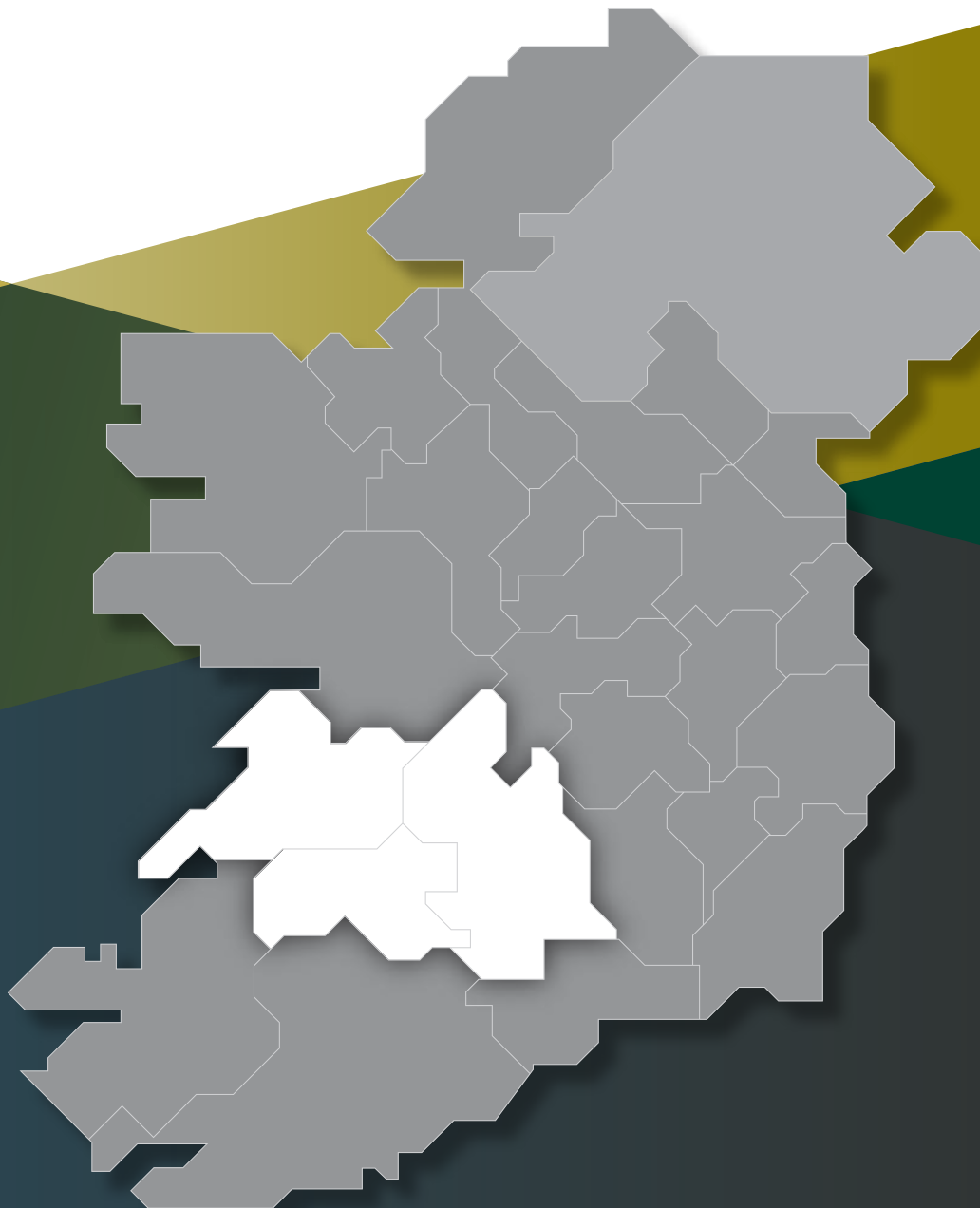




Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

MID-WEST

Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 – Final Progress Report



An initiative of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

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Minister's Foreword

I welcome this publication of the final Progress Report on implementation of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020. I am pleased to see that the Mid-West Steering Committee working with regional stakeholders has advanced all of the actions set out in the Regional Enterprise Plan.

Our Programme for Government has balanced regional growth at its core and seeks to pursue a coherent policy approach to the enterprise needs of every part of Ireland. This is seen in the strategies of the enterprise agencies; the valuable work of the local enterprise offices at county level; as well as through competitive funding and other strategic investments to reinforce regional enterprise ecosystems, including the regional enterprise development fund; regional technology clustering; investment in RD&I infrastructures; and the IDA Ireland regional property programme.

There is added value to be created however if we all work together locally to understand challenges; recognise new opportunities; and make the most of our complementary skills and resources. The Regional Enterprise Plans initiative, first launched in early 2019, takes a 'bottom-up' approach and brings together regional stakeholders to focus on addressing both vulnerabilities and opportunities critical to enterprise growth and job creation in each of regions, including the Mid-West.

I want to thank all the members of the Mid-West Steering Committee for all of your work in 2020 and since the commencement of the Regional Enterprise Plan. In thanking our Chairperson to the Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committee for the Mid-West, Prof. Eamonn Murphy, Managing Director, Irish Centre for Business Excellence, I also want to pay tribute to the contribution of the previous chairperson, Barry O'Sullivan, Global Manufacturing Lead Johnson & Johnson Vision, who led the Committee through the preparation and implementation of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 and before that, the implementation of the previous Mid-West Regional Action Plan for Jobs from 2015-2018. I also welcome the recent appointment of Paraic Rattigan, Programme Manager for the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan.

It is timely now, as we work to assist businesses all over the country to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, to consider also what will help grow and sustain businesses over the longer term as they negotiate the transformative effects of digitalisation, and address both opportunities and challenges in a low carbon economy.

The creation of a new Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-West has already commenced and will play a very important role in recognising and realising the potential that exists in this region. I very much look forward to further engagement with the Mid-West Regional Steering Committee over the coming months as the new Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 takes shape.



Damien English

Damien English TD,
Minister of State for Business,
Employment and Retail

Message from the Chairperson

The year of 2020 was immensely challenging for everyone in Ireland and beyond. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 has affected many lives and livelihoods; with the impact on the Mid-West regional economy being very painful indeed. Almost 60,000 of the 220,000 employed in the region were without work during the first lockdown. Like other regions throughout the country, our retail and tourism sectors were severely affected; however, in the Mid-West we had additional job losses in the aviation and aerospace sectors. The impact of the pandemic on Shannon Airport and on its regional supply chain has been particularly immense. Job losses ranging from maintenance, repair and overhaul right through to leasing, insurance and subcontract manufacturing of aircraft components have presented significant challenges to the region.

Despite these setbacks, the Mid-West stakeholders have continued to demonstrate resilience, cohesion and considerable innovation. As Chair of a diverse and engaged voluntary consortium of about 70 key participants, I am very proud of our recent achievements. In 2020, we continued to deliver on the key strategic targets directly associated with our Regional Plan. Further details of progress towards our objectives and actions are contained in this report; some regional highlights from 2020 are also provided.

In March the Regional Enterprise Plan stakeholders decided to develop an integrated virtual response to help those most affected by COVID-19 in the region. Prompted by Barry O'Sullivan (VP of Manufacturing J&J Vision Care), Denis Kelly (former Global Senior Vice President of Services for Dell Technologies) and Eamonn Murphy (Chairman of Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020), the Mid-West Response steering committee engaged with industry leaders across a number of sectors to devise a response to the unprecedented employment challenges the region was facing. It is difficult in a few words to capture the hundreds of person hours that were spent on virtual meetings, planning sessions and especially on detailed project management.

Without the Regional Enterprise Plan structure, it would have been impossible to co-ordinate an integrated regional response to those who lost their jobs due to pandemic. I would like to pay particular thanks to the CEOs of the Clare, Limerick and Tipperary County Councils for their contributions to the regional response to the pandemic.

The Key Objectives of the response were to:

- Take a proactive approach to helping those who had their employment affected
- Take first-hand experiences of industry challenges
- Align regional initiatives with the Next Generation EU instrument which calls for support in re-skilling and helping businesses create new economic opportunities

The Minister of State for Skills launched the report on July the 4th, 2020. Key deliverables identified in the report were as follows:

- 1,115 people upskilled through on-line certified courses during the period April 2020 – July 2020
- Adapted a Limerick and Clare ETB and Tipperary ETB course for the prevention of the spread of infectious disease. Originally designed for the HSE, the course was calibrated to meet the specific requirements for hospitality and retail as dictated by industry leaders
- Adapted the University of Limerick *e-Moderator* course, which facilitates better in-company learning post COVID-19.

Many of the major changes that we have experienced due the impact of COVID-19 had their origins in developments that long predate the pandemic. Globalisation, matrix management structures and digital transformation have had significant impacts on how we work, where we work and especially to whom we report. The pandemic has greatly accelerated these changes and, in the last six months, we have experienced greater organisational changes than at any similar period during the last century.

The impact of these changes around how organisations function will have a dramatic effect on employees; however, it will also significantly affect those who are not part of the existing workforce. Digital transformation will accentuate the differences and difficulties experienced by those who are on the wrong side of the digital frontier. The very large proportion of unemployment black spots located in the region present a very significant challenge and digital inclusivity must be central to any future economic development of the region.

Open and inclusive networks reflect a more affluent and prosperous society, conversely closed restrictive networks reflect a less well educated and economically deprived community. Many of our business opportunities and career prospects are dependent on being part of rich open networks. We derive much of our emotional well-being from closed or restricted networks. Unfortunately, many of our economic black spots are characterised by very closed economic networks. Digital transformation and especially digital exclusion will unfortunately create greater economic opportunities for those of who are already active members of open networks. Equally digital transformations will harden the bonds of closed networks and make it increasingly difficult to transform closed economic black spots into new open digital communities.

This challenge is particularly acute in this region and any post pandemic recovery stimulus package must address this key societal and economic challenge. Failure to address this digital divide now will make the Mid-West regional vision that “our policy frameworks on technology, climate, spatial, education and fiscal matters, will provide a social contract that allows us to work toward greater equalisation, redistribution and inclusion” an impossibility.

As we approach the renewal of the Regional Enterprise Plans, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Barry O’Sullivan, Chair and Dr. Orlaith Borthwick, Manager of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 who left their respective roles in late 2019. They were key drivers of this plan and Barry provided inspirational leadership. We thank them for their immense contributions to regional development and look forward to their continued engagement going forward. In October 2020 we welcomed Dr. Paraic Rattigan to the role of Programme Manager. I look forward to working closely with Paraic to deliver the next phase of the Regional Enterprise Plan with the next few years being particularly crucial as the regional economy aims to recover but also grow towards an ambitious and sustainable future.



Prof. Eamonn Murphy,
Managing Director, Irish Centre for Business Excellence,
Chair Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan

1. Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 – Final Progress Update

MID-WEST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

Enable a digital and innovation economy and make the Mid-West Ireland's leading smart city-region.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

Achieve a step-change in progress toward a low carbon economy in the Mid-West.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

Continue to develop workforce skills and talent and enhance the attractiveness of living and working in the Mid-West.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

Develop the regions capacity to deliver economic growth.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

Build a coordinated regional messaging brand for consistent communication.

Overall high-level outcomes for the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020

This is the final Progress Report of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 which closes out this iteration of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020. For the Steering Committee to present a final assessment on the level of implementation achieved during the 2019-2020 period, actions have been classified into four categories.

Complete: The Committee has deemed that these actions have been fully completed within the scope and lifetime of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020.

Action commenced but requires further work: The Committee has deemed that while these actions were not completed in full, work had commenced, and significant progress was made during the lifetime of the Plan and will continue, as many projects are of a delivery period which exceed the plan duration. The Committee will consider if these actions could be included as part of future strategic objectives in the new Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024.

Action not commenced: The Committee has deemed that these actions were either not initiated, or insufficient progress was made within the scope and lifetime of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020. However, this does not preclude these actions from being reconsidered as part of future strategic objectives in the in the new the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan.

Table 1: Progress on Actions during 2020 and Final Status

Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan	
Total Actions	31
Complete	21
Action commenced but requires further work	10
Action not commenced	0

Each of the previous Regional Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017/8 set out two core outcomes for achievement in each region by the end of 2020 and these continued to be monitored under the Regional Enterprise Plans to 2020:

- employment growth of between 10 and 15 percent; and
- an unemployment rate reduced to within one percentage point of the State average.

Table 2: Utilising data from the CSO Labour Force Survey (LFS), the rate of growth and unemployment rates achieved for the Mid-West region during the period Q1 2015 up to Q4 2020 are as follows:

Region	Numbers Employed			Actual Increase in Employment Q1 2015 – Q4 2020	Unemployment Rate	
	Q1 2015	Q4 2020	Growth Rate Q1 2015 – Q4 2020		Q1 2015	Q4 2020
Mid-West	196,500	214,400	9.1%	17,900	12.0%	7.2%
State	2,014,400	2,306,200	14.4%	291,800	10.5%	5.7%

Source: CSO Labour Force Survey, Q4 2020

Since launch of Regional Action Plan for Jobs in 2015, 17,900 more people are in employment between Q1 2015 and to Q4 2020. This is an increase of 9.1 percent which is slightly below the Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 target while the unemployment rate also fell from 12.0 percent to 7.2 percent over the same period, in the region, which again is slightly below the target.

The figures in Table 2 exclude people who were receiving the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) at the end of 2020. As of the 31st December 2020, a total of 28,592 people were in receipt of the PUP (see Table 3 for a county and regional breakdown)

Table 3: Persons in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment at the end of 2020

County	Persons in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (Number)
Clare	8,370
Limerick	11,732
Tipperary	8,490
Mid-West	28,592

Source: CSO, Labour Market Live Register
(<https://data.cso.ie/table/LRW03>)

2020 Highlights



Continued development and investment in enterprise centres and e-hubs across the region, with notable activities including the progression of the REDF funded projects Tipperary Innovation Engine and The Digital Collaboration Centre in Limerick, as well as the launch of the DigiClare suite of eHubs. Additionally, eight projects across the region were successful in Enterprise Ireland’s recent Enterprise Centres funding call.



2020 saw a number of significant film productions undertaken across the region, with a new range of film skills development initiatives also now underway, supported by the Mid-West’s recently appointed Regional Film Manager.



Continued progress has been made in 2020 to establish the Mid-West as a national centre for advanced manufacturing; with the launch in 2020 of the new headquarters for the SFI Confirm Centre for Smart Manufacturing at UL, as well as significant progress being made on the construction and operational planning for IDA Ireland’s new Advanced Manufacturing Centre.



Regional stakeholders, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, launched the Mid-West Response Initiative, supporting 40 employers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and their employees through a broad set of online training and upskilling courses across five training providers. In total 1,115 employees were upskilled through the initiative.



Future Mobility Campus Ireland, with the support of REDF funding, continued to progress, with detailed plans and a dedicated team in place to deliver the state of the art 12km test facility, to support research, development and innovation in the area of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles. This project has been identified by industry as pivotal to raising national competitiveness in the area of transport and mobility technology.



The region showed the highest number of employers and employees upskilling under the EXPLORE programme nationally in 2020, alongside continued growth in the SpringBoard+ programme with 39 courses being now offered within the region.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

1

Enable a digital and innovation economy and make the Mid-West Ireland's leading smart city-region

**Action 1:**

Develop an Autonomous Mobility Testbed.

Working Group Members:

CAV Ireland, Vehicles of the Future, Clare county council, Limerick city and county council, Shannon Group, Mid-West Enterprise Plan programme manager, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, industry partners

Timeframe for delivery:

Q2 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

A successful funding submission was made under Call 3 of REDF for €4.7m to build a testbed to develop future mobility technologies at Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI). Located in the Limerick-Shannon metropolitan area at Shannon Free Zone in Co. Clare, FMCI will be a collaborative testbed, which will feature 12km of roads combining smart junctions and connected car parks. The testbed will be equipped with multiple sensors, located throughout the site, along with high accuracy location systems, a data management and control centre and two sensor equipped test vehicles. This setup will provide the facilities and expertise to harness valuable sensor data, simulate environments and trial new technologies.

This project has been identified by industry as pivotal to raising national competitiveness in the area of transport and mobility. Collaborating companies include Jaguar Land Rover, Cisco, Seagate, Renovo, Red Hat, Valeo and Mergon. Jaguar will use its all-electric I-Pace at the site.

Work is continuing to expand the opportunity for autonomous mobility. The CAV project has lodged a request with the Department of Transport seeking permission to test on open roads, but this is likely to prove a slow approval process as legislation for this provision is now required.

Final outcome achieved

The project has secured €7 million in investment and FMCI and its industry partners hope to be able to make announcements on jobs and recruitment in the coming months.

In 2021 the campus will commence delivery, with the setting up of sensors and infrastructure that will help the autonomous test cars communicate with and receive information from data collection points, as well as "smart" junctions so that the cars' control systems can be warned of any potential hazards ahead. Other infrastructure will include electric car-charging points, autonomous parking areas, and a dedicated air corridor in and out of Shannon Airport that will allow for the deployment of small drone aircraft, which will help to monitor and locate the autonomous test cars.

Action 2:

Position the Mid-West as a national centre for advanced manufacturing.

Working Group Members:

IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Industry partners, University of Limerick, Limerick Institute of Technology, Confirm, Regional Skills, Enterprise Plan Manager, Clare County Council, Limerick City & County Council, Tipperary County Council

Timeframe for delivery:

Q3 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

IDA Ireland has commenced construction of Ireland's Advanced Manufacturing Centre (AMC) in Limerick. Construction of the dedicated c.30,000sq ft. facility commenced in July 2020, and currently the scheduled completion date is Q4 2021. The ultimate objective for the AMC is to position the Irish discrete manufacturing base at the forefront of digital transformation and to ensure that Ireland is recognised internationally as having a vibrant, collaborative, competitive and digitally enabled industry base, ideally suited to driving the next generation of manufacturing. €6.6m has been committed by the government to this project from the 2021 budget. IDA Ireland are currently putting together an operational team to manage and grow the facility when it opens.

In Q2, 2020 the Confirm Centre for Smart Manufacturing completed construction of its 16,000 sq. ft. headquarters in Limerick. The official opening of the €3million research centre took place virtually in Q4, 2020. This facility will enable a community of practice where Confirm will host 70 researchers, 12 operational and management staff, resident and visiting investigators from Confirm's nine national research partners, international collaborators, industry partners, as well as testbed and prototype facilities.

The *Joining the Dots* event was held in February 2020, led by the British Embassy, in partnership with Limerick City and County Council, Confirm Smart Manufacturing, University of Limerick and Connected Places Catapult. A total of 40 UK organisations met with their Irish counterparts at The Strand Hotel in Limerick with the aim of promoting economic links and opportunities between regions in Ireland and the UK. Johnson & Johnson, Dell and Analog Devices hosted tours of their innovation centres where both UK and Irish delegates could see first-hand technology and innovation happening within the region. This was a follow up to the event held in 2019 where a regional contingent joined a visit to the UK's national manufacturing centre, Coventry.

Organised by Local Enterprise Offices Clare and Limerick, the Tech Disrupt 4.0 pilot project encourages cutting edge technology, innovation and software development. Participants competed to secure funding of up to €25,000 to help create and launch solutions that align with the principles of Industry 4.0. A series of mandatory ideation workshops have been designed to provide an interactive platform to encourage engagement between key technology industry leaders, experts and attendees, and play a fundamental role in guiding participants on their entry forms.

The culture and strong collaboration that exists between the manufacturing sector in the region and our higher education and research providers was to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic. Limerick Institute of Technology's (LIT) Aula Maxima was set up in conjunction with a number of local manufacturers including Zimmer Biomet, Cook Medical, Johnson & Johnson Vision and local schools including Villiers and St. Clements. The operation assembled and distributed over 20,000 PPE Medical Face Visors to the healthcare community. A joint project between University of Limerick (UL) and LIT was also undertaken to produce 150 precision connectors for filters and ventilation tubing for UHL, while UL and the Confirm Research Centre, received COVID-19 research funding for the RAPID project, which aimed to overcome blocked or frozen supply chains in healthcare in a time when COVID-19 has disrupted and threatened supply chains around the world.

Final outcome achieved:

Significant investment has positioned the region as a national centre for advanced manufacturing with both the Confirm Centre and IDA AMC having progressed their physical centres significantly and positioned themselves as R&D centres for industry and academic partners.

A number of local and regional events have been held to promote advanced manufacturing, and to connect regional stakeholders with international counterparts in order to build the regional reputation.

Action 3:

Appoint a regional film manager to develop and exploit industry opportunities to identify additional economic and job creation potential opportunities exist in the region. This person will be tasked with ensuring the economic impact of TROY film studios is felt across the region and that opportunities are grasped as they arise.

Working Group Members:

Innovate Limerick, TROY studios, Limerick School Art and Design, Limerick Clare Education Training Board (ETB), Tipperary Education Training Board (ETB)

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

Paul Ryan was appointed as regional film coordinator in September 2019 and is working on a number of initiatives to promote film and film skills development in the Mid-West. These initiatives are being run in cooperation with Screen Ireland, Screen Skills Ireland, Troy Studios, Foundation Production for Apple Streaming, Limerick and Clare ETB and Mid-West local authorities.

Four Mid-West-based producers joined a delegation to the European Film Market at the Berlin International Film Festival in February 2020. The initiative by *Film in Limerick* in partnership with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board saw local producers: Gemma O'Shaughnessy, Pete Moles, Ronan Cassidy, and Zeb Moore travel to Berlin to experience a working film market and to attend structured training events.

Some notable successes for the regional film industry include the following:

- In late 2020 Odeon Fiction completed shooting *Planlos in Ireland* which translates as 'Clueless in Ireland'. Production staff were based at the Kilkee Bay Hotel for the duration of the shoot. Facilitated by Clare's Arts Office it is predicted that the value of the production to Kilkee and West Clare is in the region of €800,000.
- In October 2020 Filming resumed at Troy Studios on a new 10-part sci-fi series Foundation which, with a budget of over €45m, is one of the largest productions ever to be made in Ireland. Based on the Isaac Asimov work which inspired the Star Wars franchise it is set to become one of the key shows for new streaming service Apple TV+ when it is released in 2021. Troy Studios is currently operating to capacity and employs more than 500 production staff who have been working on the huge shoot. Filming began late 2019 before being shut down due to the pandemic, but work has since resumed.

- Cahir Castle in Co. Tipperary has been used as a location for scenes of The Last Duel starring Hollywood A-listers Matt Damon and Ben Affleck and directed by Ridley Scott. As a result of the pandemic, the movie's release date has been pushed back to October 2021.
- Nightflyers, a series based on the novella and series of short stories of the same name by George R. R. Martin, started its production in early 2018 on location in Limerick, Ireland, and also at the Limerick-based Troy Studios. The series resulted in 320 direct jobs and a €53 million boost to the local economy. The series premiered on Syfy in the United States in December 2018 and on internationally on Netflix in February 2019.
- In early 2020 filming began for the RTÉ commissioned drama Smother in Co. Clare. The 12-week shoot began in February and wrapped in May. Shooting locations included Lahinch, Liscannor, Spanish Point, Fanore, Ennistymon and Lisdoonvarna. The series is being filmed in Clare for broadcast on RTÉ One and is being distributed internationally by BBC Studios. The production of the series, which supported approximately 80 jobs, has been enabled by a number of partners including Screen Ireland and WRAP (Western Region Audio-visual Producers Fund).

Final outcome achieved:

- The regional film manager has been appointed and continues to develop and exploit industry opportunities and job creation in the region.
- A number of significant productions have been located in the region, with strong economic and jobs benefits delivered as a result.
- A number of initiatives are underway and in planning to ensure a sustainable film sector continues and thrives in the region.

Action 4:
Expand the Emerald Aero Group cluster.
Working Group Members:
EAG Group, Enterprise Ireland funded this project and will be actively involved in, monitoring the delivery of a set of Metrics & KPI's with EAG on a half yearly basis for the next three to five years
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Final Status:
Action commenced but requires further work
Expected Completion Date:
To be determined
Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:
<p>In 2018 the Emerald Aero Group (EAG) was launched as a cluster of approximately 14 Irish Companies collaborating together to supply companies in the global aerospace market. The Emerald Aero Cluster was awarded funding under the first REDF funding call in 2017 and was again successful in obtaining funding of €350,000 under the REDF call in 2019 for its work to develop Ireland – and the Mid-West region in particular – as a hub for excellence in global aerospace manufacturing.</p> <p>In 2019 it was noted that the cluster was showing good progress, with a growth in cluster size and evidence that some companies had seen as much as a 50% increase in sales resulting from the cluster, in an 18-month period. In 2020 however, the aerospace industry was badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with global demand for travel grinding to a sudden halt. It is estimated that in 2020 demand for new aircraft has fallen by up to 42%, in turn affecting Irish suppliers of components, such as the members of the cluster.</p> <p>The cluster membership continues to meet on a regular (biweekly) basis and has continued in its business development and promotional activities where possible. By maintaining regular meetings throughout the pandemic, the cluster members have also been able to support each other in availing of Government supports and sharing industry updates. The onset of the pandemic has also allowed the cluster membership to explore other ways of collaborating, with recent activities focusing on shared learnings in regard to improving and optimising operations and business processes. In addition, the cluster has taken time to undertake international benchmarking in order to better align its offerings and identify strategic strengths and weaknesses. Each of these activities have been undertaken to allow the cluster to be best placed to deliver strong and sustainable recovery in 2021 and beyond.</p>
Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional government supports made available to the aerospace sector as part of national recovery • Strategic additions to be made to the cluster membership • Additional contracts to be secured to enable recovery

Action 5:
Develop a SportsTech Cluster.
Working Group Members:
SportsTech Ireland, IDA Ireland, Limerick City and County Council
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Final Status:
Complete
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
<p>SportsTech Ireland was formally launched on the 15 June 2019, at an innovation showcase event which welcomed 100 guests to King John's Castle, Limerick. The event promoted the vision and values of the initiative as well as exhibiting a range of SportsTech companies on the day. SportsTech Ireland is supporting the growth of the sector in the region in a number of ways: 1) Supporting IDA Ireland in attracting FDI and ensuring an optimal ecosystem is in place, 2) Supporting entrepreneurship in the area of sports technology, and 3) Supporting education and training programmes that target sports technology as an industry.</p> <p>Notable efforts delivered by the cluster include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stats Perform chose Limerick as the location of its European HQ, and now employs over 200 part time and 40 full time staff, • A new Sports Tech e-hub has opened on Castle Street, Limerick supported by Limerick City and County Council, • Munster Rugby launched a new partnership with Phelan Gaming, marking their entry into esports. Esports is amongst the fastest growing sports globally, with major leagues for several different electronic games in place in Europe, Australasia, and North America. <p>Delivery of two-day Masterclass in Sports Entrepreneurship at UL headlined by Sam McCleery, the Head of Innovation at Under Armour. SportsTech Ireland has put in place partnerships with the University of Limerick, LeAD Berlin, Ryerson University in Toronto, the University of Michigan and London Sport; all of which played a role in the sports entrepreneurship masterclass.</p>
Final outcome achieved:
<p>SportsTech Ireland has been successfully launched. The next phase of the cluster's development will require funding to be secured to enable growth. Funding is being sought from a number of avenues, and will be used to provide the dedicated human capital required to fully develop the cluster in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Development: Global, national and local collaborative SportsTech network development that benefits start-ups, scaleups, established organisations and partners through the sharing of ideas, learning, expertise and sectoral knowledge. • Industry Engagement: Attracting established brands and SportsTech organisations to the region that can be active partners, customers and acquisition routes for start-ups and scale-ups. • Knowledge Development: Educational and commercialisation services: Through the provision of mentorship, training and development programmes, to help stimulate start-ups by providing a systematic approach to commercialisation and provide within the region a supply of talent that is in turn attractive to FDI companies and Irish SportsTech companies.

Action 6:
Develop a suite of regional 'Smart E-Hubs'.
Working Group Members:
Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Mid-West Enterprise Plan Manager, Enterprise Ireland, Local Development Companies, LEO network, Industry partners, HSE, University of Limerick, Limerick Institute of Technology, Limerick Clare Education Training Board, Tipperary Education Training Board
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Final Status:
Complete
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
<p>The Regional e-hub manager has been building the <i>Happen</i> branding for Mid-West e-hubs which can then be offered as a single entity to a wide range of potential users from single occupant to multinational teams living in the region. https://www.happenspace.ie/. Each hub within the Happen network will provide modern co-workspaces for freelancers, start-ups and remote workers alike and enable tenants and users of each individual space to connect and collaborate with each other through their membership of the network, be that through the use of a hot desk, a fixed desk, or a private office within the specific hub. Working from a <i>Happen</i> space is simple; All that is required to avail of a desk or office is to book via a centralised online booking system.</p> <p>Clare County Council have launched DigiClare (https://www.digicclare.ie/); an initiative which has seen the opening of five e-hubs across the county, in Feakle, Miltown Malbay, Kilrush, Kilkee, and Ennistymon. Each location offers hot-desk and co-working facilities as well as high speed broadband, while some offer conference facilities and meeting/training rooms.</p> <p>In October 2019, €184,467 from the LEO Competitive Fund went to a project to promote the existing network of Smart e-hubs across Limerick, Clare and Tipperary to attract and retain workers in villages across the region.</p> <p>In January 2020, €500,000 funding was awarded under the REDF for a new Tipperary Innovation Engine. Tipperary County Council has also committed match funding of €127,000 to assist in the delivery of this project in Tipperary Town as part of the refurbishment of the existing technology park. This project will deliver 13,000 sq. ft. of contemporary enterprise space in Tipperary Town and bring to market up to 40 flexible hot desks and co-working spaces, office space with meeting rooms, a training room and associated facilities. Other new sites being appraised as potential locations in Tipperary including Roscrea, Templemore and Carrick-on-Suir.</p>

In November 2020, regional centres benefited to the tune of €627,418 under Enterprise Ireland's Enterprise Centres Fund. In Limerick, Ballyhoura Food Centre (Hospital) DAC will receive €28,480; €40,000 will go to Broadford Community Enterprise Centre and Croom Community Enterprise Centre will receive €44,171. The LIT Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre will receive €87,525 and UL's Nexus Innovation Centre €145,394. In Tipperary Thurles Community Enterprise Centre Limited (TCEC) operated by LIT will receive €97,766, Sustainable Ireland Cooperative Society Ltd and North Tipperary Green Enterprise Park CLG will receive €71,760 and The LIT Questum Acceleration Centre will receive €112,322. Projects to develop e-hubs in Abbeyfeale and Rathkeale in Co. Limerick, led by Innovate Limerick, are still in progress.

Final outcome achieved:

Significant increase in the number eHubs and collaboration centers, spread across the region. These eHubs have become crucial in enabling remote working and connectivity throughout the pandemic and are increasingly being recognized as vital enablers to allow for regional growth and sustainability.

Action 7:

Create a digital collaboration centre to increase Multinational/ SME linkages.

Working Group Members:

Innovate Limerick, Enterprise Ireland, Limerick City and County Council, Industry partners; Limerick Institute of Technology, Mid-West Enterprise Plan Manager

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

In December 2018, the Digital Collaboration Centre (DCC) was awarded €2.27million in REDF funding. Since funding was awarded the Innovate team has been working closely with architects Drake Hourigan to finalise the design of the DCC building and in summer 2020 received planning permission from Limerick City and County Council. The overall centre size will be 14,000 sq. ft, finished to a very high standard and comprising open plan collaboration space, offices, meeting rooms and a 100-seat convention centre on the top floor. The project has recently gone out to tender, with a contract award anticipated to be announced in early 2021, and with construction to follow in early Q2, 2021. Construction is expected to be completed by Q2 2022.

Simultaneously the Innovate team have been contacting a number of multinationals and indigenous companies with a view to commencing the programme side of the DCC and building a pipeline of collaborative projects. The new DCC manager has been recruited and will be starting in Q1 2021. The new centre manager will kick start activities on the programme side.

Final outcome achieved:

- Funding for DCC obtained
- Design complete and planning permission received, with construction planned for early 2021
- New DCC manager has been recently recruited with activities on the programme side to now follow.

Action 8:
Run a pilot Public Sector Automation and Digital Transformation Centre of Excellence.
Working Group Members:
Limerick City and County Council and associated partner stakeholders as appropriate
Timeframe for delivery:
Q2 2020
Final Status:
Action commenced but requires further work
Expected Completion Date:
To be determined
Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:
<p>Limerick City and County Council operate the Housing Assistance Payment Shared Service Centre (HAP SSC) on behalf of the local government sector and are continuously striving for ways to improve their business. The organisation deals with more than 47,000 tenancies and 27,000 landlords, makes payments in excess of €400m, and collects more than €100million in rents. In order to help deal with these volumes, the deployment of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in the HAP SSC was investigated.</p> <p>A proof-of-concept pilot project was carried out by Agilisys, examining three micro processes within the centre. The proof-of-concept project demonstrated that opportunities for efficiencies and savings can be achieved through the deployment of RPA. Applying the outcome of the proof-of-concept project to a business case, it was concluded that if 10 complex processes could be replaced by RPA, then considerable savings could be made, while at the same time improving services to all key stakeholders. The HAP SSC is now seeking to identify existing processes where RPA may be immediately deployed, as well as opportunities for further business systems integration and automation within the HAP SSC.</p>
Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:
To run a pilot on developing an automation and digital transformation centre for the public sector.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

2

Achieve a step-change in progress toward a low carbon economy in the Mid-West

**Action 1:**

Develop and grow the National BioEconomy Piloting and Innovation Facility.

Working Group Members:

Irish BioEconomy Foundation, Vedanta, Tipperary County Council, Irish BioEconomy Foundation, BEACON, Dairy Processing Technology Centre (DPTC), Shannon ABC, Teagasc, Tipperary County Council, Glanbia, CMP, Marine Institute, Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT), Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2021

Final Status:

Action commenced but requires further work

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

The National BioEconomy Innovation and Piloting Facility at Lisheen, Co Tipperary received €4.6 million in REDF funding under the 2017 call. In total €5.75 million is being spent in developing the campus. The pilot scale facility is expected to come on stream by the end of Q4, 2021.

The National BioEconomy Forum has been launched to promote, support and advocate for the sustainable development of the BioEconomy in Ireland. Irish BioEconomy Foundation collaborated on 'BioEconomy Ireland Week 2020' which took place in October 2020 and aimed to place a spotlight on Ireland's BioEconomy through a series of online events and activities aimed at diverse range of audiences (citizens, industry professionals and policymakers) from multiple leading stakeholder groups within the Irish BioEconomy Network.

Final outcome achieved:

The National BioEconomy Innovation and Piloting Facility is being developed at Lisheen, Co Tipperary. A number of research projects are currently underway with a goal of transforming early-stage research to commercial testing. The pilot scale facility is expected to come on stream by the end of Q4, 2021.

Significant promotion of the facility and the wider BioEconomy movement to industry partners and the wider public has been facilitated through the National BioEconomy Forum, Irish BioEconomy Foundation, BiOrbic research centre, etc.

Action 2:

Create a Marine and Renewable Energy Research Centre at Limerick's Docklands Economic Park.

Working Group Members:

Shannon Foynes Port Company, University of Limerick, Limerick City and County Council and other commercial and research partners as appropriate

Timeframe for delivery:

Q3 2020

Final Status:

Action commenced but requires further work

Expected Completion Date:

To be determined subject to National Marine Spatial Plan (NMPF)

Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:

In recent years, Limerick's Docklands Economic Park has hosted a number of innovative research projects in the areas of Marine and Renewable Energy. These are some the highlights:

- Limerick City and County Council granted planning permission for Europe's first water-cooled floating data centre pilot project. Nautilus Data Technologies has applied for €40m in funding from the European Investment Bank to construct the flagship floating facility in Limerick. The project is being developed in conjunction with Shannon Foynes Port Company as part of a wider regeneration of Limerick's docks. Water will be funnelled from the Shannon to the floating data centre to cool the facility, before being returned to the river at a slightly warmed temperature. This innovative system is 80% more energy efficient than those typically used in medium or large data centres, and as a result the floating centre will have 30% lower operating costs.
- Limerick based GKinetic first tested a scale prototype of its hydrokinetic turbine in mid-2017, at a purpose-built facility in Limerick Docks set up in tandem with the Shannon Foynes Port Company, and with the support from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's (SEAI) Prototype Development Fund. GKinetic's technology is now being commercialised by fellow Co Limerick company DesignPro Renewables, who secured funding under the Horizon 2020 project to test its own river energy devices at scale. A Gkinetic turbine is also being placed in the nearby river Shannon to harness the water power to generate positive energy for the pilot building cluster as part of the +CityxChange project.
- A €2m underwater robot, designed by researchers at UL's Centre for Robotics and Intelligence Systems and funded by Science Foundation Ireland was launched at Limerick docklands in 2018.

The Government has drafted Ireland's first-ever National Marine Spatial Plan – called the National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The NMPF outlines the proposed approach to managing Ireland's marine activities to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources up to 2040.

Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:

- Continue to deliver renewable energy research projects
- Deliver physical Marine and Renewable Energy Research Centre to support projects
- Align Docklands Economic Park activities and development with NMPF

Action 3:

Initiate an energy demonstrator project: Positive City Exchange (+CityXchange).

Working Group Members:

The project will be led by Limerick City and County Council and Trondheim Kommune (Norway) and hosted by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). The Irish partners include the Limerick Clare Energy Agency, Innovate Limerick, University of Limerick, IES R&D, Smart MPower, ESB Innovation and ESB Networks, Space Engagers, GKinetic Energy Ltd, Future Analytics Consulting

Timeframe for delivery:

Five-year project

Final Status:

Action commenced but requires further work

Expected Completion Date:

Five-year project which commenced in 2018. Estimated to be completed in Mid-2023.

Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:

The +CityxChange (positive city exchange) is a smart city project, which was launched in 2018, and comprises a consortium of 32 partners from 11 countries including from Ireland, Limerick City and County Council. The full-scale project will receive €20 million in funding from Horizon 2020, of which Limerick, as a 'Lighthouse Smart City' will receive approximately €6.5m.

The first year of Positive City ExChange in 2019, was very active. The project focused on co-creating timelines, resolving issues around understanding terminology and requirements, and raising the profile of the project in Limerick city, in order to prepare the ground for a successful implementation phase from 2020 onwards.

Key outcomes from 2019 include:

- The PEB is in place,
- PEB building owners signed up to project,
- Broad political support for +CityxChange at national and local levels,
- Citizen Observatory Opened,
- First City Engage Week completed,
- Regulator is proactively engaged in the project,
- SLUs installed in Gardens International and preparatory work done for V2G/V2B,
- Turbine Hydrological and Environmental Impact study underway,
- Engagement with Potential Energy Champions has begun.

In Mid-2020, following a series of workshops, five innovative projects led by community leaders have been selected by Limerick City and County Council as part of a programme to re-imagine Limerick's Georgian Laneways. The overarching aim is to develop a series of demonstration projects on how to become a smart positive energy city for the benefit of the city and those who live and work there.

In September 2020, Limerick City and County Council in collaboration with +CityxChange partners hosted a full engagement week with nine online webinars and workshops on the theme of renewable energy. The target for this engagement week was owners and occupiers of buildings in the Georgian neighbourhood of Limerick, but also professionals and those with an interest in sustainable development. A total of 195 citizens attended and participated in events throughout the week, taking the opportunity to learn about the +CityxChange project and share their vision for a low carbon future for Limerick. Attendees got the opportunity to explore the potential and the challenges of installing renewables and creating positive energy districts in Limerick's Georgian Quarter.

Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:

Remaining work for the entirety of the project is as follows:

2019-2021 Testing, Commissioning and Implementation

- Continuation of testing, commissioning and implementation of demonstration projects in both lighthouse and follower cities.

2022-2023 Scaling up, Replication and Exploitation

- Replication assessment of +CityxChange solutions;
- Replication across EU Cities;
- Exploitation, IP protection and agreements.

2019-2023 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Development of a standardised approach to monitoring and evaluation,
- Development of data collation, management and analysis approach, and
- Developing practical recommendations and guideline reports based on +CityxChange.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

3

Continue to develop workforce skills and talent and enhance the attractiveness of living and working in the Mid-West

**Action 1:**

As part of the Skills for Growth initiative the Regional Skills Forum will assist local enterprises identify their skills' needs through a variety of audit tools to ensure that the region has the effective use of skills to support economic and social prosperity. Once skill needs have been identified, Regional Skills Fora will link companies with the education and training providers best suited to responding to identified skills need.

Working Group Members:

Regional Skills Forum (RSF), and partners including Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Education Training Boards (ETB), Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), Local authorities, Local Enterprise Office (LEOs), Regional Enterprise Plan for Jobs Programme Manager, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEAS)

Timeframe for delivery:

Q2 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

As part of the Skills for Growth initiative the Mid-West RSF has completed 24 audits across industry sectors ranging from micro enterprises to SME's in the first half of 2020. This data which identifies future skill needs and training requirements is being collated by the Skills Planning and Enterprise Engagement Unit (SPEE). Individual referrals have been made between respective companies and appropriate education and training providers.

The Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival was held in October 2020 with the theme celebrating and building learning communities. The festival is now in its 10th year and for the first time it was held virtually in 2020.

Final outcome achieved:

Strong framework of supports in place to assist local enterprises identify their skills' needs, with good support by industry to date.

The Skills for Growth initiative will continue, and the Mid-West RSF will continue carrying out skills audits and link companies with the education and training providers best suited to responding to identified skills needs.

<p>Action 2:</p> <p>Double the number of participants on the EXPLORE programme over the 2018 figure. The EXPLORE programme is designed to address the need for enhanced digital skills among older workers in manufacturing sectors within the region.</p> <p>Working Group Members:</p> <p>Education Training Boards (ETB), Regional Skills Forum</p> <p>Timeframe for delivery:</p> <p>Q4 2019</p> <p>Final Status:</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Outline of work undertaken during 2020:</p> <p>The EXPLORE programme has continued with the target of increasing the number of training groups of older employees with the emphasis on SME engagement continuing in 2020. Despite the COVID-19 challenges a total of 55 employers across manufacturing, logistics, retail and hospitality participated with 92 employees receiving digital upskilling training.</p> <p>A greater emphasis has been placed on SME engagement and this is reflected in company profiles: with SMEs accounting for 62% of participating companies, 36% being micro enterprises and the remaining 2% being multinationals.</p> <p>Final outcome achieved:</p> <p>The Mid-West delivered the highest number of employers and employees upskilling under the EXPLORE programme nationally.</p>
<p>Action 3:</p> <p>Support education and training providers in preparing applications under Springboard+ 2019 in collaboration with local enterprise in order to increase provision of programmes for upskilling and reskilling within the region.</p> <p>Working Group Members:</p> <p>RSF, Higher Education Institutes (HEI)</p> <p>Timeframe for delivery:</p> <p>Q2 2019</p> <p>Final Status:</p> <p>Complete</p>

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

The SpringBoard+ programme has continued to grow in numbers within the region, and 2020 saw continued regional successes under SpringBoard+ 2020 with the current course offering as follows:

	2019	2020
UL	16	18
LIT	17	21
Total	33	39

The total number of learner places for 2020 were LIT 735 and UL 397.

In addition, the Higher Education Institution's received funding under Human Capital Initiative (HCI) for undergrad places and postgrad places.

Under the Government's July stimulus package modular courses (12 weeks or less) were approved for Higher Education Institution's. The approval of such courses will bring significant upskilling opportunities for industry.

Final outcome achieved:

The SpringBoard programme has continued to increase the numbers involved within the Mid-West region, with the number of courses available and learner uptake continuing to show increases. This trend is likely to continue as the economy recovers, with stimulus measures targeting upskilling and reskilling.

Action 4:
Support all actions in the Regional Enterprise Plan where linkages to Education and Training Providers are required.
Working Group Members:
RSF
Timeframe for delivery:
2020
Final Status:
Complete
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
<p>The Mid-West RSF has played an integral part of the Regional Enterprise Plan, with RSF activities crossing all strategic objectives and ensuring alignment with regional growth objectives.</p> <p>The Mid-West RSF approved the annual operating plan for 2020, key objectives include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling and engaging with 150 new enterprise clients • Strengthening the skills and talent capacity of industry clusters across manufacturing, aviation, transport and ICT. • Upskilling employees with little or no digital skills under EXPLORE initiative, • Promoting new Traineeships & Apprenticeships in life sciences, retail and manufacturing to regional Industry • Completing 50 company skills audits • Supporting education and training providers in collaborating with industry on new programme design • Facilitate round table workshops with industry to determine skill requirements • Rolling out Upskilling the Mid-West roadshow in partnership with industry • Partnering with stakeholders in the delivery of annual career events including, Mid-West Career Fair, Mid-West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Showcase • Focusing on two emerging sectors (film and transport) that according to European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) will deliver employment growth potential up to 2030 • A total of 40 companies participated in completing skills audits to map their future training needs.
Final outcome achieved:
The Mid-West RSF has played an integral part of the Regional Enterprise Plan, with RSF activities crossing all strategic objectives and ensuring alignment with regional growth objectives

Action 5:
Communicate to employers the services available through Regional Skills Forum to assist with resolution of emerging skills needs.
Working Group Members:
RSF and other stakeholders
Timeframe for delivery:
2020
Final Status:
Complete
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
<p>A total of 151 enterprises engaged on a one-to-one basis with the Mid-West RSF during 2020. These engagements exclude the number of enterprises who have attended regional business briefings hosted by the RSF and enterprises who engaged arising through various communication channels such as the monthly ezine, website, social media, etc.</p> <p>As part of the annual operating plan the Mid-West RSF has agreed to include the use of short one-minute videos that will be used extensively on social media, ezines and the website. These videos will capture employer testimonials, education providers and various events hosted by the RSF. Short video clips can play an important part in our communicating to employers on the benefits of engaging with the RSF in terms of building a resilient workforce.</p>
Final outcome achieved:
<p>The regional skills forum showed a high level of industry uptake for its services.</p> <p>A total of 151 enterprises engaged on a one-to-one basis with the MWRSF during 2020.</p>

Action 6:

Promote existing skills initiatives to Life-Long Learners and those in employment.

Working Group Members:

Limerick Clare Education Training Board, Tipperary Education Training Board, University of Limerick, Limerick Institute of Technology, Mary Immaculate College, Mid-West Regional Skills Forum, Limerick for Engineering, Limerick for IT, Skillnets, Chambers of Commerce, IBEC, LEO network, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Mid-West Enterprise Plan Manager

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

In 2020 the Mid-West RSF has continued to facilitate engagement with industry and education and training providers to improve upskilling in the region.

In October 2020, the Mid-West RSF launched *DigiEco*, a pilot programme, the objective of which is to instil cultural and behavioural change within organisations, on the importance of embracing the Green Economy. A total of six manufacturing companies, based in north Tipperary, participated. The educational partners included LIT and LCETB.

Developing the digital capacity of employees will help participants undertake green audits in areas such as energy use, resource management and emissions. The findings will assist in implementing new work processes that contribute towards greener and cleaner working environments. The programme provides part-time training in association with local Education and Training Boards and targets small to medium size enterprises across to all industry sectors.

To facilitate greater engagement between industry and education and training providers, the Mid-West RSF in partnership with both further education and higher education colleges, have facilitated a series of industry webinars, in the absence of traditional round table workshops.

During the first lockdown, a working group chaired by Denis Kelly former VP Dell EMC, facilitated the upskilling of approximately 1,115 employees in 40 retail and hospitality businesses. A final report was presented to Minister Collins on July 17, 2020. This Mid-West initiative demonstrated the active partnership between business and education providers.

The RSF also hosted Springboard+ webinars in June in collaboration with HEI's, to promote the new range of Government funded programmes and help increase participation in various upskilling programmes. A second webinar, also hosted by the RSF, promoted a range of talent development supports including Springboard, *Skills to Advance* and Skillnet programmes as part of a regional upskilling campaign.

More recently the RSF hosted two webinars for the freight and logistics and hospitality cluster with member companies joining together with education providers to discuss future training needs. On December 1, 2020 the RSF hosted a webinar with the Limerick for IT cluster to discuss skill needs and a scholarship proposal to attract more females into ICT.

Final outcome achieved:

Numerous initiatives were undertaken to promote the development of new skills to life-long learners and those in employment. These initiatives have continued and evolved during COVID-19 lockdowns and will play an important part in regional recovery.

Action 7:

Increase Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

A key objective of the action plan is to work toward achieving the Department of Education and Skills ambition to double the number of programmes on offer across industry sectors, achieving in excess of 10,000 apprentice registrations per annum in Ireland.

Working Group Members:

University of Limerick, Limerick Institute of Technology, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick Clare Education Training Board, Tipperary Education Training Board, Limerick for Engineering, Limerick for IT, Skillnets, Chambers of Commerce, IBEC, LEO network, Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, Regional Enterprise Plan Programme Manager, with Mid-West Regional Skills Forum Manager

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

Mid-West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Showcase as part of European Skills week is usually held in October. The event showcases work and learning opportunities to those considering future career options. It is intended for that the Mid-West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Showcase becomes an annual event. However, the showcase for 2020 could not go ahead and was instead replaced by a series of industry webinars in partnership with LCETB. During European Skills Week employers including Takumi Precision, Regeneron and Confirm all presented to both TY and senior cycle students along with guidance teachers on future career opportunities.

There has been a big increase in non-craft (logistical and life-sciences) apprenticeships.

A new website <https://apprenticeship.ie> was launched by Solas however, in the absence of a direct line of communication between potential apprentices and employers the RSF will continue to promote the Mid-West apprenticeship app.

Final outcome achieved:

In response to a consultation on a new 5-year apprenticeship action plan by Minister Harris, the RSF submitted a detailed proposal representing the views of 35 employers.

Action 8:
Pilot an Enterprise-led employment initiative targeted at unemployment blackspots.
Working Group Members:
Limerick Clare Education Training Board, Tipperary Education Training Board, Limerick Regeneration Agency, Innovate Limerick, Department of Employment and Social Protection, regional employers, Mid-West Enterprise Plan manger, South-East Enterprise Plan manager
Timeframe for delivery:
2020
Final Status:
Action commenced but requires further work
Expected Completion Date:
To be determined
Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:
<p>In January 2020, €500,000 funding was awarded under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) for a new Tipperary Innovation Engine. Tipperary County Council has also committed match funding of €127,000 to assist in the delivery of this project in Tipperary Town as part of the refurbishment of the existing Technology Park. This project will deliver 13,000 sq. ft. of contemporary enterprise space in Tipperary Town and bring to market up to 40 flexible hot desks and co-working spaces, office space with the capacity to house 60 employees as well as meeting rooms, a training room and associated facilities. In October 2020 the Tipperary Town Task Force continued stakeholder engagement which will feed into the preparation of a broad three-year action plan for the town.</p> <p>Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (LEDP) continues to contribute to the social fabric of Limerick City South through job creation, training and education and is a key stimulator for enterprise development and regeneration. There are now 35 enterprises and 1,000 jobs on site at Roxboro with over €70m invested there since 2001. LEDP's 35,000sq ft Innovation Hub boasts a state-of-the-art training and education facility, and working closely with key education, industry and other stakeholders in the region, will continue to act as a beacon for future job creation.</p>
Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:
Pilot a specific initiative in partnership with relevant state and regional agencies, but specifically the Education and Training Boards, working toward employer-led pathways for persons from areas of social and economic disadvantage.

Action 9:
Work with companies to develop 'Returnships', aimed at increasing the female participation rate.
Working Group Members:
Mid-West Enterprise Plan Programme Manager, with industry and regional stakeholders
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Final Status:
Action commenced but requires further work
Expected Completion Date:
To be determined
Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:
<p>In 2019 Johnson & Johnson's Limerick based VisionCare operation launched a new 'returnship' programme called Re-Ignite aimed at females returning to the workplace. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has likely resulted in reprioritisation for a number of firms approaches to recruitment.</p> <p>The regional skills forum 2020 in collaboration with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is bringing a proposal to the Limerick for IT cluster with the aim of increasing female participation in ICT roles under a scholarship proposal.</p>
Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:
The plan's original metrics of an additional 10 companies offering 'Returnships' by 2020 has not been achievable to date. Returnships and other initiatives aimed at improving female participation rates will be explored at the next iteration of the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan.

Action 10:
Undertake a campaign to attract national and international talent into the region.
Working Group Members:
Chambers of Commerce, Recruitment agencies, Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Enterprise Ireland Mid-West, IDA Ireland Mid-West, industry partners, HEIs, Mid-West Enterprise Plan manager
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Final Status:
Complete
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
<p>Limerick: Atlantic Edge, European Embrace was unveiled in January 2020, becoming the first major branding of the city and county to promote it nationally and globally as a destination for inward industry investment, tourism, education and for people to live and work in. Developed by global creative agency M&C Saatchi, the new branding aims to internationalise Limerick and the wider region and has been accompanied by a national and international media campaign.</p> <p>Limerick Chamber launched http://movemidwest.ie/ in June 2019 at an event entitled <i>Let's Talk Tech</i>, hosted by Jess Kelly of Newstalk, showcasing the breath of technology innovations and career opportunities that exist in the Mid-West.</p> <p>Tech on the Wild Atlantic Way 2020, a major sci-tech recruiting event and conference took place in Thomond Park in February 2020. The objective of the event was to connect sci-tech employers with world-class STEM talent who are interested in working and living in the Mid-West.</p> <p>In November 2020, the Chartered Institute for Securities and Investments hosted a webcast on why there has never been a better time for financial services to locate in a regional location in Ireland. The panel included Mid-West based firms Northern Trust and DMS Governance, and representatives from IDA Ireland.</p> <p>County Clare is part of the <i>More to Life</i> initiative launched by the Western Development Commission, which showcases lifestyle quality and career opportunities in the county.</p>
Final outcome achieved:
A number of campaigns and events have been undertaken to attract national and international talent into the region. This action will continue to be a priority for the region going forward.

Action 11:
Expand the Mid-West STEM Alliance.
Working Group Members:
Limerick Clare Education Training Board, Regional Skills Forum Manager, Mary Immaculate College, Regional Enterprise Plan Programme manager, Limerick for Engineering, Limerick for IT, University of Limerick, Limerick Institute of Technology, Tipperary Education Training Board, industry partners, Skillnets, LERO outreach, Chambers of Commerce
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Final Status:
Action commenced but requires further work
Expected Completion Date:
Q4, 2021 (To be maintained as an action for next iteration of Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan.
Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:
<p>The Regional Enterprise Plan continues to support industry related STEM initiatives and strengthen links between industry and post primary schools to promote STEM career pathways.</p> <p>The Limerick for Engineering showcase 2020 had been due to take place on March 5, 2020 and would have been the biggest such event to date. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 concerns, a late decision had to be made to cancel this year's event. This year's showcase would have seen the addition of five new STEM Pods covering civil/environmental, aeronautical and mechanical, autonomous vehicles, robotics and medical devices. Each pod was to be led by an industry partner including Arup, Lufthansa, Analog, Modular Automation and Edwards Life Sciences.</p>
Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:
<p>Significant progress for this action was achieved in 2019, with the Mid-West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Careers Showcase in October 2019 attracting more than 2,500 people.</p> <p>The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted this action since outreach is an important activity. This action will continue to be progressed by the relevant stakeholders through 2021 and beyond as necessary.</p>

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

4

Develop the regions capacity to deliver economic growth

**Action 1:**

Pilot a Town and Village Renewal project.

Working Group Members:

The three local authorities of Clare, Limerick and Tipperary will lead the project in partnership with LEO offices, local town and community fora, business associations, local development companies and the Department of Rural and Community Development

Timeframe for delivery:

Three-year project.

Final Status:

Action commenced but requires further work

Expected Completion Date:

Q4 2022

Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:**Update on Tipperary Town Renewal Project**

The Tipperary Town Task Force has started its work to support the revitalisation of Tipperary town. The Taskforce will benefit from having a full-time project manager for the three-year period, and will have 18 members representing different sectors, agencies and community organisations and part of its work will be to develop and implement a three-year plan to revitalise the town. A project manager was appointed in March 2020 to progress the development of a 3-year plan. The task force has established nine sub-groups to progress actions under employment, tourism, social inclusion etc.

In January 2020, €500,000 funding was awarded under the REDF for a new Tipperary Innovation Engine. Tipperary County Council has also committed match funding of €127,000 to assist in the delivery of this project in Tipperary Town, as part of the refurbishment of the existing Technology Park. This project will deliver 13,000 sq. ft. of contemporary enterprise space in Tipperary Town and bring to market up to 40 hot desks and co-working spaces, office space with the capacity to house 60 employees as well as meeting rooms, a training room and associated facilities. Other new sites being appraised as potential locations in Tipperary including Roscrea, Templemore and Carrick-on-Suir.

In August 2020, following multiple stakeholder consultations the first-ever Heritage Action Plan for Tipperary Town, which sets out a clear path for heritage-led regeneration based on the county town's rich heritage assets which date back to the 13th century, was launched by the Heritage Council, Tipperary Town Revitalisation Task Force and Tipperary County Council. In October 2020 the Tipperary Town Task Force continued stakeholder engagement which will feed into the preparation of a broad three-year action plan for the town.

Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:

- Action plan to be put in place following review of stakeholder inputs
- The Heritage Action Plan for Tipperary Town to be continued

Action 2:

Support the development of data centres in the Mid-West, including new forms of data centre technology development.

Working Group Members:

Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Shannon Foynes Port Company, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland

Timeframe for delivery:

2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

Limerick City and County council granted planning permission for Europe's first water-cooled floating data centre pilot project. Nautilus Data Technologies has applied for €40m in funding from the European Investment Bank to construct the flagship floating facility in Limerick. The project is being developed in conjunction with Shannon Foynes Port Company as part of a wider regeneration of Limerick's docks. Water will be funnelled from the Shannon to the floating data centre to cool the facility, before being returned to the river at a slightly warmed temperature. This innovative system is 80pc more energy efficient than those typically used in medium or large data centres, and that the floating centre would have 30pc lower operating costs.

Clare County Council has rezoned a 51-hectare (126-acre) site on the Tulla Road leading out of Ennis, off the M18, as an enterprise zone that will be data-centre specific. A one million sq. ft facility with an investment of €400m is now at the early stages of pre-planning. US data centres are being targeted in the marketing of the Ennis Data Centre, a planning application for which is under preparation. This project is expected to create 1,000 construction jobs over five years with 200 permanent posts to be established with an additional 150 indirect jobs. Representatives from the Council visited Facebook's data centre in Lulea, Sweden prior to putting together their proposal.

County Tipperary will receive an investment of €118 million to provide fibre broadband to cover over 29,000 premises (including approximately 6,000 businesses and farms). In Tipperary, 10 broadband community points have been developed in the villages of Aglish, Curreeney, Drom, Killea, Killeen, Killoscully, Killurney, Moyglass, Poulacapple and Rossmore.

A regional stakeholder group has been formed to investigate the feasibility of a connected regional green digital jobs strategy – *The Atlantic Green Digital Basin*, which aims to leverage the region's green energy potential and future digital developments to create the correct ecosystem in which to deliver a large number of high-tech jobs.

Final outcome achieved:

Multiple data centre projects are now at advanced stages within the region, with international best practice and new technology being a regional priority.

A regional strategy for optimizing the delivery of sustainable high-tech jobs aligned with these and future data centre projects is being developed.

Action 3:

Deliver new enterprise capacity and opportunities arising from Shannon Foynes Port Company operations.

Working Group Members:

Shannon Foynes Port Company, Limerick City and County Council

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

Shannon Foynes Port Company is pursuing an unprecedented investment programme at pace to transform the Shannon Estuary into a major economic hub, consistent with the Government's National Planning Framework. The current investment programme will create an additional two-thirds capacity at its general cargo terminals of Limerick and Foynes.

The company has received planning permission for phases, II to IV of its infrastructure investment programme. These phases consist of new quay construction of €117m to join the east and west jetties, infilling for associated quay set down together with the development of a 38-hectare site at Foynes as a port logistics park. During 2019, detailed design and procurement evaluation was completed for Phases II to IV.

Separately, planning permission has been granted to re-develop the Bannatyne Mill on the Dock Road in Limerick city. The proposal would see the building re-purposed from a grain store, to be used as office space. The redevelopment represents the first phase of a €100m investment from Shannon Foynes Port Company, which is seeking to develop 75 acres of property along a 2.1km stretch of the River Shannon.

In addition, work has begun on upgrading the N69 road, the main link between the port and the national network, to cater for future growth.

In Q4, 2020 the port launched its *Offshore Wind Potential Study*, which identifies the potential, through capitalising on our unique wind resource and deep-water port, to turn the State into an exporter of energy and generate unprecedented job creation in the process. The opportunity combines the emergence of floating offshore wind technology as the biggest growth area for renewables globally, the Irish west coast having among the best wind resources in the world and the unrivalled deep waters of the Shannon Estuary to enable the manufacturing and industrial ecosystem necessary to support the global scale floating offshore wind farms.

Final outcome achieved:

In 2019 the company's largest general cargo terminal, recorded its second highest tonnage throughputs ever while Limerick Port continues to facilitate near historically high throughputs. The port company remains confident, subject to COVID-19 impact, that there are significant opportunities to grow and expand the Port at the operating level arising from decarbonisation and renewable energy.

Significant infrastructure development projects have been undertaken to support the growth of traditional business through the port, while also enabling new business opportunities including floating offshore wind energy.

The company believes Brexit can see the port play a much greater role in moving freight to Europe and beyond than heretofore, rather than through the UK. This can help alleviate the transport congestion around Dublin and redistribute economic well-being throughout the country.

Action 4:

Develop a Marine Enterprise Zone.

Working Group Members:

Clare Maritime Economic Zone DAC led by Clare County Council, Enterprise Ireland, Maritime College of Ireland Commercial Services, Flagship Maritime Consultant, Limerick Clare Education Training Board, Limerick Institute of Technology, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, United Hospitality Institute

Timeframe for delivery:

Q3 2020

Final Status:

Action commenced but requires further work

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

The Clare Marine Economic Zone was successful in receiving €1.76m from the 2018 REDF funding call for its project located on the Shannon Estuary that will develop a facility for maritime and cruise liner related training as well as a test bed for renewable technologies.

The project has generated significant local and international support, and early activities such as a website launch, brochure development and international engagement, have been positively received. However, the project has faced a number of problems including environmental issues, and procurement / planning challenges.

The project team has been working hard to restructure the project, with positive announcements expected in early 2021. The project remains a priority for Clare County Council and the other project stakeholders, as well as the region in general.

Final outcome achieved:

The initiative has received REDF funding and project development is ongoing. The project has received significant support from local communities and industry feedback has been positive to date. Following some project delivery issues in 2020 it is anticipated that 2021 will see more positive updates.

Action 5:

Explore opportunities for greater utilisation of capacity at Shannon Airport.

Working Group Members:

Shannon Group, Chambers of Commerce, IBEC, Industry partners, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Limerick City and County Council, Clare county council and Tipperary county council

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Final Status:

Action commenced but requires further work

Expected Completion Date:

To be determined – Ongoing action that Shannon Airport should remain a regional and national priority for the foreseeable future until the airline industry has recovered to pre-COVID-19 levels. The airport supports many direct and indirect jobs in the region.

Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:

Exploring opportunities to grow Shannon Airport is an ongoing regional priority. In 2019, passenger numbers using Shannon International Airport fell by 8% compared to 2018 despite continued European and North American connectivity. In early 2020 the COVID-19 Pandemic swept the globe, grounding the vast majority of international flights and placing the airport in an unprecedentedly precarious position overnight.

COVID-19 Impacts

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the airport is averaging a 96% drop in passenger numbers. Shannon Group said its revenue fell by over €1.3 million per week since March when travel restrictions began.

Between the 14th November and the 12th December, Ryanair had no flights to or from the airport. Aer Lingus has halted its Heathrow service, and with transatlantic services not running either, it means Shannon was without any scheduled passenger services at all for a period of four of weeks. The strategically crucial Heathrow service is unlikely to return until April at the earliest. Neither Aer Lingus nor Ryanair will be reopening their bases at Shannon Airport until 2021 at the earliest, unless restrictions are eased.

Chambers representing businesses that directly support over 100,000 jobs across the Mid-West and West have called for Government supports to help Shannon Airport during the on-going coronavirus crisis. Galway, Ennis, Limerick and Shannon Chambers, have collectively proposed to Government measures to deal with the current crisis and to establish a new national aviation model. In November 2020 it was announced that under the Regional State Airports Programme, Shannon and Cork Airports will receive an extra €22.1m, consisting of €15m in current funding and a further €6.5m in capital funding for 2021.

Measures taken by Shannon Group to protect the safety of its passengers and employees at Shannon Airport during the COVID-19 pandemic have been recognised internationally, with the airport receiving a global endorsement from the Airports Council International (ACI) World and ACI EUROPE. In November 2020 a drive-through COVID-19 testing centre was opened at Shannon Airport.

Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:

- Ensure adequate funding is provided to Shannon Airport until international travel returns
- Promote the return of Aer Lingus and Ryanair bases
- Ensure all previous routes are returned and not reallocated to other airports.
- Promote all types of aviation activity through the airport across all channels

Action 6:
Conduct a feasibility study for a regional Housing Agency.
Working Group Members:
Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council
Timeframe for delivery:
Q2 2019
Final Status:
Complete
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
Discussions have taken place across the region on the benefits of creating a regional Housing Agency. Regional collaboration exists across some services, such as homelessness prevention. However, at the time it was concluded that there was no appetite to proceed with the creation of an additional Housing Agency, due to a number of issues including the variability of the housing challenges that exist across the region.
Final outcome achieved:
Following engagement, there is no current plan to proceed with the creation of an additional regional housing agency.

Action 7:
Make use of lands for the expansion of Enterprise, Education and R&D capacity.
Working Group Members:
Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Shannon Commercial Properties, Limerick 2030, IDA Ireland
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2020
Final Status:
Complete
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
<p>The project team for the 3.7-acre Opera Site project in Limerick city is now in place. A key part of Limerick 2030, the project will be a landmark commercial development in a regional and national context and one that will reflect Limerick's status as a leading destination for inward investment. The 1.62-hectare site will be developed at a total cost of circa €180 m and is fully funded, thanks in the main to €170 m funding from the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank loans. A transformational project for Limerick, the fully developed site will be capable of employing up to 3,000 people across a 450,000 sq. ft campus accommodation.</p> <p>Another key part of Limerick 2030, the master-planning process for the Cleeves Riverside Quarter in Limerick commenced in late 2020 following the appointment of the design, planning and project management teams. The Cleeves Riverside Quarter project represents a unique opportunity to develop a high-quality mixed-use development of scale that will transform the high-potential site synonymous with the Limerick city centre skyline for its red-brick chimney stack tower. The total cost of the project is estimated at between €250 – €300 million and delivery will take approximately seven years.</p> <p>In late 2019, the Templemore Town Hall: Enterprise and Cultural Centre project was awarded €2.1million under RRDF funding. This is an urban regeneration project to conserve and re-establish Templemore Town Hall as the economic, cultural and community hub of the town. The project will also deliver a civic plaza and town square enhancement, greatly improving the appearance and function of the area and providing a focal point for the town. The architects for this project are currently being appointed.</p> <p>In late 2019 the Roscrea Enterprise, Digital and Social Impact Hub project was awarded €1.9million under RRDF funding. This project will refurbish and repurpose a vacant property located in the town centre and establish an Enterprise, Digital and Social Impact Hub. The project will assist in the drive to boost skills and create new employment opportunities in the town and its hinterlands. The project is underway and Quinn architects have been appointed.</p> <p>Redevelopment for LIT's Coonagh Campus is underway at a brownfield site on the north side of the city and comprises the full fit out of more than 5,000 square metres of previously unused space, transforming it into state-of-the-art teaching, learning and research facilities. This will provide for an additional 542 places on LIT's engineering courses, an expansion which is considered essential to support industry demand in the region.</p> <p>In Q2, 2020 the Confirm Centre for Smart Manufacturing completed construction of its 16,000 sq. ft. headquarters at a disused commercial site at UL's Digital District in Limerick. Confirm will host 70 researchers, 12 operational and management staff, resident and visiting investigator as well as testbed and prototype facilities.</p>
Final outcome achieved:
Significant development within the region, with large projects delivered and more underway to allow for continued expansion of Enterprise, Education and R&D Capacity.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

5

Build a coordinated regional messaging brand for consistent communication

**Action 1:**

Establish a regional messaging cross-stakeholder forum.

Working Group Members:

Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Chambers of Commerce, Shannon Group, public and private stakeholders including HEI's and industry partners, Mid-West Enterprise Plan manager

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2020

Final Status:

Complete

Outline of work undertaken during 2020:

Limerick: Atlantic Edge, European Embrace was unveiled in January 2020, becoming the first major branding of the city and county to promote it nationally and globally as a destination for inward industry investment, tourism, education and for people to live and work in. The brand was born out of a collaborative approach. As well as syndicating the brand with key communities before launch a comprehensive ambassador network was developed, engaging high-profile Limerick representatives from media, business, education, tourism and local interests to champion the brand and galvanise their communities to bring it to life. This network has collaborated with the council since the brand's inception, providing entrepreneurial deputies through which the council can disseminate communications and tailor messaging through the brand lens.

County Clare is part of the 'More to Life' initiated launched by the Western Development Commission, which showcases lifestyle quality and career opportunities in the county.

Limerick Chamber launched <http://movemidwest.ie/> in June 2019 at an event entitled Let's Talk Tech, with speakers showcasing the breath of technology innovations and career opportunities that exists in the Mid-West.

Tech on the Wild Atlantic Way 2020, a major Sci-tech recruiting event and conference took place in Thomond Park in February 2020. The objective of the event was to connect sci-tech employers with world-class STEM talent that are interested in working and living in the Mid-West.

COVID-19 Related Activities:

Tipperary County Council, Clare County Council and Limerick City and County Council all undertook a number of activities to respond to COVID-19 impacts:

- Moving fast to build online platforms to support offline businesses and encourage uptake for offline businesses
- Promotional campaigns and initiatives to shop local.

Final outcome achieved:

Regional messaging groups in place to support locating / re-locating to the Mid-West. Two groups have been set up:

- An IAG (Inter Agency Communications group) has been set up to deal with COVID-19 and subsequent public messaging at a regional level. This group consists of public sector communications professionals in Mid-West (Limerick County Council, Clare County Council, Tipperary County Council) and representatives of An Garda, Shannon Group, Third Level Sector communications. To date this group has concentrated on public health messaging due to pandemic, however the structure is now in place and focus could potentially change to recovery for 2021.
- Ambassador group to discuss rolling out of Brand Limerick and filter messaging through Brand Limerick lens

Action 2:

Deliver a 'real-time' information source for Second Site Location property data.

Working Group Members:

Directors of Planning in Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, AEC officer in Clare County Council, ACE officer in Limerick City and County Council, Enterprise Ireland Mid-West, IDA Ireland Mid-West, Mid-West Enterprise Plan manager

Timeframe for delivery:

Q4 2019

Final Status:

Action commenced but requires further work

Expected Completion Date:

To be determined

Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:

The regional e-hub manager has been building the *Happen* branding for Mid-West e-hubs which can then be offered as a single entity to a wide range of potential users from single occupant to multinational teams living in the region. Each hub within the *Happen* network will provide modern co-workspaces for freelancers, start-ups and remote workers alike and enable tenants and users of each individual space to connect and collaborate with each other through their membership of the network, be that through the use of a hot desk, a fixed desk or a private office within the specific hub. Working from a *Happen* space is simple; all that is required to avail of a desk or office is to book via a centralised online booking system.

The Western Development Commission, through the Atlantic Development Corridor (encompassing Clare and Limerick) is undertaking a three-year project focusing on the challenges in some regional hubs such as low occupancy rates, lack of a centralised ICT system, and the need for improved marketing and branding. The Western Development Commission (WDC) held two hubs strategy workshops in Limerick and Sligo in late 2019, with over 160 participants involved. The Atlantic Economic Corridor has developed an online mapping tool showing all hubs along the Corridor <https://www.atlanticeconomiccorridor.ie/hubs-map/>. The database shows the availability at each hub of the following services: Remote Work, Hot Desks, Co-Working Space, Private Offices, Meeting Rooms, Event Room, Lab, Training Rooms, Start-up Programme, Incubation Service, Accelerator Programme, Biz Mentoring, Community Services. The database also provides details on broadband strength at each location, contact details and website links.

Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:

Integrated data collation of commercial, office and industrial property solutions identifying regional property solutions and potential second site locations.

Development of a robust real-time information source.

Additional Action in the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan

Action:
Mid-West Response to COVID-19.
Lead Actor(s)/Working Group Members:
Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Tipperary County Council, Chambers of Commerce, Shannon Group, public and private stakeholders including HEI's and industry partners, Mid-West Enterprise Plan manager
Timeframe for delivery:
Q4 2021
Final Status:
Ongoing
Outline of work undertaken during 2020:
<p>Mid-West Response is an independent, voluntary not-for-profit group which was set up to deliver employment initiatives to the Mid-West region of Ireland (Clare, Limerick and Tipperary) post COVID-19. Prompted by Barry O'Sullivan (Vice President of Manufacturing Johnson and Johnson Vision Care), Denis Kelly (former Global Senior Vice President of Services for Dell Technologies) and Eamonn Murphy, Interim Chairman, Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan, the Mid-West Response Steering Committee engaged with industry leaders across a number of sectors to devise a response to the unprecedented employment challenges the region was facing.</p> <p>The Key Objectives of the response were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a proactive approach to helping those who had their employment affected • Take first-hand experiences of industry challenges and devise a strategy that would benefit everyone • Capture data and insights that would benefit the region and country in designing a solution • Use a data driven decision-making process • Alignment with the Next Generation EU instrument which calls for support in re-skilling and helping businesses create new economic opportunities <p>Research and analysis was conducted to identify industries and employers within the region who were challenged by a skills shortage. These sectors will become the focus for the development of future careers. Noting the skills shortage in the ICT and CX sectors, a target of 2,000+ new digital careers was set.</p> <p>Under the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan, Mid-West Response has brought together employees, employers and training providers to deliver a broad set of online training and upskilling courses for people who have had their employment affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing this impacted employees were enabled to either return to their original employment with new skills or, transition to other sectors of the economy where there are employment opportunities.</p>

Progress achieved to date and reason for delayed completion:

- 1,115 people upskilled through on-line certified courses during the period April 2020 – July 2020
- Adapted a Limerick & Clare ETB and Tipperary ETB course for the prevention of the spread of infectious disease. Originally designed for the HSE, the course was calibrated to meet the specific requirements for Hospitality and Retail as dictated by industry leaders
- Adapted the University of Limerick “e-Moderator” course, which facilitates better in-company learning post COVID-19.
- Based on previous experience, appointed a formal Steering Committee and applied a structured Project Management approach to oversee execution and delivery
- Focused on transferable skills. Selected courses which developed transferable skills enabling candidates to transition to other sectors if desired.

Outline of remaining work to be completed on this action:

Mid-West Response has an ambitious target to transition 2,000+ people from unemployment into Software Development, Data Analytics and Customer Experience (CX) professionals by creating a Regional Enterprise COVID-19 Response and Upskilling Team (RECRUT) intends to establish a traineeship type model in ICT and CX that will act as an employment-based transition programme for those who want to restart their careers.

Initially with 200, then scaling to 2000, RECRUT, together with the DEASP, will facilitate this transition from unemployment to jobs of the future.

2. Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Local Enterprise Office activities and outcomes in the Mid-West Region during 2020

In order to achieve the 2020 employment targets and maintain strong regional enterprise and job creation performance, the Strategic Objectives and collaborative actions identified for the Midlands region complement and reinforce the core activities of the Enterprise Agencies, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs).

The Enterprise Agencies each have corporate strategies which include national level objectives as well as frameworks for bespoke regional activities that support regional enterprise development potential and leverage regional assets and opportunities.

During 2020, the Agencies and LEOs worked in partnership with regional stakeholders to strengthen regional enterprise ecosystems as well as maintaining their focus on attracting foreign investment, providing guidance and financial supports to the installed base of companies in the region, and fostering new enterprise start-ups.

Enterprise Ireland

In January 2020, it was reported that 20,305 people were employed by 536 Enterprise Ireland supported companies across the Mid-West region, this represented a 2% growth in employment from the previous year.

Support and investment continue throughout 2020 to develop the start-up ecosystem across the Mid-West, this includes significant investment into the following initiatives:

- New Frontiers Limerick Institute of Technology
- Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre, LIT
- Questum Acceleration Centre, LIT
- Mid-West Business Angels Network - Irrus
- Nexus Innovation Centre UL
- Additional Budget Support for Mid-West Local Enterprise Offices
- Mentoring and Strategic Consultancy

In January 2020, Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation Heather Humphreys announced the results of the third call of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) (see appendix 1 for more details).

Enterprise Centre Scheme Funding

In December 2020, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar TD announced €8.24m in grants for 95 Enterprise Centres around the country under Enterprise Ireland's Enterprise Centres Fund. Enterprise Centres are embedded in communities in every county in the country. They provide space and training for entrepreneurs, allowing them to work remotely, access training and advice, and network with other business leaders. This funding will be crucial as the centres continue to offer services to local businesses during what is an exceptionally difficult time. It will help the Centres implement a recovery plan for businesses within their remit over the next six to twelve months. A total of 8 Mid-West Enterprise Hubs were approved COVID-19 grants under this scheme (see appendix 1 for more details).

Regional Brexit Webinars

Enterprise Ireland undertook a series of regional business webinars, 'Brexit Customs Briefing Series the week commencing 7th December 2020. The focus of these webinars was outlining the critical steps to get ready for new customs rules from January 1st, 2021'. As the Brexit transition period comes to an end on 31 December 2020, Irish businesses involved in trade with the UK will need to operate in a new business environment. To assist Irish companies with their final preparations, Enterprise Ireland in partnership with Local Enterprise Offices scheduled a series of webinar briefings tailored towards five regions around Ireland. The webinars were complimentary and open to any Irish business involved in importing and exporting goods to and from the UK. In over 1,400 SMEs signed up to attend these webinars.

COVID-19 Online Retail Scheme

The COVID-19 Online Retail Scheme has proven to be a very attractive scheme for retailers with 56 South West retailers approved funding in 2020. It's clear that Irish businesses are keenly aware of the growing e-commerce opportunities both at home and abroad for online retail. They also understand the necessity of operating an updated and efficient online sales platform that complements their physical stores. Grants through this scheme are being used by retailers to upgrade their systems to improve their digital presence and to become more competitive in the virtual marketplace. This is helping to broaden their customer base and grow sales with some companies reporting that they are recruiting extra staff as a result. Ultimately, retailers who are investing in their online presence now are also strengthening their offering to help deal with the uncertainty and challenges that lie ahead.

IDA Ireland

IDA Ireland's mission is to partner with multi-national companies to win and develop foreign direct investment, providing jobs for the economic and social benefit of Ireland. IDA Ireland works with key stakeholders both in the public and private sectors to deliver on this mandate. IDA Ireland partners closely with Enterprise Ireland across the Regions on multiple initiatives under the Regional Enterprise Plans and in relation to the provision of property solutions to the indigenous base, where appropriate.

On January 6th, 2021, IDA Ireland launched summary results for FDI for the country for 2020, and also launched a new Strategy, "*Driving Recovery & Sustainable Growth 2021-2024*".

Employment growth of 3.6 percent in IDA Ireland supported companies was achieved in 2020. Total employment in IDA Ireland client companies in Ireland now stands at 257,394, accounting directly for 12.4 percent of COVID-19 adjusted national employment.

The Mid-West Region consists of three counties – Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary. There are 143 IDA supported companies in the Mid-West Region, employing 24,169 people in total. The Mid West Region has an impressive base of existing FDI companies across key industry sectors. Key recent investments of scale have been in Technology, Med Tech, Pharma and Financial Services sector.

Companies attracted to the region and announcing operations in 2020 include companies like Bath Fitter, Exida, Meira GTX, & Transact. Existing companies like Regeneron have publicly announced plans to increase their workforce and several others have been supported by IDA Ireland to increase their mandates, training and research activities and others to maintain their current levels of investment.

Ireland's extraordinary FDI performance over the past five years put us in a strong position going into the COVID-19 crisis and the high value sectors we have pursued provide us with a strong base from which to help to drive recovery once again. The majority of IDA Ireland's existing portfolio remains functioning either remotely or on-site while adhering to public health guidelines. At this point, existing FDI is looking for the most part resilient, but it is not immune. The global economic climate within which we are now all operating remains extremely challenging, with international forecasting bodies predicting significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global growth, trade and on FDI flows.

In response to COVID-19, IDA migrated many of its business development and client engagement activities to digital platforms. IDA Ireland has developed a suite of digital content which can be accessed by potential investors. The Agency has developed this further and has put in place an E-Site Visit experience for potential investors. The use of digital platforms by IDA staff has contributed to an enhanced digital engagement with existing clients and also in hosting e-site visits with potential new investors.

1. Enable a digital and innovation economy and make the Mid-West Ireland's leading smart city-region

IDA Ireland supports a significant digital/tech cluster in the Mid-West including companies like Analog, Dell, Fiserv, JLR, WP Engine and many other companies with technology investments. Companies like Axiom, Exida and Transact will add further to that growing cluster.

IDA Ireland continues to engage with the Future Mobility Campus Ireland, IDA clients like JLR, GM, Analog, Dell, etc. that are part of the cluster and other relevant stakeholders like Shannon Group, the educational institutes and others to position the Mid-West region for continued Autonomous Vehicle investment.

IDA Ireland progressed previously announced plans to develop an Advanced Manufacturing Facility (AMC) on the National Technology Park, Limerick. The mission of the centre is to accelerate the adoption and deployment and skills development of digital technologies with the discrete manufacturing industry sector. The AMC facility will be a national centre for collaborative deployment of digital technologies and will complement existing state resources such as Confirm and IMR by being differentiated across the spectrum between research and commercial activity. The AMC will only focus on mature stage commercial deployment of technology at manufacturing scale. Planning permission has been granted, design and planning are completed. Construction began in Summer 2020. IDA Ireland is actively in design and industry engagement stage and expect to have a fully operational, industry focussed AMC in H2, 2021. Per industry feedback COVID-19 challenges strengthen the case for the AMC as need to optimise process and embed new capabilities more important than ever for competitiveness.

2. Achieve a step-change in progress toward a low carbon economy in the Mid-West

IDA Ireland continued to support our client on their green agendas as Ireland and the Mid-West region progresses towards a low carbon economy. IDA Ireland clients have adopted lean processes, circular economy best practices and implemented energy efficiency investments.

IDA Ireland continues to engage closely with stakeholders including the Local Authorities, Shannon Group, Shannon Foynes Port and the ESB amongst others to advance sustainability agenda in the Mid-West region. IDA clients continue to evaluate clean energy options. Facebook for example has agreed a deal to purchase the energy produced by a planned wind farm at Lisheen in Co Tipperary. The AMC which has progressed this year will continue to drive the adoption of clean and efficient technologies in the region.

3. Continue to develop workforce skills and talent and enhance the attractiveness of living and working in the Mid-West

IDA Ireland has worked through the Regional Skills Forum and through direct relationships with client companies, UL, LIT, the ETBs and other education providers to support the promotion of existing courses, identify future skills needs, and the process for developing new courses and enhancing existing course content. Good examples would include additional courses in the technology, biopharma, medical technology and green sector. IDA Ireland has worked closely with Laois Offaly ETB, Grow Remote and Solas to launch two courses aimed at improving the skillsets of remote working. These courses have proven to be very popular since their launch earlier this year. IDA Ireland welcomed the recent application by Athlone IT and Limerick IT to form a Technological University.

The new technological university aims to connect knowledge creation with industry partnerships to grow and support collaboration. LIT was also granted European University status by the European Commission in 2020. The Regional University Network - European University (RUN-EU), a collaborative network with eight higher education institutions including LIT and its Technological University consortium partner AIT, RUN-EU which received €6m in funding, strives to promote excellence and innovation in higher education, provide advanced learning and innovation tools, improve the national and international competitiveness of the associated regions, strive to ensure sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental progress, and become a true engine of regional development.

IDA Ireland also hosted Career Zoo Tech Train to the Mid-West event earlier this year as a showcase event to attract national and international tech talent to region and continue to work with local authorities on placemaking agenda and positioning the Mid-West as an attractive place not just to work but to live.

IDA Ireland actively participated in the Mid-West Response initiative set up through the collaboration of local industry partners, local authorities, educational groups and government agencies to deliver reskilling and employment initiatives to the Clare, Limerick & Tipperary areas of Ireland when COVID-19 restrictions and subsequent economic impact in March.

4. Develop the regions capacity to deliver economic growth

IDA Ireland has worked to develop appropriate property solutions through the provision of infrastructure and sites in the NTP and Raheen Business park. IDA Ireland actively engages with the Local Authorities, Shannon Commercial Properties and other property owners and stakeholders on their development plans. IDA actively markets sites and property solutions across the Mid-West region through its extensive overseas network to both existing and new investors. The region is well positioned to continue to attract new FDI investment and further develop the infrastructure needed to support new investments. IDA Ireland engages with relevant stakeholders on the provision of suitable infrastructure for economic development.

5. Build a coordinated regional messaging brand for consistent communication

IDA Ireland has engaged with local authorities on branding and promotional efforts for the region. IDA Ireland supported Limericks 'edge embrace' promotion and Tipperary's 'the place, the time' promotion with IDA Ireland clients like Edwards, JLR, Fiserv and others featuring in promotional material this year across the Mid-West region. After the launch of IDA Irelands strategy, we plan to engage with local stakeholders on revised messaging as part of our implementation plan for the region. IDA Ireland also works closely with Enterprise Ireland and its indigenous base of companies to identify synergies, enhance clusters, participate in site visits and maximise benefits for the region.

Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)

In 2020 the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) continued to be the 'first stop shop' providing entrepreneurs and business owners with advice, guidance, financial assistance, and other supports. The developing pandemic saw their focus shift from assisting with start-up or growth, to triage and rescue. With 31 offices spread throughout the country the LEOs were truly operating at the coalface of the COVID-19 response to the SME sector and provided a 'signposting' service for all the relevant COVID-19 supports available through all State bodies.

The LEOs supported 35,236 jobs across 7,529 client companies in 2020 of which there was an additional 82 companies outside of the Dublin region. In 2020 there was a fall of 1,494 net jobs during the year the State. It is worth noting however, that micro enterprises were adding jobs with a gross job gains across all regions. The challenge ahead will be to restore businesses to growth once the impact of the pandemic subsides. The LEOs provided significant training and mentoring to small businesses in 2020 to help them navigate the particularly difficult trading environment created by Covid-19 and Brexit. Last year, the Local Enterprise Offices trained over 77,000 entrepreneurs and business representatives, up from 37,000 the year previous. 16,231 completed business mentoring assignments up from 10,756 in 2019.

In response to the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, the LEOs quickly moved to introduce new schemes and adapt existing supports to meet the needs of micro and small enterprises across all regions and business sectors.

The Business Continuity Voucher, introduced in March 2020, offered businesses with up to 50 employees, across all sectors, a voucher of up to €2,500 in third party consultancy costs, and helped companies and sole traders to develop short-term and long-term strategies to respond to the COVID-19 restrictions and prepare for reopening of the economy.

This scheme closed for new applications in May 2020 and within that period the LEOs processed 14,871 applications and approved 12,077 of these to a value of €25.8m.

The **Trading Online Voucher Scheme (TOVs)** was adjusted from a 50% co-funding basis to 90% and businesses who had successfully implemented a previous voucher were now allowed to apply for a second voucher. Further amendments enabled sectors that were normally excluded from the scheme to apply.

In previous years this scheme would have seen an average of around 1,200 applications; in 2020 the LEOs processed 17,315 applications for TOVs and approved 12,984 of these. The unprecedented demand for the scheme saw funding rise from €2.3m to an estimated cost of €30m.

The Micro Enterprise Assistance Fund, introduced in September 2020, targeted a small cohort of micro enterprises that could not avail of existing government supports by virtue of their sector, size or by way of operating from a non-rateable premise, many of which were small local traders who provided unique services within their communities. A total of 196 successful applicants were awarded a grant of between €500 - €1,000 of vouched expenditure on adaptation and reconfiguration costs, as well as COVID-19 consumables such as PPE and sanitisation equipment.

Throughout 2020 and despite the pandemic and lockdowns, the LEOs continued to offer grant aid to entrepreneurs who spotted opportunities in the current climate to start or grow their businesses through their Feasibility, Priming and Expansion grant programmes. To assist in their remit of developing regional employment, the LEOs also continued to offer 'soft' supports by way of their free of charge **Mentoring programme**, where clients work with an experienced mentor to identify solutions to areas of exposure within their business.

The LEOs have pivoted their extensive suite of **Training programmes**, workshops and networking meetups to an online platform covering areas such as: cash management in a crisis; leading your business through COVID-19; and advice for employers impacted by the crisis.

During 2020, there have been 10,255 participants in the Mentoring Programme and 49,623 participants in the COVID training programmes. In addition to this, the LEOs launched a new 'Lunch & Learn' live training webinar series that is open and accessible to all LEO client companies and prospective clients across the country, with no registration or sign-up required. This new series complements existing online training and webinar programmes offered by the LEOs.

Many of the successful projects under the LEO Competitive fund in 2019 had to be put on hold as a result of the pandemic. These were collaborative projects between two or more LEOs; and LEOs working with other local groups like Chambers, Community Enterprise Centres, Education or training bodies, Local Authorities or colleges. Many of these projects are aligned with the Strategic Objectives in the Regional Enterprise Plans and it is hoped that they can progress.

3. Achieving a Just Transition in Ireland's Regions

The Climate Action Plan 2019 sets out the measures by which Ireland can reduce its emissions from sectors outside the EU's Emissions Trading System by 30% (relative to 2005 levels) by 2030. It sets out ambitious environmental targets for Ireland to meet over the next 40 years.

Just Transition is a key part of Climate Action policy. It supports the idea that communities and individuals are safeguarded in the move to face the challenges presented by climate change, in a climate-proofed economy.

Under Action 164 of Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2019 the Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committees were asked to include a Just Transition standing item on the agenda of each of the nine regional areas. This is now in place for all the Committees and has encouraged consideration of region-specific impacts that transitioning to a low carbon economy will have in their region, and the possible solutions to mitigate these impacts.

How to manage a transition to a fundamentally new economic future was the focus of work at the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) in late 2019 and early 2020. The Council's work, a key deliverable in the Government's Climate Action Plan and Future Jobs Ireland 2019, was detailed in their final report, *Addressing Employment Vulnerability as Part of a Just Transition in Ireland* published in May 2020.

NESC's report is focused on how to manage the transition associated with climate change and digital automation, and identified recommendations to help Ireland address them and embrace the significant opportunities presented through three broad areas:

- continuous, pre-emptive workforce development;
- building resilient enterprises; and
- delivering high-impact targeted funding to support transition.

In the preparation of their Report, NESC consulted with a number of the Regional Enterprise Plan Steering Committees to consider the engagement already taking place in the regions and explore how place-based collaborative solutions could be adopted.

Appendix 1: Regional Funding approved for the Mid-West supported by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in 2020

Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF)

The Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) was launched in May 2017 with the overarching aim of driving enterprise development and job creation in each region throughout Ireland.

Administered by Enterprise Ireland, it supports new collaborative and innovative initiatives that can make a significant impact on enterprise development in the region/across regions, or nationally. Just under €100m has been approved across 68 projects nationally.

During 2020, the Mid-West Region secured funding of €5,573,757 for three projects*.

Project	Location	Description	Grant amount €
Future Mobility Campus Ireland CLG	Clare	The project aims to deliver a CAV test facility located in real-world settings, providing technology companies and researchers the ability to test and enhance their innovations	4,723,197
Tipperary Innovation Engine (Company Limited by Guarantee)	Tipperary	This project seeks to upgrade an existing facility at Tipperary Technology Park to provide flexible co-working and individual office spaces.	500,000
Emerald Aerospace Group	Limerick	This project is an expansion of an original project approval under Call One of the REDF. Project aims to capture the growth that the aerospace industry is experiencing globally by increasing aerospace manufacturing export business revenues for members.	369,600
Total			€5,573,757

*See the first Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan for details of Calls 1 & 2.

Enterprise Centres Fund

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Leo Varadkar TD, announced €627,418 in grants for 8 enterprise centres in the Mid-West under Enterprise Ireland's Enterprise Centres Fund. Enterprise centres are embedded in communities in every county in the country. They provide space and training for entrepreneurs, allowing them to work remotely, access training and advice, and network with other business leaders.

Approvals (for profit centres)

Applicant Name (Correct legal entity name)	County	Nuts III Region	Grant amount €
Thurles Community Enterprise Centre Limited (TCEC)	Tipperary	Mid-West	97,766
Total			€97,766

Approvals (for profit centres)

Applicant Name (Correct legal entity name)	County	Nuts III Region	Grant amount €
Ballyhoura Food Centre (Hospital) DAC	Limerick	Mid-West	28,480
Broadford Community Enterprise Centre CLG	Limerick	Mid-West	40,000
Croom Community Enterprise Centre DAC	Limerick	Mid-West	44,171
Limerick Institute of Technology Questum Acceleration Centre	Tipperary	Mid-West	112,322
LIT Hartnett Enterprise Acceleration Centre (HEAC)	Limerick	Mid-West	87,525
Nexus Innovation Centre UL	Limerick	Mid-West	145,394
Sustainable Ireland Cooperative Society Ltd & North Tipperary Green	Tipperary	Mid-West	71,760
		Total	€529,652
		Grand Total	€627,418

Appendix 2: Statistical snapshot – Mid-West

Constituent counties	Clare, Limerick and Tipperary	
Regional Population and change (1996-2016)	392,583 (1996) - 473,269 (2016) increase of 80,686	
Total in employment	214,400*	
Labour Force participation rate	58.6%*	
% of Male employment (State)	54.3%	
% of Female employment (State)	45.7%	
Live Register at 31/12/20	19,341	
Unemployment rate	7.2%*	
Persons in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment at 31/12/20	28,592	
Unemployment blackspots ¹	12 ²	
Employed in Enterprise Ireland companies	220,613	
Total Employment outside Dublin in Enterprise Ireland companies	65%	
Jobs created in Enterprise Ireland companies ³	16,496	
Job Losses in Enterprise Ireland companies ⁴	17,368	
Net Change in Enterprise Ireland companies ⁵	-872	
EI supported employment and number of client companies (2019 – 2020)	2019	2020
	Jobs: 20,305	Jobs: 20,702
	Companies: 516	Companies: 538
IDA supported employment & number of client companies (2019 - 2020)	2019	2020
	Jobs: 24,031	Jobs: 24,169
	Companies: 144	Companies: 143
New jobs created in 2020 by the IDA ⁶	Over 20,000	
% of IDA investments to regional locations ⁷	52%	
IDA net job created ⁸	8,944	
LEO supported employment & number of client companies (2019-2020)	2019	2020
	Jobs: 299	Jobs: -94
	Companies: 816	Companies: 824

1. Unemployment Blackspots are defined as Electoral Districts with at least 200 people in the labour force and an unemployment rate of 27% or higher

2. Unemployment blackspots in the Region: Clare (3), Limerick City and County (18) & Tipperary (2)

3. Enterprise Ireland End of Year Statement 2020

4. Enterprise Ireland End of Year Statement 2020

5. Enterprise Ireland End of Year Statement 2020

6. IDA Ireland Results for 2020

7. IDA Ireland Results for 2020

8. IDA Ireland Results for 2020

* CSO Q4 2020 Labour Force Survey

Appendix 3: Just Transition Fund Projects

Stream 1

	Project Name	Lead Applicant	Counties impacted
1	Producing and Promoting Green Energy Birr and SW Offaly	Birr 20:20 Vision Company Limited	East Galway, North Tipperary, Offaly, Roscommon

Stream 2

	Project Name	Lead Applicant	Counties impacted
1	A Brown to Green Jobs Transition to Eliminate Energy Waste in Midlands Homes	Hub Controls Ltd	All counties
2	Bord na Móna Employee Supports - Training and Upskilling Project	Bord na Móna	All counties
3	Bord na Móna Medicinal Herbs Project	Bord na Móna	All counties
4	Climate Action Training and Mentoring Programme	Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office	All counties
5	Community Led Just Transition North Tipperary	Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative CLG	North Tipperary
6	Connecting Communities with Peatlands	Irish Rural Link	All counties
7	Empower Eco	Athlone Institute of Technology	All counties
8	Enablers of a Just Transition for Communities in the Midlands Region	University of Limerick - Centre for Environmental Research	All counties
9	Littleton Labyrinth	Tipperary County Council	East Galway, Laois, North Tipperary
10	Lough Boora Discovery Park and Midlands Cycling Destination - Sustainable Connections 2020	Offaly County Council	All counties
11	Lough Boora Enhancement: Cycle Way and Feasibility Study - Industrial Art Space	Bord na Móna	All counties
12	Midland Bioenergy Development Project	Irish BioEnergy Association	All counties
13	Midlands Retrofit Growth	KORE Retrofit Ltd	All counties
14	Superhomes Midlands	Tipperary Energy Agency CLG	All counties

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