant Government Departments and agencies.

The Oireachtas Committee's report sets out 15 recommendations to support jobs in the retail sector in towns and villages throughout the country. The report is available on the Oireachtas website at:

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/committees/Final---Policy-Options-to-Support-Business-Growth-and-Job-Creation-and-Retention-in-Town-and-Village-Centres.pdf>

The October meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum centred on the setting up of Working Groups to progress the implementation of recommendations from the Joint Oireachtas Committee report on "Policy Options to Support Business Growth and Job Creation and Retention in Town and Village Centres", in particular through the setting up of the following working groups:

a working group on reducing energy costs to examine and propose solutions aimed at assisting retailers to reduce their energy costs through facilitating comparisons across providers and raising awareness among retailers of energy saving options;

a working group on retail and the Digital economy to examine how the retail sector can maximise the opportunities presented by the digital economy, with particular focus on training in online sales and social media and on the potential for e-commerce infrastructures for towns and villages;

a working group on the revival of the town centre to examine and identify practical ways to give effect to some of the recommendations of the JOC report

Action 326: Ensure that the situation of the retail sector is considered in the development of Regional Enterprise strategies, with a view to identifying any specific initiatives that could be taken to support the sector in the regions.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

On 11th February 2015, the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation announced details of the Action Plans for Jobs: Regional initiative (i.e. Regional Enterprise Strategies). Building on the approach to the national Action Plan for Jobs process, the Regional Action Plans include a series of practical actions to support enterprise growth and job creation in each region, within clear timelines for delivery.

Extensive consultation process has taken place across all 8 regions, with a wide range of stakeholders, to identify potential actions for inclusion in the regional Action Plans for Jobs. Stakeholder Fora have taken place in Athlone, Galway, Sligo, Waterford, Carrickmacross, Limerick, Cork, Navan and Dublin to discuss how best to capitalise on each region's strengths and opportunities through practical actions and commitments. Every effort was made to ensure the majority of participants were from the enterprise sector. Members of

the Retail Consultation Forum were advised of the Stakeholder events and invited to register.

The situation of the retail sector was taken into consideration in the development of each of the regional Plans and a number of the Plans contain specific actions which will have a positive impact on the retail sector.

Q4 Measure: In developing Regional Enterprise Strategies (see Section 2.2), consult with retail bodies on the performance of the retail sector in each region, with a view to identifying any specific issues that need to be addressed to support the sector in a region. (DJEI, in consultation with relevant bodies)

Update: Complete

Details of the development of the regional Action Plans for Jobs initiative (i.e. Regional Enterprise Strategies) were outlined to members of the Retail Consultation Forum at its meetings in April and June. The Forum includes retail representative bodies as well as individual practitioners and relevant public bodies. Forum members were also invited to register for Stakeholder events held to collect potential ideas for inclusion in the regional Action Plans for Jobs. In addition, bilateral discussions have taken place with some retail representatives on the retail situation in the regions. All of these engagements have been helpful in helping to form a view of the retail sector in the different regions, with a view to identifying actions that could be taken to support the sector in its recovery.

Action 327: Consult with the Department of Education and Skills, SOLAS, Skillnets and other relevant training providers, where appropriate, to identify how training programmes which are particularly relevant to the retail sector can be expanded or newly introduced to enhance the skills profile of the sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, in consultation with relevant training providers)

Update: Complete

Discussions with the Department of Education and Skills and with Skillnets took place in early 2015. The outcome of these discussions was the decision to dedicate the March meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum to a discussion on skills for the retail sector. A summary of the discussions which took place at that meeting is provided below.

Q4 Measure: Provide feedback to Retail Consultation Forum on findings from consultations, and highlight any steps that sectoral representatives might be able to take in collaboration with training providers to support skills enhancement for the sector. (DJEI, Retail Consultation Forum)

Update: Complete

Given the importance attached to the issue of skills for the retail sector by members of the Forum, and following consultations by the Forum's Secretariat with the main skills providers, it was decided that a discussion on skills for the retail sector would be tabled as the main item for the meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum on 11th March 2015. A number of special contributors were invited to the meeting to help inform the discussion.

A presentation was made by personnel from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and SOLAS, outlining the findings of work which had looked at the skills issues affecting the retail sector. The Department of Education & Skills and Skillnets also made presentations on the calls for new apprenticeships and for new skillnets networks. A representative from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) outlined the retail training provided by DIT. Forum members contributed to a wide-ranging discussion on foot of these presentations.

There was general agreement that there is a need to address a career perception challenge for the retail sector, a need for new apprenticeships in certain areas, and a need for both management skills and e-commerce training in the retail sector. A working group on retail and the digital economy was set up in October 2015 which will be looking at digital training options available to the retail sector. The issue of skills is recognised as a key issue that will continue to be addressed by the Retail Consultation Forum in 2016.

Action 330: Roll out the Integrated Licensing Application Service for the retail sector and seek feedback from the Retail Consultation Forum. (see also Section 3.5).

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI and relevant public bodies)

Update: Complete (as per action 98)

The introduction of an Integrated Licence Application Service (ILAS) was a disruptive reform in the Action Plan for Jobs 2013 with the delivery of such a service to the retail sector in the first instance.

This ambitious and transformative initiative will reduce dramatically the amount of time businesses spend applying for licences thereby reducing the administrative burden and change how businesses and licensing bodies interact.

A Steering Group with membership from the key licensing authorities with a remit for retail licensing was established to oversee the process. The Steering Group considered options for delivering this service either through an extension of an existing platform within the State sector or an outsourced provision of the solution. In the absence of additional exchequer funding, the Steering Group agreed to progress the option of an outsourced provision, through a finance-design-build-operate model.

After a competitive tendering process An Post, with Escher (an Irish software company) as their technology partner, have been appointed as the Service Provider for ILAS under a single vendor framework agreement on a finance-design-build-operate-market model.

The design and system build work for licences.ie is complete and the Service is now available for all Licensing Authorities to use as their online application process and also available to all businesses to apply for, renew and pay for their licences (those that are available on the Service) through www.licences.ie

Currently there are a pilot number of licensing authorities using this Service which is now being expanded to include other licenses of key sectors of the economy and involve other licensing authorities as the Integrated Licensing Application System is rolled out

Action 331: Review the 2012 Forfás report on businesses licences with a view to identifying further actions which can be taken to reduce the administrative burden for the Retail sector in this area, including, where appropriate, the rationalisation of licences.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI in consultation with relevant public bodies)

Update: Complete

Details of the development of the regional Action Plans for Jobs initiative (i.e. Regional Enterprise Strategies) were outlined to members of the Retail Consultation Forum at its meetings in April and June. The Forum includes retail representative bodies as well as individual practitioners and relevant public bodies. Forum members were also invited to register for Stakeholder events held to collect potential ideas for inclusion in the regional Action Plans for Jobs. In addition, bilateral discussions have taken place with some retail representatives on the retail situation in the regions. All of these engagements have been helpful in helping to form a view of the retail sector in the different regions, with a view to identifying actions that could be taken to support the sector in its recovery.

Action 333: Building on measures taken in 2014, continue to tackle illicit trade which impacts on the retail sector.

Q4 Measure: Use the additional powers under Finance Act 2014 to drive compliance. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Building on measures taken in 2014 to continue to tackle illicit trade which impacts on the retail sector.

Action 335: Through the Retail Consultation Forum, continue to identify and address issues which can help support quality employment in the retail sector.

Q4 Measure: Convene regular meetings of the Retail Consultation Forum, in accordance with the Forum's work programme, and examine issues of relevance to employment in the retail sector. (DJEI, Retail Consultation Forum)

Update: Complete

The Retail Consultation Forum held four meetings in 2015.

The Forum's meeting of 11th March 2015 focused on the skills needs of the sector and included presentations by experts from SOLAS, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, and Dublin Institute of Technology (see also update on Action 327).

The meeting of 27th April focused on town centre retailing and was held in Drogheda - a feature town in RTE's Local Heroes programme on town centre rejuvenation. Drogheda Chambers of Commerce and local traders attended part of the meeting and made a presentation on the Local Heroes initiative in the town. The Forum also considered the report of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; *"Policy Options to Support Business Growth and Job Creation and Retention in Town and Village Centres"* (see also update on Action 324).

The Retail Consultation Forum meeting of 15th June 2015 had a discussion on Building Retail North and South, based on a joint presentation by Retail Excellence Ireland and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association. A representative of the County and City Management Association presented a new publication on best practice initiatives by Local Authorities to support retail in towns and cities (see also update on Action 325). The Forum also had an initial discussion on potential proposals for Budget 2016 that could help to support the recovery of the sector.

Much of the focus of the October meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum centred on the setting up of Working Groups to progress the implementation of recommendations from the Joint Oireachtas Committee report on *"Policy Options to Support Business Growth and Job Creation and Retention in Town and Village Centres"*, in particular through the setting up of the following working groups:

a working group on reducing energy costs to examine and propose solutions aimed at assisting retailers to reduce their energy costs through facilitating comparisons across providers and raising awareness among retailers of energy saving options;

a working group on retail and the Digital economy to examine how the retail sector can maximise the opportunities presented by the digital economy, with particular focus on training in online sales and social media and on the potential for e-commerce infrastructures for towns and villages;

a working group on the revival of the town centre to examine and identify practical ways to give effect to some of the recommendations of the JOC report

Q4 Measure: Provide updates to the Retail Consultation Forum on progress being made in delivering the actions contained in this section of the APJ. (DJEI and relevant Departments)

Update: Complete

Updates are provided at each meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum on developments which have taken place since the previous meeting, including progress on delivering actions for the Retail sector under the Action Plan for Jobs. The updates are recorded in reports of the Forum's meetings.

Construction and Housing

Action 336: Implement Construction 2020 so as to deliver a dynamic, competitive and sustainable construction sector, capable of contributing to economic growth and job creation, and equipped to meet the future infrastructure needs of the country, including addressing the challenges in housing supply.

Q4 Measure: Continue to support implementation of Construction 2020, including through regular oversight by the Cabinet Committee on Construction 2020, Housing, Planning and Mortgage Arrears. (D/Taoiseach, DECLG)

Update: Complete

Implementation of the Construction 2020 Strategy has been considered by the Cabinet Committee on Construction 2020, Housing, Planning and Mortgage Arrears and supporting Senior Officials Group on a regular basis throughout 2015.

Action 337: Implement the Social Housing Strategy 2020, which will provide 35,000 new social housing units over a six year period and will provide housing support to up to 75,000 households in the Private Rental Sector through the new Housing Assistance Payment.

Q4 Measure: Implementation of the Social Housing Strategy in line with the detailed milestones and targets set for the delivery of the Strategies' actions. (DECLG and relevant Government Departments)

Update: Complete

Key milestones delivered as at end Q4 under the Social Housing Strategy 2020:

Over 13,000 units have been delivered across all social housing programmes in 2015,

representing an 86% increase on the 7,000 units delivered in 2014.

The implementation of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme, a key pillar of the Strategy, is progressing at pace. HAP has been rolled out to all categories of household in 18 local authority areas. At the end of 2015, over 6,000 households have been accommodated through HAP since its commencement.

Almost 400 additional posts have been sanctioned in local authorities to help build capacity as the construction programme ramps up.

The six sites for the first bundle of the social housing PPP project were announced on Budget day, 13 October. This €100 million project will deliver 500 units, in the Greater Dublin Area.

€10 million has been made available from the proceeds of the sale of Bord Gáis Éireann for an affordable rental pilot scheme. This will be an on-going annual commitment to secure a long term increase in the supply of housing for affordable rental. The Scheme will be rolled out in early 2016.

Part 2 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 commenced 13 April 2015, strengthening local authorities' ability to effectively manage their housing stock by expanding existing powers to counter anti-social behaviour.

The necessary Regulations [Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 484 of 2015)] for the introduction of a new incremental tenant purchase scheme have been signed. The new scheme becomes operational on 1 January 2016.

The Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act 2015 was enacted in December 2015, giving legal effect to short-term measures aimed at stabilising rents, as provided for in *Stabilising Rents, Boosting Supply* (November 2015).

Implementation of the remaining relevant measures set out in the *Social Housing Strategy 2020* will continue throughout 2016.

Action 339: Support 270 direct/indirect jobs arising from the major refurbishment programme for the National Gallery of Ireland and a further 130 jobs in the development of a permanent exhibition space and interpretative centre at the GPO, the development of visitor facilities at Teach an Phiarsaigh, Ros Muc and other investments as part of the Ireland 2016 Programme.

Q4 Measure: Continuation of work on projects. (DAHG, ÚnaG, NGI, An Post)

Update: Complete

Work is continuing on the NGI major capital project and is part of the Action Plan for Jobs

2016. The Teach an Phiarsaigh project continued in 2015 and is due to be completed in Quarter 3 2016.

New Sources of Growth

Growing Sales Through Leadership in Design

Action 343: Deliver a national programme of events presenting Irish design across the island of Ireland, in addition to the programme of exhibitions commissioned for ID2015 and international exhibitions hosted in Ireland as part of ID2015.

Q4 Measure: Deliver events in accordance with agreed calendar. (DCCoI, ID2015)

Update: Complete

The agreed national programme of events has been successfully delivered on schedule. Over 500 projects and events have been delivered throughout the island of Ireland, reaching an audience in excess of 500,000.

Action 344: Deliver an international programme of events presenting Irish design in international capitals of design and commerce, aligning events with EI's programme of sectoral and targeted trade and investment missions and supported through an International Trade Fund to assist Irish designers and makers in accessing international markets.

Q4 Measure: Deliver events in accordance with agreed calendar. (DCCoI, ID2015)

Update: Complete

A comprehensive programme of events and activities has been successfully delivered on schedule in international capitals of design and commerce, reaching an audience in excess of one million. The International Trade Fund made offers of support to 59 companies to attend leading trade shows and events including Ambiente, Medtec UK and the Kidscreen Summit resulting in new exports of €6.2m to date.

Developments in Financial Services

Action 351: Ensure effective and coordinated marketing and promotion of the strategy in

key overseas markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA, EI and DFAT)

Update: Complete

IDA Ireland's Global Financial Services team continued to market and promote Ireland as a location for international financial services activities throughout 2015. This was the first year of the Government's new strategy for the industry: IFS 2020. Marketing and promotional activities at home were coordinated, as appropriate, through the Public Sector Coordination Group (PSCG) and overseas through the mechanism of the Local Market teams. Several high profile promotional events were held in Ireland, the US, UK, Germany and Asia. These were in addition to the continuous and regular contact maintained between IDA, existing clients and potential new investors.

IDA also commenced work in the development of a new banner brand for the sector and on the organisation of the inaugural European Financial Forum (EFF) to be held in Dublin Castle in January 2016. Assisted by the various marketing and promotional activities together with the ongoing client development work undertaken by IDA's financial services team, the agency approved 30 new investments with employment potential of more than 3,000 jobs during 2015. Net job creation across IDA's financial services portfolio was more than 2,000 jobs. Overall, the international financial services industry in Ireland has recovered the job losses incurred as a result of the global financial crisis and is back on a solid growth trajectory.

Green Economy

Action 357: Carry out Cleantech Trade missions or include the Cleantech sector in multi-sectoral trade missions to highlight the products and services available from Irish companies in the sector and to develop export opportunities for them.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Three Cleantech related Trade Missions have been completed as follows:

A Trade Mission to Scotland led by Minister for the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Mr. Alex White TD, took place from 22nd-24th February.

Participating on the trade mission were several established and start-up Enterprise Ireland Cleantech Clients. A part of the mission these companies took the opportunity to exhibit on the Ireland Stand at Low Carbon Scotland Exhibition and Conference. In collaboration with Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) a reception for the participating clients and their guests (potential customers) was attended by the Minister. During the mission a collaboration

agreement between Crowley Carbon and Eco Energy (Scottish Company) was announced by Minister White. The Trade Missions also afforded the Minister and Enterprise Ireland the opportunity to meet with political, academic and business leaders with particular interest in the Cleantech Sector.

From the 19th – 23rd April five Cleantech clients participated in Enterprise Ireland’s Trade Mission to the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The mission, Led by Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Mr. Richard Bruton T.D., took in 5 cities: Dubai and Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates; Jeddah and Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Doha, Qatar. The Gulf visit facilitated practical relationship building for Enterprise Ireland client companies with their current and prospective counterparts in the region, as well as raising the profile of Ireland at the highest levels of Government in the three countries. It was a strong platform to promote Ireland and its companies as strategic partners across multiple sectors including Cleantech and highlighted how Enterprise Ireland can act as a conduit to those world class goods and services.

Enterprise Ireland’s Trade Mission to Poland & Czech Rep from the 18th- 19th May included a market study visit focused on one of the Cleantech sectors namely Energy sustainability and include a seminar which allowed a number of Enterprise Ireland client to showcase their capability in this sector to potential clients in Poland.

In addition to the Cleantech related trade missions Enterprise Ireland’s:

- Construction team and Singapore Office organised in inward buyer visit targeted at influencers, specifiers and decision makers of smart buildings in Singapore. The visit showcased the latest green technology applications in various building functions.
- Shanghai office arranged an inward buyer visit in November for a number of Chinese companies in the Cleantech sector.

Action 358: Contribute to the development of a European Union list of products as part of the negotiation of a plurilateral agreement liberalising trade in Environmental Goods in significant international markets (e.g. USA, China).

Q4 Measure: Consult with EI to identify relevant products for Ireland as part of the development of the EU list. (DJEI, EI)

Update: Complete

Ireland’s priorities were sent to the European Commission, as part of the EU list of goods which will be liberalised once final agreement is reached at International level.

Q4 Measure: Attend Technical Export Group meetings at EU level as required. (DJEI, EI)

Update: Complete

Ireland's Environmental Goods list was presented at EU technical meetings.

Action 359: Develop a strategy and appropriate tools to communicate the performance of Ireland's Green Economy to global audiences more effectively to encourage greater investment in the sector in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Continue to work with The Green Way, Green IFSC, other Government Departments and agencies, and other key stakeholders to highlight the profile and achievements of the Green Economy in Ireland. (DJEI with relevant Agencies)

Update: Complete

The Global Green Economy Index 2014 ranked Ireland 11th of 60 countries in terms of its performance in the Green Economy. However, Ireland is ranked only 33rd in terms of how performance is perceived internationally. Actions were undertaken as part of the Action Plan for Jobs for 2015 to explore how Ireland's performance in the Green Economy could be communicated more effectively to encourage greater investment in the sector in Ireland.

In 2015, the department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation held discussions with some stakeholders on how Ireland's performance in this area could better be communicated and is currently progressing the development of communication tools to achieve this objective.

The Department has also spoken with the publishers of the Global Green Economic Index to understand more fully the indicators used to measure how countries perform in the Green Economy.

Action 360: Examine the scope for improving access to finance for cleantech companies – which often have particular difficulties in accessing capital - to allow them to expand and export. (DJEI, EI and relevant actors)

Q4 Measure: Explore options for improving access to credit for cleantech companies and follow up with relevant providers. (DJEI, EI, OGP)

Update: Complete

A meeting took place in January 2015 between representatives from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland and industry to gain an understanding of the difficulties that companies in the cleantech sector are experiencing in accessing finance.

Since then, Enterprise Ireland announced a second call under its Seed & Venture Capital Scheme (2013–2018). Under this call, Enterprise Ireland is seeking to invest up to €65m in

commercially focused Seed Capital funds. Sectors to be targeted include including Cleantech, Food, ICT, Lifesciences and Manufacturing.

AIB have also announced a new €5 million equity fund to assist start-up companies in the sustainable technologies sector. This is in addition to a €100 million Energy Efficiency financing fund announced by AIB in 2013.

Action 362: In developing Regional Enterprise Strategies, explore the potential for the development of new employment opportunities in the Green Economy at regional level.

Q4 Measure: As part of the approach to developing Regional Enterprise Strategies, identify, through the consultation process, any opportunities to build on the inherent strengths of particular regions in the Green Economy and, where appropriate, build in to the Enter. (DJEI, EI)

Update: Complete

On 11th February 2015, the Taoiseach, Tánaiste and Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation announced details of the Regional Enterprise Strategies initiative – to be known as Action Plan for Jobs: Regional. Building on the approach to the national Action Plan for Jobs process, eight Regional Action Plans will be developed at NUTS III level and will include a series of practical actions to support enterprise growth and job creation in each region, within clear timelines for delivery.

Consultation Fora have taken place with stakeholders in 8 regions to date to identify areas of strength and opportunity that can be capitalised on in the regions. In this stakeholder process, the Green Economy has arisen in a number of regions as a sector with potential for jobs growth and many of the Action Plans published to date include specific actions to support the Green Economy

Action 363: Through the Consultative Committee on Jobs in the Green Economy, continue to identify new opportunities to support job creation in the Green Economy.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, Consultative Committee)

Update: Complete

No meetings of the Consultative Committee have been scheduled to date in 2015. However, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has been working on an on-going basis to support job creation in the Green Economy.

As part of the development of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs (see Action 34) Consultation Fora have taken place with stakeholders in 8 regions to date to identify areas

of strength and opportunity that can be capitalised on in the regions. In this stakeholder process, the Green Economy has arisen in a number of regions as a sector with potential for jobs growth and many of the Action Plans published to date include specific actions to support the Green Economy.

The Department also participated in the Sustainability Gathering in Dublin Castle on 24th June, which focused on the potential for the growth of the Green Economy and, in particular, for investment to support this growth.

National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training

Action 365: In response to continued growth in biopharmaceutical manufacturing investment, there will be a continued focus on this skill area in Springboard 2015, to increase the pool of available talent to meet the growing industry needs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HEA, IDA)

Update: Complete

175 biopharmaceutical courses will be provided under Springboard+ 2015.

Glossary of Terms

ADCs	Antibody Drug Conjugates
AIB	Allied Irish Banks
ARV	Annual Rates on Valuation
BIM	Building Information Modelling
BPFI	Banking & Payments Federation Ireland
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India and China
CCMA	County and City Managers Association
CeADAR	Centre for Applied Data Analytics Research
CER	Comprehensive Expenditure Review
CRFs	Clinical Research Facilities
CRO	Credit Review Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSSO	Chief State Solicitor's Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DAHG	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DCCoI	Design and Craft Council of Ireland
DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
D/Defence	Department of Defence
DECLG	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
D/Finance	Department of Finance
D/Health	Department of Health
DJEI	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
D/Justice and Equality	Department of Justice and Equality

DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
DSP	Department of Social Protection
D/Taoiseach	Department of Taoiseach
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
EI	Enterprise Ireland
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
EII	Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPC	Energy Performance Contracting
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ETB	Education and Training Board
ESCOs	Energy Services Companies
FCF	Food Competitiveness Fund
FW	Food Works
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FET	Further Education and Training
FH2020	Food Harvest 2020
GEDI	Global Entrepreneurship Development Index
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
H2020	Horizon 2020
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HOOW	Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth
HRB	Health Research Board

HPSU	High Potential Start-ups
HSE	Health Service Executive
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers' Confederation
ICMR	Irish centre for Manufacturing Research
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDA Ireland	Industrial Development Agency
IFS	International Financial Services
IICM	Irish Institute of Credit Management
IMP	Integrated Marine Plan
INIS	Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
IoT	Internet of Things
IP	Intellectual Property
IRC	Irish Research Council
ISIF	Irish Strategic Investment Fund
ISME	Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ITI	InterTradeIreland
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
KTI	Knowledge Transfer Ireland
LA	Local Authorities
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCDP	Local Community Development Programme
LEADER	Liaisons entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale
LEOs	Local Enterprise Offices
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency
MCG	Marine Coordination Group
MFI	Microfinance Fund Ireland
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MTES	Medium Term Economic Strategy

NCC	National Competitiveness Council
NDS	National Digital Strategy
NESF	National Energy Services Framework
NFP	New Frontiers Programme
NGI	National Gallery of Ireland
NHIH	National Health Innovation Hub
NIBRT	National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training
NPRF	National Pensions Reserve Fund
NPT	National Project Team
NSAI	National Standards Authority of Ireland
NSS	National Skills Strategy
NTD	National Talent Drive
ODPC	Office of the Data Protection Commissioner
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	Office of Government Procurement
PMTC	Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology Centre
PPC	Prompt Payments Code
PTSB	Permanent TSB
PtW	Pathways to Work
QNHS	Quarter National Household Survey
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RD&I	Research, development and innovation
RFT	Request for tender
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
TRL	Technology Readiness Levels
SBCI	Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland
SBG	State Bodies Group
SBIR	Small Business Innovation Research
SCS	Seed Capital Scheme

SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SVCS	Seed and Venture Capital Scheme
SFA	Small Firms Association
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
SSPC	Synthesis & Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
SURE	Startup Refunds for Entrepreneurs Scheme
ÚnaG	Údarás na Gaeltachta
VAT	Value Added Tax
WEF	World Economic Forum

