



**South East Region  
First Progress Report:  
Actions to June 2016**



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## Ministers' Foreword



The Regional Action Plans for Jobs initiative is a key element in supporting the delivery of balanced regional development, which is a key priority of Government. The Programme for a Partnership Government sets a goal to help create 200,000 additional jobs by 2020. Importantly, 135,000 of those jobs are to be in the regions outside Dublin.

The Action Plan for Jobs for the South East region, covering the counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford, aims to build on the unique strengths of the region to support businesses to start up, grow and generate exports.

While much emphasis is placed on multi-nationals, we remain for the most part, an economy dependent on small, family business. Across the towns and villages of our regions, employment is heavily based on the SME sector. Ensuring these SMEs have access to both supports and market opportunities is vital to ensuring consistent and real recovery across the country. No matter what part of the country you are in, developing an idea with the support of the Local Enterprise Office and growing to scale is something we want to see happening more and more in every county. The LEO network is a great asset and my firm view is that it offers great potential to support job creation and help entrepreneurs and small businesses start up and grow.

Overall these reports demonstrate that real progress is being made on the Government ambition to ensure all regions reach their economic potential. We are nowhere near our endpoint, but we are getting better and enhancing both the employment and economic potential of the South East region.

From a low of 181,300 in 2012, employment levels have now reached 215,100 in this region in Q3 2016 – an increase of 18.6%. The QNHS shows that there is positive jobs growth across a range of sectors, including Professional, Scientific and Technical activities, Wholesale and Retail and Industry and Construction.

In tandem with strong jobs growth, the unemployment rate has reduced from a high of 20.1% in 2012 to 10.4% in Q3 2016. This represents real progress and a major milestone for the South East. Every job created has a real effect on men, women and children and the wider community. That is why we cannot be complacent about job creation but we are happy to see that we continue to move in the right direction

Contrary to popular belief, employment recovery is not confined to Dublin – in fact 72% of the new jobs created over the last twelve months have gone to people from outside Dublin. As was the case with all regions, the downturn in employment hit the South East particularly hard in 2008 but there is potential

to improve that and grow sustainable jobs in the region, based on the sectoral strengths, skills profile and innovative capacity within this region.

Every day, world-leading companies based in the South East such as Bluefin Payment Systems, CipherTechs and Sanofi Waterford, all of which recently announced new jobs in the region, are showing that by investing in people and talent, global opportunities are possible regardless of the location. What we need to do is enhance the job-potential environment and ensure companies based in Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford have access to global market opportunities. What this report demonstrates is that in regions like the South East, with the right environment, world-leading companies, both Irish and foreign-owned, co-exist and create a dynamic enterprise base. Our enterprise agencies are available to provide assistance to companies at all stages of their journey, whether as start-ups, companies that are scaling or exporting or companies seeking to invest in Ireland

Government does not create jobs, but is an enabler of jobs. This region has rich potential in Manufacturing, Tourism, Agri-food and International Services. We have responded to the crash, but now is the time to build resilience in the economy with a global competitive business offering

There is no doubt but that Brexit will test our economic resilience. Many companies in the South East will have some exposure to the UK. Although there is still a lack of clarity as to the extent to which Brexit will impact on the businesses in the area, Enterprise Agencies are working with these companies to focus on talent, innovation, competitiveness and investing in people. This remains the best way to build resilience in a company.

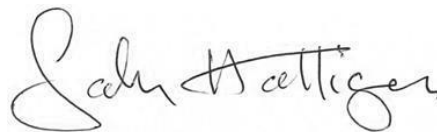
Of course the Regional Action Plans themselves will not solve everything. A full recovery requires more than just jobs. These Plans will be complemented by other programmes the Government is working on at national level, including the Action Plan for Rural Development, infrastructure projects, the Action Plan for Jobs, skills strategies and the Action Plan for Housing.

Employment recovery is a critical element of a wider social recovery. Now is not the time for complacency. Despite global uncertainty, the goal of full employment in the lifetime of this Government is within reach. This employment will be sustainable, built on the back of talent and innovation – something the South East, with its excellent skills and talent base and strong education and research infrastructure, has in abundance.

I would also like to pay tribute to Frank O'Regan, the Chairman, the Enterprise Champions and all members of the Implementation Committee for their ongoing commitment to the South East Regional Action Plan, to job creation within the region and in helping to drive the ambition of the Plan. The input which you bring to the process creates a real step-up in the level of innovation and jobs impact of this process. This is a genuine public service which will make a real impact to the South East region.



**Mary Mitchell O'Connor, TD**  
**Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation**



**John Halligan, TD**  
**Minister of State for Training, Skills and Innovation**

## Introduction

I am pleased, on behalf of the South East Action Plan for Jobs Implementation Committee, to present this first Progress Report to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms Mary Mitchell O'Connor, TD.

The Implementation Committee is a public-private partnership between the local authorities and state agencies in the region on the one hand and leading business and industry reps on the other. We are united in our purpose to strive to develop the right environment to create the jobs the region needs. We have put in place a comprehensive implementation structure to ensure effective delivery of the Plan: In particular, we have established: 10 sub-groups, covering sectors of strategic advantage, as well as critical thematic issues, to drive the actions in the Plan, and each of these groups is championed by a local entrepreneur; an Action Monitoring Committee to undertake detailed review of the implementation of the actions in the Plan and to report to the Implementation Committee on issues arising; and an Advisory Group that includes the local champions to provide strategic guidance on the process.

This first report demonstrates that we have made good progress since the Plan was launched in September 2015. The updates provided under each action reveal the wide range of initiatives that have either been delivered or are in train across the region. We have also had considerable success competing for funding that has been made available through Enterprise Ireland for the Regional Action Plans at national level: of the 32 community enterprise centres approved in the first round across the country under the community enterprise fund, 4 are located in the south east; LEOs in the region are involved in 6 of the 16 projects approved in the first round of the LEO competitive fund nationally. Furthermore, we have developed close working relationships with the South East Regional Skills Forum, and we have already agreed a number of joint initiatives with the Forum aimed at helping to meet the skills needs of industry in the region.

Our objective is to create 25,000 jobs by 2020. The latest figures from the CSO reveal that there are 7,000 more people in the region at work now compared to 12 months ago and the unemployment rate has fallen to 10.8%. This is indeed extremely encouraging and shows that we are heading in the right direction. However, while we have got off to a really good start, it must be stressed that the economy of the south east is still lagging behind the rest of the country. The region has the highest unemployment rate (at 10.8%) in the country, and is running at over 2 percentage points above the national average (at 8.6%). The Gross Value Added (GVA) per person in the region is the third lowest of the 8 regions in the country at c71% of the national average and disposable income at c93.5% of the national average is also third lowest. While there has been significant employment growth in the last 12-months, there is still an over-reliance on traditional enterprises and low skilled service work in the region. The scale of the challenge therefore is such that greater levels of intervention and support will be required to help close the gap that exists between the south east and the rest of the country in terms of wealth and employment.

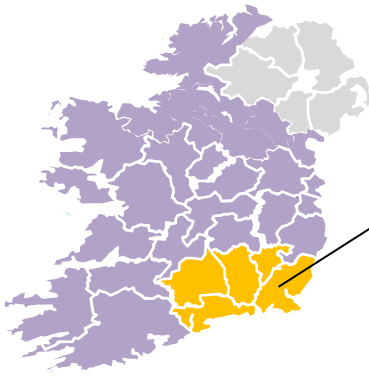
The process of implementing the Plan is a dynamic one, and we have the flexibility to add actions and ideas as they emerge. The real success of the Plan is getting everyone involved to focus on thinking regionally and working together for the benefit of the whole of the south east. The progress achieved to date is a demonstration of the commitment of all of the

stakeholders in doing just that. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for their efforts thus far and I look forward to continuing to work with the stakeholders for the benefit of the region. Finally, I would also like to thank the Minister and her officials at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) for the support and encouragement provided to me and the South East APJ Implementation Committee to date.

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Frank O'Regan  
Chairman  
South East APJ Implementation Committee



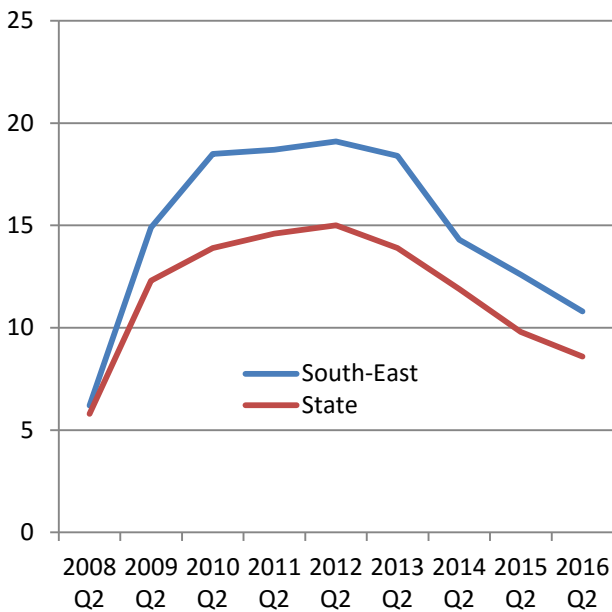


### Employment Snapshot: South East Region

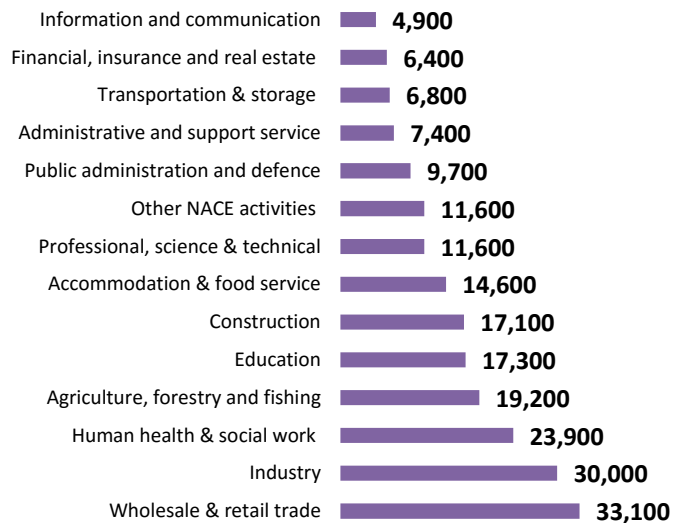
	2015 Q1	2016 Q1	Q2 2016
Persons aged 15 years and over in Employment (000s)	201.9	204.4	213.8
Unemployed Persons aged 15 years and over (000s)	29.6	29.1	25.9
Persons aged 15 years and over in Labour Force (000s)	231.5	233.5	239.6
ILO Unemployment Rate (15 - 74 years) (%)	12.8	12.5	10.8
ILO Participation Rate (15 years and over) (%)	58.5	58.8	60

Source: CSO QNHS

ILO Unemployment Rate (15 - 74 years) (%) by NUTS 3 Regions and Quarter



Employment by economic sector Q2 2016



#### Employment/Unemployment Trends as at Q2 2016 (see above)

- The unemployment rate for the South East region in Q2 2016 stood at 10.8%, compared to 8.6% for the State
- Between Q1 and Q2 2016, 9,400 additional people entered employment, while the number of unemployed persons declined by 3,200
- In the same period the size of the Labour Force also increased (+6,100), as did the participation rate (+1.2%)
- These trends (Unemployment down, Employment, Labour Force and participation up), can also be seen in the data from Q1 2015 to Q2 2016.

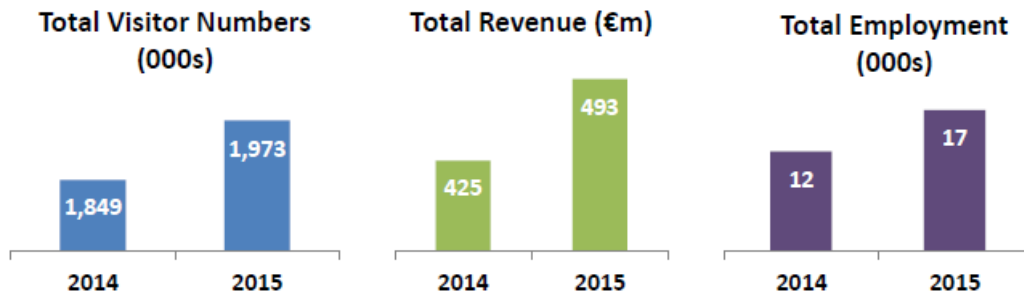
Source CSO QNHS Persons aged 15 and over by NUTS3 Regions, Statistical Indicator and Quarter

#### Sectoral breakdown of Employment as at Q2 2016 (see above)

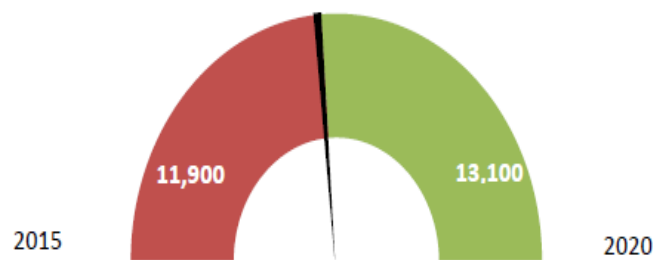
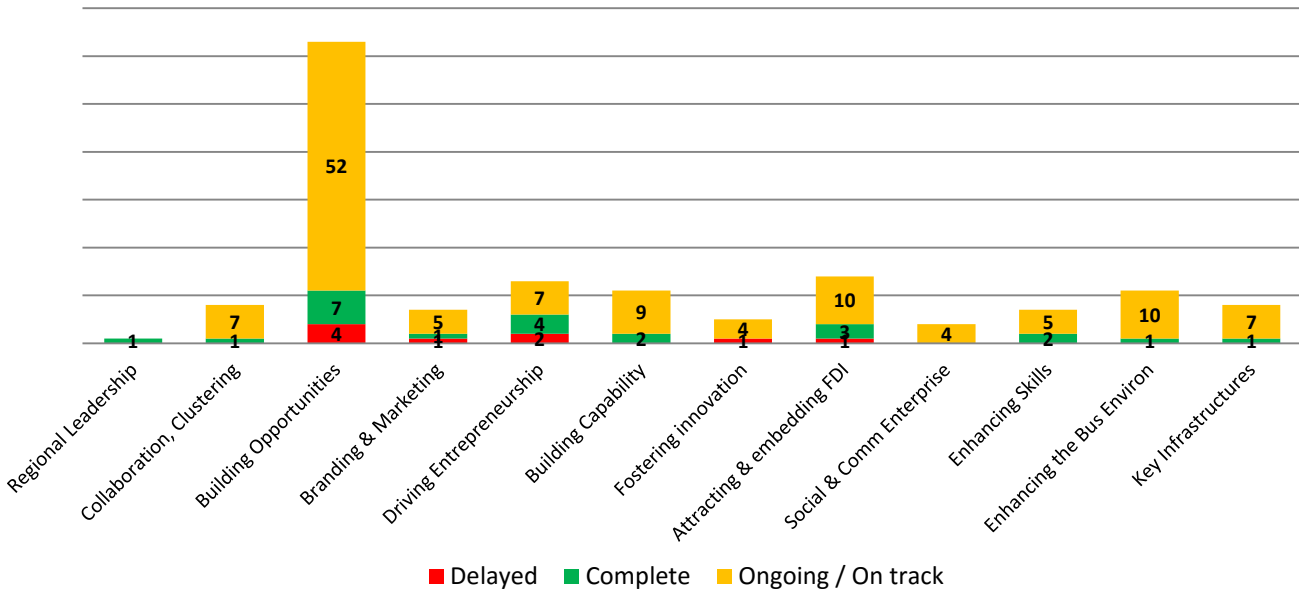
- There were 213,800 people in employment in the South East region in Q2 2016, almost 12,000 more since Q1 2015
- **Whole and Retail Trade** was the largest sector, employing over 33,000 people
- The second largest sector was **Industry** with 30,000 employees; it has also seen the largest decrease in the numbers employed of any sector in the region (down 1,900) since Q1 2015
- Since the start of 2015, **Professional, Scientific & technical** has seen the largest increase in numbers employed (up 3,000).
- **Construction**, employing 17,100 has seen an increase of 2,400 since the start of 2015

Source CSO QNHS Persons aged 15 and over by NUTS3 Regions, Statistical Indicator and Quarter

### Tourism in the South East 2014-2015



### Scorecard: Actions to June 2016



**Jobs Target for 2020-  
APJ South East Region Q1 2015 to Q2 2016**

#### ACTIONS DUE BY JUNE 2016 (H1 2016)

By the first half of 2016, of the 156 Actions that had to be reported on for this first progress report, 23 have been delivered on time while 120 are on track for completion. The Implementation Committee decided to remove 4 action from the Plan as they were deemed no longer relevant (Actions 88, 159 and 160) or unable to progress (Action 149).

## Executive Summary

### Background

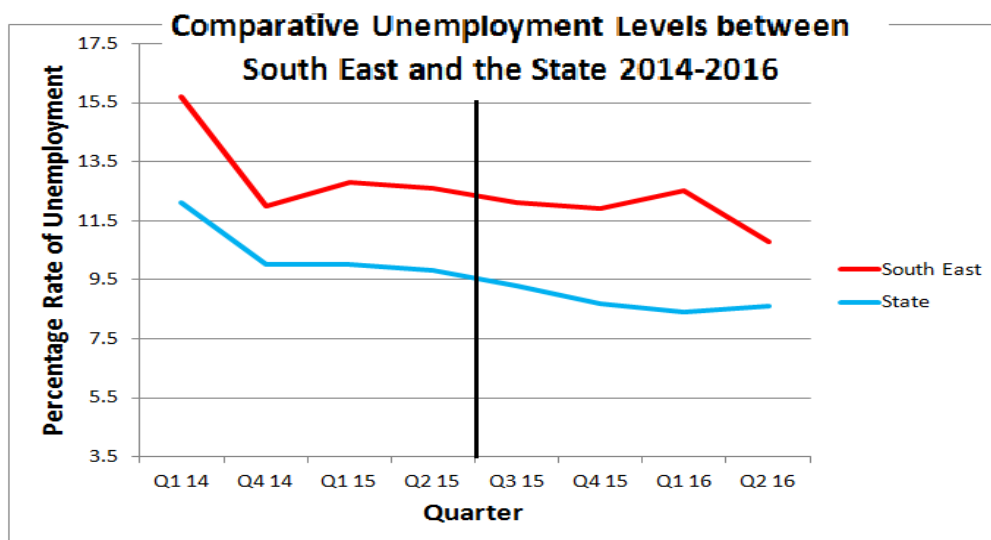
The South East Action Plan for Jobs covers the 5 counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. An Implementation Committee comprising of executives from all of the main stakeholder organisations in the region has been established. The organisations represented include: the 5 local authorities; IDA; EI; LEOs; third level educational institutes (i.e. WIT, IT Carlow and LIT); Chambers of Commerce; Failte Ireland; the Education & Training Boards; along with local business and industry representatives. The Implementation Committee is chaired by Frank O’Regan, former Vice-President of Global Operations with Bausch & Lomb.

### Main Targets

The South East APJ contains 194 actions and its main objective is to ensure that the unemployment levels in the south east are within 1 per cent of the national average. Among the targets in the Plan to help achieve this are:

- increasing the number of start-up businesses by at least 30% (e.g. extra support programmes through the Local Enterprise Offices);
- increasing investments by overseas companies in the region by between 30% and 40%, to be delivered through measures including three new advance office facilities and branding and promotion of the region as a great place to live and work;
- a 20% increase in jobs in exporting companies, in particular in manufacturing, agri-food, business services and biopharma/medtech;
- accelerate the agri-food targets set for the region over the next 10 years, in particular increasing food exports by 85% through a range of measures, including the development of an artisan food hub, creation of an agricultural manufacturing cluster and setting-up a dedicated agri research centre; and
- measures to accelerate the tourism targets set for the south east over the next 10 years, in particular to attract over 300,000 extra tourists and to create at least 5,000 associated jobs.

Table 1: (Source CSO QNHS, Sep 2016)



Since its launch in September 2015, the Plan is beginning to make a positive impact on the region. While the region still had the highest unemployment rate in the country in Q2 2016, the rate nevertheless fell sharply in the previous 12-months from over 12.6% to 10.8% (Table 1). At the end of Q2 2016, there are over 7,000 more people in employment in the region compared to Q2 2015.

### **Implementation Structure**

The Implementation Committee (IC) has held 3 meetings to date (i.e. November 2015 in Kilkenny; February 2016 in Wexford; and June 2016 in Clonmel). The next meeting will be held in Waterford in October. The IC has approved a comprehensive implementation structure to facilitate the implementation of the Plan (Appendix 1). This includes the establishment of:

- **An executive project team**: the 5 local authorities have provided funding towards the recruitment of a project team to oversee the implementation of the Plan, namely a Director, Sean McKeown, who has been in situ since the end of March 2016; and a Project Executive currently being recruited.
- **10 Sectoral Sub-Groups**: comprising 6 sectors of strategic advantage identified in the region (i.e. Agri-Food; Tourism; Pharma/Med-Tech; Global Business Services and ICT; Engineering; and Design & Creative Industries) and 4 Capability Enablers (i.e. Critical Infrastructure; Enterprise & Entrepreneurship Supports; Education & Skills Provision; and Regional Branding). Each of the Sub-Groups will be led by a local champion (e.g. successful entrepreneurs from the region). Many of the sub-Groups have held meetings to discuss priority actions. The local champions already in place include: Terry Clune, Founder & Chair of Connect Ireland and Taxback, Kilkenny; Seamus Kilgannon, CEO Schivo Group, Waterford; Patsy Carney, CEO Eirgen Pharma, Waterford; Rachel Doyle, MD Arboretum, Carlow; Pat McLoughlin, Operations Manager Abbott Vascular, Clonmel; Pauline Oakes, Director of Operations CR Bard, Wexford; Colin Gordon, CEO Glanbia Consumer Products; Liam Griffin, MD Griffin Hotel Group, Wexford; and Barry Downes, Entrepreneur and former Manager of TSSG, Waterford.
- **An Advisory Group** (i.e. the Chair, 5 Local Authority CEOs and 10 Sub-Group champions) to: review progress reports and issues arising in relation to the implementation of actions; make recommendations to the Implementation Committee; and to provide strategic advice to the Director.
- **An Action Monitoring Committee (AMC)** of key Agency Stakeholders to: undertake detailed monitoring / review of progress in implementing the actions in advance of the Implementation Committee meetings; report to the Implementation Committee on any issues arising; and to help assess the impact of the South East APJ, including recommending indicators and targets for actions contained in the Plan as appropriate. The stakeholders represented on the AMC, are: the 5 Local Authorities - represented by Directors of Service for Economic Development and/or Heads of Enterprise; the 3 Institutes of Technology; EI; IDA; and South East Chambers. The AMC have held 2 meetings to date, in May and September. A number of issues have been raised by the AMC and these have been shared with DJEI officials. Having reviewed an early draft of the First Progress Report, the IC at their meeting held in June mandated the AMC to “sign off” on the Final Draft of the Report on its behalf.

### **Workshops Held**

A number of sectoral Workshops have been held to progress actions and to further develop the South East APJ process, including:

- Pharma & Life Sciences; Engineering; and Global Business Services & ICT Workshops held in Waterford on 15<sup>th</sup> February;
- Small & Artisan Food; Getting More Innovative Start-ups; and Creative Industries Workshops held in Carlow on 1<sup>st</sup> June;
- Regional Branding; and Tourism Workshops held in Clonmel on 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

The Workshops have been attended by stakeholders including key development agencies, entrepreneurs and business people. Reports including recommendations have been compiled for each of the Workshops. The many ideas and suggestions put forward will be incorporated into the actions contained in the Plan.

### **Highlights in the First Progress Report**

A total of 158 of the 194 Actions listed in the South East Action Plan for Jobs are to be reported on in this First Progress Report. By their nature the vast majority of actions are on-going. It should be noted that 4 actions (namely, 88, 149, 159 and 160) will not now be progressed (for various reasons as outlined in the updates provided), so 154 Actions are therefore reported on in the First Progress Report.

Some highlights of the actions in progress and/or that have been completed during the timeframe of this first reporting period (i.e. Sep 2015 – June 2016), are as follows:

- over a dozen new and expanding FDI projects have been secured for the region since the launch of the Plan. These include: Bluefin Payment Systems, CipherTechs, CGM, First Data, Technopath Clinical Diagnostics, MSD, Opko, Eurofins Lancaster Laboratories and Sanofi Waterford;
- the commencement of a regional microenterprise Food Strategy in conjunction with Bord Bia and other relevant stakeholders. This will include a review of the various existing county-based food networks and events and shared service initiatives such as the Irish Food Co-op;
- support provided to local food producers has resulted in 5 from the south east, out of a total of 29 selected nationally, being selected for trial listings in a cross section of SuperValu stores under the very demanding Food Academy 'Advance' Programme;
- the development of a smart specialisation strategy for the region (through the EU funded e-DigiRegion Project), looking at ways to maximise the use of ICT in particular in: Agriculture, Digital Media, Medical Devices and Pharmaceutical Industries, Advanced Manufacturing and Tourism. Facilitated workshops have also been held with industry champions in some of these sectors to further explore what is needed and further workshops will be held in the coming months;
- the development of a new technology gateway - DESIGN+ (at IT Carlow) to complement the existing gateways (at WIT) that will provide industry with a mix of design and technical expertise to help prototype and implement new products, as well as help upgrade the industrial strengths of the region;
- Enterprise Ireland has approved an investment of €2.31Mn in support of the expansion of the ArcLabs Incubation Centre at WIT, which will double the Institute's capacity to support ICT start-ups in the region;
- Enterprise Ireland has approved an investment of €2.783Mn in the South East New Frontiers Programme, which will be jointly run by IT Carlow and WIT over the next five year period;

- a comprehensive programme of enterprise training and management development programmes (put in place by the LEOs in the region), aimed at assisting over 4,000 entrepreneurs to either start or develop and grow their business this year;
- 6 of the 16 projects approved in the first round of the LEO competitive fund nationally are being led by LEOs from the region in support of a number of actions listed in the Plan including projects to: develop a creative hub in the South East through an extensive networking and training programme servicing the creative industries; develop a South East Artisan cluster of fledgling food exporters; proactively prepare small businesses with potential for growth and export; develop a strong Digital Media and Gaming corridor in the region; and develop a programme to explore the potential for higher levels of innovation, entrepreneurship, and productivity in agricultural technology (AgTech);
- Support provided to a wide range of tourism developments across the region in support of the new Ireland's Ancient East brand including: the Thosel, Fethard, Co. Tipperary; the Butler Trail; Hook Lighthouse; The Norman Way, Wexford; The Ros Tapestry, New Ross; Viking 3D Experience, Waterford; St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny; Dunleckney Maltings, Carlow; and the Celtic Tree Experience, Co. Carlow;
- Recognised leaders, innovators and influencers of the food and hospitality sector have been appointed as Food Ambassadors to help spread the vision of Irish Food Tourism among visitors, media, food tourism business and other stakeholders in Ireland's Ancient East. The food champions from the south east include: Anthony O'Toole (Culinarian Press) Wexford; and Claire Dalton (Dungarvan Brew Co) Waterford;
- A new Pocket Guide to the region, highlighting visitor experiences and key destination locations has been produced and is available at Rosslare Port and all Tourist Information Offices and Visitor Discovery Points across the region;
- the HEA has approved funding of €1.5m to support WIT and IT Carlow to develop and implement an action plan to lead to Technological University for the south east. The two Institutes are committed to delivering a university of international standing for the region; and
- The South East Regional Skills Forum has been established and reciprocal representative arrangements have been agreed between the South East APJ Implementation Committee and the Forum. A number of joint project initiatives have already been scoped and are being progressed.

It should be noted that 8 actions to be reported on in the First Progress Report are delayed (namely, 24, 33, 84, 92, 103, 105, 129 and 150). It should also be noted that the Action Monitoring Committee recommends for future Progress Reports, that given the similar objectives involved in the following sets of actions, that they be merged for ease of reporting, namely: Actions 95 and 151 (merged into 1 action); Actions 140, 141 and 144 (merged into 1 action); and Actions 107 and 180 (merged into 1 action).

#### **NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN (PROGRESS TO JUNE 2016)**

The National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to deliver high speed services to every city, town, village and individual premises in Ireland. The Programme for a Partnership Government commits to the delivery of the NBP as a matter of priority. This is being achieved through private investment by commercial telecommunications companies and through a State intervention in areas where commercial investment is not forthcoming.

The procurement process formally commenced in December 2015 with the publication of the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and Project Information Memorandum. Five responses were received from prospective bidders to this stage of the competitive procurement process by the deadline of 31 March 2016. These responses have been evaluated by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources from a technical, financial and legal compliance perspective. A number of companies have qualified to proceed to the next stage of the procurement process, in which qualified bidders will be invited to formally dialogue with the Department, based on detailed schedules drawn up by the Department.

#### **BREXIT (POSITION TO JUNE 2016)**

The UK decision will not take effect for some time and that the precise implications of the referendum result will now depend on the period of negotiation ahead, involving the UK and our EU partners.

Government has a clear plan in place to respond to the referendum outcome and has a Contingency Framework which maps the key issues that will be most important to Ireland in the coming weeks, months and years, including the future changing trading relationship between the UK and Ireland, and the protection of jobs here, both of which are of course interlinked.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is fully engaged in the risk analysis and contingency planning work that is being undertaken at cross-Government level, led by the Department of the Taoiseach.

The Government, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the enterprise agencies are fully committed to supporting business in this period of heightened uncertainty; however, this is being done against the background of a strong economy and a highly competitive enterprise sector.

There have been multiple contacts already between IDA and Enterprise Ireland and their respective senior business clients.

Enterprise Ireland, has already set up a helpline and email address to provide assistance to its clients, and will implement a range of plans to assist Irish exporters. In addition, EI will fine-tune existing support tools to address new UK market conditions.

The IDA will continue to market Ireland across the globe as the number one location for foreign direct investment.

## Update on Actions

### REGIONAL LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

#### **Action 1: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Establish a South East Strategy and Implementation Group to take forward the areas for collaboration among stakeholders on the enterprise development agenda of the region set out in this Action Plan and appoint an external Chair.

**Update:** Complete

An Implementation Committee has been established to drive the South East Regional Action Plan for Jobs. The Committee has met 3 times since the launch of the Plan (i.e. in November, 2015 in Kilkenny; in February, 2016 in Wexford; and in June, 2016 in Clonmel.)

Frank O'Regan was appointed as Chair of the Implementation Committee following the launch of the Plan. Sean McKeown was appointed as Director of the Implementation Committee after an open recruitment competition in March, 2016. The Director of the SEAPJ in conjunction with the Implementation Committee has put in place a detailed Implementation Structure that aims to ensure effective delivery of the Plan (Appendix 1).

### COLLABORATION, CLUSTERING AND BUILDING BUSINESS NETWORKS

#### **Action 2: South East Chambers**

**Measure:** Increase the collaboration of regional Chambers of Commerce for businesses and startups to share knowledge and best practice and to provide a combined ambition for the overall development of the South East region.

**Update:** On-going

The various Chambers of Commerce based in the South East share information, adopt best practice and make decisions on regional issues through the South East Chambers Ltd entity. South East Chambers Ltd has adopted the following 3 main areas of focus for 2016:

1. Delivering on designated Action Points under the South East APJ.
2. Proactively engaging with and supporting the 'Three Sisters Bid' for the European Capital of Culture.
3. Driving tourism initiatives through supporting the Ireland's Ancient East brand.

There are many practical examples of how the Chambers in the South East are delivering on these priorities, such as:



- Creation of new membership categories for start ups and fledgling businesses encouraging them to become part of the Chamber movement and providing them with access to the supports and advice needed in their early stages.
- Running events designed specifically to cater for the needs of this new business community by affording them opportunities to network, meet each other and share experiences.
- The introduction of a ‘One Day Visitor Pass’ giving access to attractions along Ireland’s Medieval Mile in Kilkenny, thus encouraging more visitors to come to the region and to stay longer and explore what the region has to offer (all consistent with the Ireland’s Ancient East message).

This Action Point continues to receive engagement from all Chambers in the SE region on an ongoing basis.

#### **Action 4: LEOs**

**Measure:** Develop a ‘Bizfest South East’ Business Networking Event and hold annual Sector Specific Networking Events to promote and encourage sector development between LEO and EI Clients

**Update:** On-going

Bizfest – Business Connections Event. Bizfest 2016 will take place in The Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny on 20th October. The aim of Bizfest is to provide an opportunity for owner/managers and their key staff across Ireland to make connections, while immersing themselves in the experience, entrepreneurial spirit and stories of entrepreneurs.

The target is to have 300 businesses attend the event. There will be an opportunity for Agency and B2B exhibition stands on the day. As there is likely to be a competitive start for females launched in November, in this regard it would be an opportunity to arrange a workshop to focus on same at the event.

Entrepreneurs from each county in the region will be represented on the panel. Industry champions involved in the South East APJ will be approached along with others. Richard Curran will MC the Event. Minister Mitchell O’Connor to launch the event on 11<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **Action 5: Ibec**

**Measure:** Strengthen existing Ibec networks across the SE region by developing additional Ibec development and best practice networks in the region including in PharmaChem and medtech and food and drink sectors, together with Leadership Forums.

**Update:** On-going

Ibec's regional network has been built upon and strengthened. The South East network has been expanded to include a wider range of sectors including pharma, medtech and food sectors. The network now comprises of 20 senior business leaders from across the South East region.

**Action 6: South East Chambers**

**Measure:** Establish an SME 'Advocates for Success' panel of local business leaders, entrepreneurs and enterprise role models.

**Update:** Complete

Through South East Chambers Ltd, the Chambers of Commerce in the South East have created an "Advocates for Success" panel. Successful business leaders exist in each Chamber area and through the creation of this panel, this group of role models will be more accessible to the wider region.

At the recent meeting of the South East APJ "Enterprise and Entrepreneurship" sub group, it was agreed that the description of this Action Point be modified by deleting the words "that will champion entrepreneurship in the SE Region", as it is acknowledged that mentoring and coaching services are already available (e.g. through the LEO Network), and it is not intended that the "Advocates for Success" panel would duplicate or overlap with those services.

The panel is now in place and the South East Chambers Ltd will further explore expanding the panel.

**Action 8: LEOs**

**Measure:** Develop Regional Networks and Clusters in Food & Craft microenterprises to promote development of the sector and to network and collaborate on key development needs.

**Update:** On-going

LEO Tipperary have agreed to take the lead in relation to Craft initiatives, on behalf of the 5 LEOs in the region. The Design & Crafts Council of Ireland (DCCoI) will also be engaged in this action. LEO Tipperary held an information seminar in conjunction with the DCCoI, to provide both sectoral intelligence and a forum to gauge the future development needs of craft makers across the south east region. Tipperary CoCo has also committed to the development of a County Based Craft Industry Strategic Plan.

28 craft enterprises from across the south east were supported by the LEO Network to exhibit at 'Showcase' in January. The national LEO Network also supported the Enterprise Zone at this year's Showcase aimed at emerging craft makers.

LEOs in the region will continue to support craft makers to access trade fairs, mentoring support, etc. as appropriate. LEO Kilkenny will pilot a bursary scheme in conjunction with the DCCol. LEO Kilkenny will also continue to support the 'MADE in Kilkenny' craft network of approximately 30 craft enterprises. The action to develop clusters in Food also links closely with Action 83 of the South East APJ.

LEO Waterford has agreed to lead the action in respect of the Food Sector initiatives, on behalf of the 5 LEOs in the region, with a view to creating robust clusters and networks in the region and to ensure that the region's already well-established reputation for food production will also be reflected in the microenterprise sector. The existence of regional networks will provide opportunities for learning, best practice and economies of scale across the sector. In particular, this will involve the commencement of a regional microenterprise Food Strategy to be developed in conjunction with Bord Bia and all the relevant regional stakeholders. In particular, the work will include a review and evaluation of current initiatives and programmes including the Food Academy, various existing county-based food networks and events and shared service initiatives such as the Irish Food Co-op.

#### **Action 9: InterTradeIreland**

**Measure:** Promote connections with South East business networks on a cross border basis.

**Update:** On-going

InterTrade Ireland (ITI) have met with all the Local Enterprise Offices in the region to brief them on their programmes and to explore areas of cooperation. This has resulted in two "Going North" Initiatives with LEO Carlow/LEO Kilkenny and LEO Waterford. These are ongoing projects and ITI will continue to develop the links during 2016. All the LEOs in the region continue to regularly recommend companies for participation on ITI sales and marketing programmes. ITI have also worked closely with SEBIC to deliver a Seedcorn Competition workshop, equity advice clinic and business planning workshop in Q1 2016.

#### **Action 10: Southern Regional Assembly**

**Measure:** Develop a plan to grow exports and sales through the new Ireland Wales Scheme funding..

**Update:** On-going

The Regional Assembly continues to work with the Ireland-Wales Programme Partners and the Welsh European Funding Office, to advance the Ireland Wales Programme in accordance with the strategic objectives set out in the Operational Programme and agreed with the EU Commission. A key objective of Priority 1 is to improve the innovation performance of SME's in the cross border area through increased collaboration, in particular with research centres, with a specific

focus on the shared priorities of the Irish and Welsh smart specialisation strategies (S3). Through working with programme partners, strategic partners will be identified to develop projects to:

- Address the barriers faced by SMEs, such as market chain access;
- Bring new innovative products closer to the market as a result of the cross -border collaboration between research organisations and SMEs in shared priorities of the S3s;
- Strengthen responses to the S3s and providing opportunities to develop the international competitiveness of SMEs in line with the identified shared priorities;

The next meeting of the Programme Partners takes place on July 7th in Wales where the potential of developing a cross border Plan to grow exports and sales, in a collaborative way for the benefit of both territories, is being discussed.

#### **Action 11: South East Chambers**

**Measure:** Establish a USA/SE region collaboration "SE Irish American Association", based on existing town-twinning initiatives, to provide a network for promoting investment and collaboration in the region with US companies through clubs, associations and routes-to-market for SE firms and to attract investment from the US.

**Update:** On-going

South East Chambers Ltd has reached out to the American Irish Chamber to arrange a meeting designed to establish points of common interest. In this respect contact has also been made with the IDA, Connect Ireland and each individual Chamber is engaging at a local level with their Local Authority and also with locally based US companies to explore opportunities further.

Recent examples of this work include Wexford Chamber joining academic staff and students from the Centre for Irish Research & Training Georgia Southern University, Georgia, USA sharing information about the Wexford-Savannah Axis research project and the historical links to Co Wexford and the President of Wexford Chamber travelled to the USA to attend a major international Franchise Expo in New York.

#### **BUILDING SECTORAL OPPORTUNITIES, CLUSTERS AND ECOSYSTEMS**

#### **Action 12: WIT**

**Measure:** Develop a smart specialisation strategy for the South East Region as part of the eDIGIREGION project.

**Update:** On-going

Following a wide ranging consultation process with regional stakeholders five areas of potential smart specialisation for the region, were identified. These are: ICT in Agriculture (Digital Agriculture), Digital Media, ICT in Medical Devices and Pharmaceutical Industries, ICT in Advanced Manufacturing and ICT in Tourism. A regional champion has been identified for each area. Specific action areas have been identified and these are:

### **ICT in Agriculture**

Action 1: Develop a “Precision Agriculture Hub” in Kilkenny, encompassing ICT and agri-researchers, industry and start-ups.

Action 2: Develop a “Precision Agriculture Accelerator Programme” for the region.

Action 3: Develop an internationally-recognised regional brand of excellence for precision agriculture.

### **Digital Media**

Action 1: Engage with stakeholders, building on the DesignFest initiative, to support the development of a roadmap for the sector in the region.

Action 2: Engage with stakeholders to develop a strategy for keeping digital media graduates in the region and encouraging graduates to engage in start-up enterprise.

Action 3: Engage with stakeholders to develop strategies to make traditional industries aware of the opportunities offered by digital media and digital marketing.

### **ICT in Medical Devices and Pharmaceutical Industries**

Action 1: Establish a multi-stakeholder regional forum to explore key focus areas.

Action 2: Facilitate a multi-disciplinary offering from WIT (PMBRC and TSSG) to the sector, encompassing pharmaceutical and biotechnology development, advanced ICT expertise and engineering/mathematical modelling.

Action 3: Engage with stakeholders on a key challenge requiring ICT inputs e.g. developing “secure” analytical platforms for merging pharmaceutical and medical device data.

### **ICT in Advanced Manufacturing**

Action 1: Set up an ongoing interaction engagement process between SEAM and policy makers/funders.

Action 2: Identify industry collaborators and regional stakeholders to engage in developing smart specialisation advanced manufacturing.

Action 3: Set up a series of focused industry-centred workshops.

## ICT in Tourism

Action 1: Establish a Munster Vales ICT Forum of stakeholders to produce a 3 year strategy that: develops research projects that address industry needs, and enhance visitor experience for key customer groups, through ICT; and advocates greater use of ICT across the initiative.

Action 2: Support international linkages with regions focusing on ICT-enabled tourism to share best practice and explore opportunities for collaboration.

The eDIGIREGION team is now working with each champion to further refine these actions and to support their implementation through a Joint Action Plan especially through engagement with the relevant regional stakeholders. One aspect of this engagement is to link the smart specialisation champions with their international counterparts in Spain, Hungary and Romania.

The smart specialisations were presented to the first EI Regional Competitive Fund Workshop in Waterford on 15th Feb. The synergy between the eDIGIREGION smart specialisations and those selected by the workshop is very clear.

CEDRE (WIT) as the Lead Partner of the eDIGIREGION project has keep regional stakeholders such as ITC, EI, IDA, Local Authorities, Teagasc, SRA, and Ibec informed of progress and development of the smart specialisations.

## Agri-Food

### Action 13: Bord Bia

**Measure:** Through the expansion as part of Food Wise 2025, achieve an 85% increase in exports over the next decade and develop the region as a leading food producing location in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

**Update:** On-going

Board Bia are committed to delivering on an 85% increase in exports by 2025 as part of the national Food Wise strategy and part of an ongoing programme of positive food initiatives being progressed throughout the region.

### Action 14: Enterprise Ireland

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland will target food companies in the South East to scale and innovate in line with National Policy

**Update:** On-going

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<sup>1</sup> Slight rewording of original action.

Enterprise Ireland works on an on-going basis with all dairy and food business clients in the region. This entails working through a business diagnostic and business planning process. The outcome of these plans are NPD/Innovation/Export Market opportunity development/ Scaling and Jobs growth.

Enterprise Ireland delivered a Food Innovation Voucher pilot scheme at the end of 2015 to specifically target NPD in the sector. Enterprise Ireland continue to run the Food Works Programme targeting food companies that wish to make the next step in their business growth, and the LEO's run a Food Academy programme with Musgraves/SuperValu to target early stage companies who wish to bring their product to market.

**Action 15: Bord Bia**

**Measure:** Food producers and processors to work with retailers to develop market-led products so as to increase shelf space for local produce.

**Update:** On-going

There were two companies from the South East amongst the 21 that completed the Food Academy Advance programme thus far in 2016. These companies enjoy the opportunity of a provincial or even national listing with SuperValu. There is however only 1 participant from the South East thus far in 2016, on the Food Academy Start programme run by the LEOs.

**Action 16: Bord Bia**

**Measure:** Bord Bia to work with LEOs to assist South East food and drink companies to be Included in this year's Tesco Taste buds programme.

**Update:** Complete

Three companies from the South East were selected by Tesco and Bord Bia for the Taste Buds programme running at this time.

**Action 17: LEOs**

**Measure:** Examine the potential for shared actions, including distribution activities, across the SE region of artisan food producer networks at county level.

**Update:** On-going

LEO Wexford and Wexford County Council actively works with the Wexford Food Family, a network of Food Producers now totalling 42 members, to develop and support artisan food producers in the county. LEO Kilkenny manages and supports #tastekilkenny, a food producer marketing initiative who attend trade fairs on a joint basis in order to share costs. LEO Kilkenny is

also involved in supporting The Irish Food Co-op which is a sales and distribution model for food producers in the region.

**Action 18: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop an artisan food hub pilot project in the region based on international best practice of such hubs.

**Update:** On-going

This action was put forward under the LEO Competitive Fund call in 2015. The objectives of the South East Artisan Food Initiative are to:

- (a) Establish a cluster of fledgling food exporters across 5 counties;
- (b) Develop the export capability of 10-15 artisan food clients from the LEO portfolio; and
- (c) Implement the recommendations of the South East Food Export Study conducted in 2013.

A multi-agency delivery mechanism is envisaged with Enterprise Ireland and Bord Bia to avoid duplication of effort, services and resources. The Local Enterprise Offices will drive the Initiative and draw on the skills/services and resources of Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland and the Irish Exporters Association as appropriate. The initiative will build on the successful initiatives of LEO's in the region in supporting indigenous food and beverage microenterprises in accessing international markets through their attendance and participation at international trade shows and events

The LEOs involved in the project are: LEO Tipperary (Lead); LEO Waterford; LEO Wexford; LEO Kilkenny; LEO Carlow. Work will commence upon receipt of the formal Letter of Offer from Enterprise Ireland.

**Action 19: Bord Bia**

**Measure:** Bord Bia will work with retailers in the region to increase shelf space for local produce.

**Update:** Complete

Products from five companies in the region were offered for sale in selected SuperValu stores as part of the Food Academy Advance programme, which affords participants the opportunity of further developing their business with that chain and serves as a reference for other multiple accounts.

**Action 20: WIT / Teagasc**



**Measure:** Explore the development of a dedicated agri research centre, through the further expansion and development with Kildalton College and Carlow-Kilkenny Local

**Update:** On-going

WIT (TSSG) and Teagasc are currently collaborating on a number of research projects in the area of smart agriculture (integrating ICT in agriculture) which are funded by Enterprise Ireland, EU and SFI. There is ongoing engagement with industry stakeholders, ISIF and Science Foundation Ireland on the development of a smart agriculture research and innovation centre in Kilkenny. WIT is currently working on a number of proposals open by Enterprise Ireland and SFI which would support the development of a dedicated agri tech research centre. The potential use of Kildalton College and Carriganore as an Ag ICT test bed for environmental management using funding received from SFI is also under discussion.

In January 2016 Professor Donnelly organised a workshop on smart agriculture in Brussels with speakers from EU Agricultural & Rural Development Commission, DG CONNECT, TSSG, Trinity College, SFI, Teagasc and Fraunhofer as a first step to developing a strategic European partnership in this area. TSSG's aim for the workshop was to bring together people from both the agricultural and ICT industries so common opportunities could be identified and the potential captured as a national strategy geared towards developing an export focused Digital Agriculture industry.

Researchers from WIT and Teagasc Moorepark have a long established collaboration focussed on the development of probiotics as a substitute for in-feed medication in pigs. This work to date has been funded by Teagasc, SFI, and the HEA. Another joint proposal was submitted to Enterprise Ireland's Commercialisation Fund Programme in Q1 2016. Another joint project with a contract value of €472,000 between researchers in WIT and Teagasc Moorepark was approved under Enterprise Ireland's Commercialisation Fund Programme in Q2 2016. A second project funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine to the value of €784,000 was approved in Q3 2016. This project which is to be led by researchers in Teagasc Moorepark with collaborators in WIT's Department of Science will examine reproductive performance in Irish sheep, beef and dairy populations'

Teagasc is also a partner with WIT in a four year Forestry research project, SHORTFOR: Investigating the potential of Short Rotation Forestry for Fuel and Fibre in Ireland which is funded by the Department of Agriculture, and involves a partnership between, UCD, WIT, UL, TCD and Teagasc. This project has recently facilitated a successful application for a World Forest Institute International Fellowship. WIT Forestry, working on the Forest Energy Technology Transfer and COFORD research programmes, and Teagasc collaborate on many national public demonstration events on conifer thinning, broadleaf tending, harvesting operations, wood fuel supply chains, use of woodchip for energy and animal bedding and wood fuel quality assurance. The most recent event was at Dungarvan, Co. Kilkenny in April 2015 and was attended by over 150 forest owners.

WIT continues to expand and develop its 40 year undergraduate education partnership with Kildalton Agricultural College. The partnership has undergone expansion to incorporate honours degree programmes in Agriculture, Agricultural Science, Forestry Horticulture and Food Innovation. WIT collaboration with Teagasc has also expanded with collaborative agreements with other Teagasc education centres such as those in the Botanic gardens and in Ballyhaise Agricultural College, Co. Cavan. All collaborative programmes between WIT and Teagasc are currently being reviewed to enhance and build on the institutes' current positive engagement.

WIT in conjunction with Teagasc has also been recently involved in the development of upskilling programmes for Teagasc staff. Programmes in education and laboratory skills have already been developed for delivery.

**Action 21: Bord Bia**

**Measure:** Target an increase in the number of participants on the Food Academy programme and progress a number of companies in the region to the next level - Food Academy Advance.

**Update:** Complete

There were ten participants from the South East on the Food Academy 'Start' programme in the second half of 2015 out of a national total of ninety-seven (i.e. approximately 10 per cent). However, the performance of South East companies was more impressive on the more demanding Food Academy 'Advance' (which involves company products being selected for trial listings in a cross section of SuperValu stores) saw five participants from the South East out of a national total of twenty-nine (i.e. over 17 per cent).

**Action 22: EI**

**Measure:** Continue to exploit the full potential of the dairy industry for value-added food and nutrition product innovation and development.

**Update:** On-going

Enterprise Ireland works on an on-going basis with all dairy and food business clients in the region. This entails working through a business diagnostic and business planning process. The outcome of these plans are NPD/Innovation/Export; Market opportunity development / Scaling and Jobs growth.

Enterprise Ireland delivered a Food Innovation Voucher pilot scheme at the end of 2015 to specifically target NPD in the sector. Enterprise Ireland continues to run the Food Works Programme targeting food companies that wish to make the next step in their business growth, and the LEO's run a Food Academy programme with Musgraves/SuperValu to target early stage companies who wish to bring their product to market.

**Action 24: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Expansion of Dublin Food Chain initiative to locations in the South East

**Update:** Delayed

Kilkenny County Council are taking the lead on this initiative and scoping is currently underway for implementation.

**Action 25: LEOs**

**Measure:** Create a pipeline of companies growing beyond Artisan/Small Food Business definition via the introduction of both bespoke 1:1 and group multi-level supports across strategic planning, marketing and marketing finance (for example Ascent, Superbrands and Step Change Fund).

**Update:** On-going

Funding secured under the LEO Competitive call to progress the establishment of a Food Cluster involving at least 15 Companies from the South East. Meeting scheduled for 7<sup>th</sup> July to progress.

**Action 26 : BIM**

**Measure:** Develop effective measures to attract additional landings into ports in the south east and continue to invest significantly in necessary infrastructure at the Fishery Harbour Centres

**Update:** On-going

BIM's tender "Developing a strategy to expand the raw material base for the Irish Seafood Sector" went live on the e-tender website on 20th May 2016 following external reviews.

BIM are seeking tender proposals to contribute to the development of a strategy to expand the raw material base for the Irish Seafood Sector with the aim of exploiting Ireland's strategic location to access additional raw material resources from non-Irish vessels to augment existing high quality supply from Irish fisheries.

**Action 27: BIM**

**Measure:** Develop a national strategy with implementable actions to deliver scale in the key seafood sectors, including food ingredients, while also including elements to upskill personnel across the sector in the key areas.

**Update:** On-going

The BIM Seafood Innovation Academy aims to increase the innovation and NPD capability of seafood companies to help build these companies through the development of value-added products.

During 2016 BIM will deliver a series of three innovative workshops, on a pilot basis initially, to four suitable companies. The first Seafood Innovation Academy for large companies was held on May 3rd in which eight companies participated. The follow-up meetings with the companies concluded at the end of May 2016. The second workshop is scheduled to take place in September. This workshop will focus on building an innovation process and an innovation culture in companies.

To this end three innovation advisors have been recruited by BIM with start dates in September 2016.

**Action 28: BIM**

**Measure:** In line with FoodWise 2025, develop a national strategic plan with practical and implementable actions to significantly increase the quantity of seafood added value across all main species groups. This strategy should complement the strategic plan to deliver scale in the key seafood sectors, including food ingredients. The aim will be to reduce the level of produce sold in commodity form from 70% to below 50%.

**Update:** On-going

BIM went to tender for a strategic plan to deliver scale and value-adding in the sector in May 2016. There are two phases in this tender process:

- Phase 1 is the development of a strategic Plan due by September 2016
- Phase 2 involves training and mentoring support to implement the plan, over a two year period.

The aim of the plan is to increase the share of value added seafood from the current 30% to 50%.

**Action 31: BIM**

**Measure:** Work to ensure that to the greatest extent possible, 100% of all seafood exports in the South East region will be verified Origin Green by 2016.

**Update:** On-going

**Seafood-specific Origin Green planning workshops**

BIM conducted a series of seafood-specific Origin Green planning workshops in Q1 and Q2 2016.

During the workshops, participants were guided on how to develop their Sustainability Charter by Bord Bia and BIM's Green Seafood Business Programme team. The workshop is an important first step in the development of an Origin Green sustainability plan and has set many companies on the path to full membership of the programme. Continuing the series of seafood-specific Origin Green planning workshops BIM's seafood business team co-hosted a workshop with Bord Bia on 25th May 2016 in Cork.

### **Responsibly Sourced Standard**

BIM's internal review of the Responsibly Sourced Standard (RSS) has been completed. This incorporates changes arising from:

- the impact of the landing obligation and other changes arising from the CFP,
- changes in working conditions specific to all crew, including migrant workers and
- includes linkages to sustainability initiatives in line with Origin Green.

Discussions with key stakeholders on this revised draft will be completed in Q2. A meeting of the Technical Advisory Council - set up to oversee the development for the RSS - will be convened in early Q3 2016, to agree on the revised RSS. This will then be sent to the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) for ratification.

### **Action 33: Teagasc**

**Measure:** Evaluate the potential for the development of a National Precision Dairy research and innovation centre in the region supporting the creation of new products and services.

**Update:** Delayed

At its meeting held in September, 2016 the AMC noted that the Director of the SEAPJ will engage with Teagasc and DAFM to review the focus of this action.

### **Action 34: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Further advance the proposal for a European centre of excellence for ICT in Agriculture in Kilkenny.

**Update:** On-going

1) In January 2016, TSSG with their SFI Connect partners hosted a workshop in Brussels with major leaders in policy, industry and academia to discuss 'Europe's opportunity in Digital Agriculture' Speakers on the day included EU Agricultural & Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan, Mario Campolargo, Director of DG CONNECT, WIT's President Prof Willie Donnelly and Prof Linda Doyle of Trinity College Dublin and CONNECT.

2) TSSG co-ordinated the submission of a large scale pilot proposal (€50m) under EU H2020 in April 2016. The proposal involves the partnership with 101 partners across Europe, from all sectors of agriculture - dairy, meat, arable, fruit / veg, supply chain, large industry partners, academia and agri start-ups) in addition to 11,000 farmers. As part of the proposal development TSSG established a Special Advisory Group with 20 leading ICT and Ag experts. The outcome of this proposal is expected in September 2016. Further engagement with the key stakeholders is planned for July.

3) WIT through TSSG and ArCLabs in conjunction with the NDRC, Local Authorities, SEBIC, ITC and other regional partners submitted a proposal under the EI Accelerator Development Scheme. One strand of priority is focussed on the Agri Tech sector.

## Tourism

### **Action 36:** Fáilte Ireland

**Measure:** Develop the South East zone value proposition and experiences as part of Ireland's Ancient East, including in scaling up the asset base in the region and achieving international "stand-out" for the area based on its comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage.

**Update:** On-going

Key activities for the first half of 2016 include: Launch of irelandsancienteast.com (May 2016), commencement of domestic campaign, series of workshops to tourism trade so that they understand and can leverage the new IAE brand. International marketing campaign ongoing by Tourism Ireland. New Ireland's Ancient East assets in development in the South East include Thosel, Fethard (grant investment €198,000), Butler Trail (grant investment €109,442), Hook Lighthouse (grant investment €80,000), Norman Way, Wexford (grant investment €178,832), The Ros Tapestry (grant investment €16,924), Viking 3D Experience (grant investment €145,100), St. Canice's Cathedral (grant investment €80,000), Dunleckney Maltings (grant investment €200,000), Celtic Tree Experience (grant investment €48,398)

### **Action 37:** Fáilte Ireland

**Measure:** Promote and incentivise greater business links between tourism and food sectors, promoting use of local produce by the local hospitality sector and attracting visitors to the region for food and beverage related activities.

**Update:** On-going

Recognised leaders, innovators and influencers of the food and hospitality sector in Ireland's Ancient East region have been appointed as Food Ambassadors to help spread the vision of Irish Food Tourism among visitors, media, food tourism business and other stakeholders.

**Action 38: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Identify opportunities which are appropriate to each county where co-ordination of attendance at Trade Shows can be managed at a regional level to ensure appropriate marketing and promotion of tourism offerings in SE. This will require coordination and collaboration on a) on shows to attend b) cross-marketing material and c) training on promotion.

**Update:** On-going

Ireland's Ancient East is the programme area in which the five counties of the South East lie and will form the basis of any marketing and promotion material in the international and domestic marketplace.

Fáilte Ireland have identified opportunities appropriate for B2B sales missions in key overseas markets and coordinated the attendance, materials and training for trade industry partners for these events.

Throughout 2016, Fáilte Ireland will conduct sales training and business development work with trade and stakeholders for the delivery of Ireland's Ancient East programme.

Tourism Ireland undertakes the coordination and collaboration of consumer trade shows in overseas markets.

**Action 39: ETBs**

**Measure:** Develop FET programmes for new entrants to the Hospitality and Tourism sector as well as upskilling Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes for those currently engaged.-out" for the area based on its comparative advantage in built and cultural heritage.

**Update:** On-going

In counties Waterford and Wexford, WWETB offers a number of Tourism and Travel Industry focused courses. The aim of these programmes are to enable learners to independently and effectively carry out a range of information, administrative and service functions in tourism-related enterprises.

The Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2014 to 2019 indicates that the FET sector must actively promote the benefits of FET with employers and employees and assist where appropriate with the development and or implementation of appropriate HR strategies for small to medium size businesses in particular.

Courses delivered by WWETB are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they meet the demands of industry.

WWETB in conjunction with SOLAS will begin a process of occupational skills profiling in local companies in late 2016, early 2017. Occupational skills profiling (OSP) summarises essential characteristics required for a given job: the level of education and training required (and hence the complexity of the occupation); the field of education and training required; and other requirements in terms of knowledge, skills, competence, occupational interests, and work values

Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) has run an accredited Professional Cookery Course at Level 5 and Culinary Skills at Level 4. 20 learners achieved minor awards at Level 5 and 12 learners achieved Major Awards. The BTEI will run these programmes again in the 2016 – 2017 academic year.

The Diageo 'Learning for Life' programme ran in Kilkenny from February – April 2016. 22 learners between ages 18 – 25 enrolled on this programme in which the ETB provided tuition in QQI Level 4 components. Diageo provided tuition in practical hospitality skills and facilitated work placement. At the time of this report over 50% of learners have completed the placement and some are taking up employment in bars and restaurants.

**Action 41: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Ensure appropriate marketing material is available at Rosslare Port on visitor experiences and key destination locations in the South East Region.

**Update:** On-going

New Pocket Guide to the region highlighting visitor experiences and key destination locations has been produced and is available at Rosslare Port and all Tourist Information Offices and Visitor Discovery Points across the region.

**Action 42: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop the rivers and coastal 'water margins' assets of the South East region as key elements of the Failte Ireland South and East region offer, including blueway trails linking activity hubs and amenities.

**Update:** On-going

The River Suir Blueway is On-going. Access improvement works have been completed on the 2 trails heads in Cahir & Carrick on Suir. Part 8 Planning was granted on 18th May for works in Ardfinnan, Lady Blessingtons Clonmel, Sandybanks in Marlfield, Clonmel and in Kilsheelan. This includes the construction of a Slalom Course in Clonmel and forms part of the Community Sports Hub. This work is currently at tender stage. A service provider is currently providing education & training on the River Suir in Canoeing & Kayaking.



**Action 43: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop a plan to improve the visitor experience and business capability of water activity providers (SMEs) active in tourism in coastal and river areas considered key to delivering on the objectives of both Fáilte Ireland's Experience Development strategy and the DAFM's marine strategy Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth (HOOW).

**Update:** On-going

Carlow County Council is actively engaged in the development of the Barrow via the delivery of supports for community and business organisations and marketing projects. This has included the development of a specific set of marketing messages based around the Economic Potential of the Barrow under the title of the "South Carlow Adventure" delivered as part of the Borris REDZ Project.

Waterford City & County Council have prioritised this action in their Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) and have also developed a related REDZ project.

Actions 3.2 and 6.2 of the County Kilkenny LECP commit to supporting and developing water based tourism activities. Kilkenny County Council is actively engaged in the development of the river based initiatives supporting groups and individuals with marketing and infrastructural direction for projects including, progressing an 'Aire de Service' facility through the REDZ initiative. This is ongoing. Kilkenny County Council actively supports a number of activity based initiatives in association with Kilkenny Tourism and additionally through festival grant supports.

**Action 44: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop a strategy to increase adoption and use of ICT technologies in marketing and delivery of tourism experiences for the South East.

**Update:** On-going

Institute of Technology Carlow have committed to the undertaking of a postgraduate project relating to the impact of social media on relationship management in the tourism industry. In addition the BA (Honours) in Culture and Heritage Studies offered through the Wexford campus of IT Carlow will be contributing towards the achievement of this action in the next academic year.

WIT through TSSG has been involved in a number of technology development projects which have developed ICT solutions to enhance the tourism experience in the South East. However WIT is of the view that the development of a strategy to increase the adoption and use of ICT technologies for the tourism experience in the South East requires discussion among the key players in the South East to progress– Education Providers, Fáilte Ireland, industry representatives. An initial tourism workshop as part of the roll out of the South East APJ is

scheduled for June 23rd. A number of top multimedia companies with capabilities of enhancing the tourism experience are based in the South East. These companies should be engaged in the consultation process.

**Action 45: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Tourism and hospitality enterprises to collaborate to develop appropriate training for the hospitality sector to improve customer service standards.

**Update:** On-going

Programmes in “Increasing Food and Beverage Sales” and “Customer Care” have been delivered in the last 12 months (with 55 participants attending). Direct supports and advice is continually provided to the trade on an ongoing basis.

**International Financial Services (IFS)**

**Action 47: IDA**

**Measure:** Promote the advantages and potential of the region for Business Services and financial services and technologies.

**Update:** Complete

New marketing materials have been developed for internal marketing purposes and IDA are also collaborating with local authorities on the development of FDI messages by location.

**Action 48: EI / IDA**

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland and IDA will implement their joint BPO strategy to grow the BPO sector in the South East.

**Update:** Complete

IDA and EI through the creation of the CRIOS group are working collaboratively to position Ireland, and the South East Region as a location for Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) opportunities. IDA has engaged extensively with the EI client base to understand the client offering and to find best in class examples for the promotion of BPO in the region. IDA Ireland has prepared an FDI Value Proposition on BPO for target clients.

Enterprise Ireland funded the CRIOS group (BPO cluster) in 2014 as part of the pilot cluster programme and is working with the participating BPO under that heading. Lately this has

included the development of a comprehensive work programme for the remainder of 2016 covering activities to drive tendering activities and internationalisation (e.g. new business opportunities in Germany), Global Sourcing opportunities with the existing MNCs and new MNCs that recently established in Ireland, driving innovation by linking BPO companies with appropriate technology centres including Learnovate and CeADAR and ensuring Irish companies can available of any Public Procurement opportunities in Ireland (which in turn can open up international public procurement opportunities.) To drive this agenda, in 2016, EI recruited a senior Development Advisor with private sector BPO experience to drive the development of the companies on an individual basis and also participate in the development of the sector nationally.

#### **Action 50: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop the skills base for the business processing activities in the region, with HEIs, to provide training courses on the infrastructure and management / supervision side to support and develop this sector.

**Update:** On-going

IT Carlow is constantly reviewing its product offering. IT Carlow has 49 new programmes in development, while conducting annual and strategic reviews on the existing 700 programmes. Programmes are reviewed to ensure graduates are fully prepared to enter the workforce and to immediately add value to their employer. Programmes from level 6 – 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications are offered and these include specific programmes targeted at business processing and the management of businesses. Examples include:

- Certificate in Purchasing Strategy, Quality Management and Lean Six Sigma
- Certificate in Project Management and Communications
- Bachelor of Business (Honours)
- Higher Diploma in Business (Financial Services in Insurance and Risk)
- Higher Diploma in Business in International Financial Services
- Higher Diploma in Business in Supply Chain Management
- Master of Business
- Master of Science in Information Technology Management

Many of these programmes are available through Springboard. Springboard is a Government initiative offering free, part-time Higher Education courses to eligible individuals at Certificate, Degree, Higher Diploma and Masters Levels which lead to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy.

A significant number of WIT graduates from the School of Business and Department of Science, computing programmes are working in BPO /Financial Services companies in the South East.

**South East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF)**

The South East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF) was established in May 2015. A steering group comprising senior staff from South East education providers and regional employers was formed. Reporting to this group is an education providers group. ETBs are represented on the Forum where this action is discussed. The current concentration of work has been assisting the HEIs with the recruitment of the new Regional Skills Forum Manager. Action 50 forms part of the work plan of the Manager.

Following the October meetings of the South East Steering Group and the Education Providers group a submission was made to the HEA for funding to appoint an interim administrator to commence the work of the SERSF. This work was to focus on the identification of data sources and methods of capturing data and making it accessible. The work package has two primary components – gathering data on the programmes available through Higher Education and FET providers in the South East and gathering employer data on skills and vacancies. This work is ongoing but has highlighted a number of potential areas for programme development, both in terms of qualifications and transferable business skills sought. An analysis is being conducted of vacancy advertisements on sites such as irishjobs.ie to look at the common skills and qualifications requested by employers. This work is ongoing and involves the SOLUS Labour Market Research Unit.

In December 2015 the SERSF made a comprehensive submission to the consultation process on the National Skills Strategy. This submission covered themes including skills required, activating the skills supply, and developing skills.

The work of the forum is progressing at a pace largely dictated by the pace of establishing the Skills Fora in the other regions. The DOES are keen that there is sharing of best practice and that the data being collected be collected in a manner that facilitates national analysis, as well as regional analysis. As a result some decisions, for example on the development of a 'Pathways to FET / HE' information portal and on a national intranet are pending the appointment of all of the RSF managers.

### **Action 51: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop multilingual talent base in the region through increasing promotion and take-up of foreign language modules in third level and further education courses.

**Update:** On-going

The importance of languages and overseas experience are explicitly detailed through the internationalisation activities of the Institute of Technology Carlow. Language modules in French and German are available on all the Bachelor of Business suite of programmes. Chinese is offered to all students as an extra mural activity. However the take up is low. The take up of language modules at third level is an increasing problem. Irish students are not choosing these modules and it is not feasible to make the modules mandatory as not all students will have the requisite

foundations in the languages. Take up of outward mobility opportunities through Erasmus is also low even where modules are taught by overseas partners through English.

WIT provides a BA Honours degree programme which provides major study options in English, Irish, French and Spanish. Minor options are also available in Italian, German, French, Spanish and Irish. Language module options are also provided for on degree level programmes in international marketing, tourism and hospitality and software development.

**Action 52: Wexford CoCo**

**Measure:** Wexford County Council to progress the development of a financial services hub in Wexford town, building on the strengths already established in the sector in the region.

**Update:** On-going

Wexford County Council has recently purchased a 10 acre site in Wexford Town Centre for development as a business park. The park will be targeted at corporate headquarters of indigenous and foreign investors with a specific focus on the Financial Services sector. The Council will shortly appoint architects to master plan the site which will include a mix of modern office space, hotel accommodation and residential units. Total investment is estimated at some 35 million euro.

The Trinity Wharf development will complement the Council's plans to regenerate the Quay front in Wexford Town, for which it has recently received a Government Capital Grant of €1m.

**Action 53: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Increase collaboration in the development of education and training infrastructure to support FinTech programmes from entry through to postgraduate level.

**Update:** On-going

IT Carlow have recently developed two major FinTech initiatives. In December 2015 IT Carlow signed an agreement with Shanghai Finance University (SFU). IT Carlow is the first Irish partner of SFU. This agreement with SFU will give IT Carlow access to industry and academic expertise at a global scale that it is hoped will stimulate innovation within the financial services sector. The plans for this agreement include joint research programmes and articulation arrangements for both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The second initiative will be formally announced later in 2016 and involves a substantial joint research and development programme with a major international financial services company. This will result in institute – industry projects in FinTech with a global reach. Specific FinTech programmes or programmes aimed at providing a pipeline of suitably qualified employees to financial services companies include:

- Certificate in Purchasing Strategy, Quality Management and Lean Six Sigma

- Certificate in Project Management and Communications
- Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Accounting
- Bachelor of Business (Honours)
- Honours Bachelor of Laws (LLB)
- Higher Diploma in Business (Financial Services in Insurance and Risk)
- Higher Diploma in Business in International Financial Services
- Master of Business
- Master of Science in Information Technology Management

Many of these programmes are available through Springboard. Springboard courses have been designed in consultation with employers to ensure that the courses are relevant, up-to-date, and geared towards making participants fully job-ready.

**WIT School of Business** runs the following programmes directly relevant to the Financial Services sector in the South East:

The Bachelor of Business Studies (H) is a four year honours programme running for over 35 years. Economics and Finance and Accounting are among the specialist streams available for students. Approximately 50 students graduate annually from these streams combined. The work placement elective in year 3 allows students to gain direct experience.

The Master of Business – Economics & Finance specialism is a 1 year taught masters programme designed to enhance the skills and experience of graduates from business degrees with a specific economics and finance focus. Approximately 10 students graduate annually.

The BA (Hons) in Finance and Investment is a 3 year honours programme specifically dedicated to the development of financial services professionals, through a number of analytical, numerical and financial modules. WIT has just introduced an optional year-long work placement on to this programme (the programme will be 4 years in duration for those choose this option). There is also a summer internship programme available to students on this programme. There were 51 graduates from this programme in the period 2011-2015 inclusive and there are currently 24 students enrolled in third year of the programme.

The BA (Hons) in Accounting is a three year honours programme. The programme has strong ties with the four main accountancy bodies (CAI, ACCA, CIMA, and CPA), all of whom offer generous exemptions to our graduates. 92% of students who graduated from the programme in 2015 are currently studying for their professional examinations. Approximately 30 graduate annually.

MSc in Global Financial Information Systems was developed in response to the current and future demand from the Financial Services (FS) industry, for hybrid finance-technology graduates with a specific focus on the application of ICT to Financial Services. 18 students are currently registered. Developed in conjunction with a number of FS companies from Ireland and the UK, the objective of the MSc in GFIS is to enable high calibre graduates to rapidly develop quantitative, analytical, and ICT skills and experience, embedded in a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of

Financial Services. The MSc in GFIS was also shortlisted as Best New Course of the Year at the Postgrad Ireland Awards held at the Mansion House, Dublin in April 2015. The programme is delivered over a 12-month period whereby the first 9 months are spent on-campus at WIT, and the final 3 months comprise of a Professional Internship.

The WIT AIB Centre for Finance and Business Research aims to produce and disseminate high quality in the key themes: (1) small firm finance, (2) behavioural finance, (3) governance and corporate responsibility and (4) personal finance. The Centre supports a number of PhD research scholarships and hosts seminars and workshops. The Centre is supported through direct endowment from the AIB Group. To date, two students have obtained their doctorates via the Centre and another eight are in various stages of the process.

### **South East Regional Skills Forum (RSF)**

The South East Regional Skills Forum (RSF) was established in May 2015. A steering group comprising senior staff from SE education providers and regional employers was formed. Reporting to this group is an education providers group. ETBs are represented on the Forum where this action is discussed. The current concentration of work has been assisting the HEIs with the creation of job specification and recruitment details for the new Regional Skills Forum Manager presently being recruited in common with the other regional fora. Action 53 will form part of the work plan of the new manager.

Following the October meetings of the South East Steering Group and the Education Providers group a submission was made to the HEA for funding to appoint an interim administrator to commence the work of the SE Regional Skills Forum. This work was to focus on the identification of data sources and methods of capturing data and making it accessible. The work package has two primary components – gathering data on the programmes available through HE and FET providers in the South East and gathering employer data on skills and vacancies. This work is ongoing but has highlighted a number of potential areas for programme development, both in terms of qualifications and transferable business skills sought.

In addition an analysis is being conducted of vacancy advertisements on sites such as irishjobs.ie to look at the common skills and qualifications requested by employers. This work is ongoing and is involving the SOLUS Labour Market Research Unit.

In December 2015 the SE RSF made a comprehensive submission to the consultation process on the National Skills Strategy. This submission covered themes including skills required, activating the skills supply, and developing skills.

### **Action 55: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** HEIs to support business growth through participation in Horizon 2020 proposals, SFI, EI and other funded and co-funded research opportunities related to Financial Services.

**Update:** On-going

Institute of Technology Carlow is launching a joint research programme with US Fortune 250 company UNUM relating to ICT in Financial Services. In addition the institute has signed a memorandum of understanding relating to co-funded research opportunities in Financial Services with Shanghai Finance University. Exchange visits have taken place between the two institutions aimed at building relationships between research groups and individual researchers.

Funding opportunities are communicated to organisations and companies through the Institutes Research and Commercialisation Support Centre.

WIT has a comprehensive programme offering within the School of Business of relevance to the Financial Services sector. Included in this is the ongoing research collaboration between WIT's School of Business and AIB.

In Q 2 2016 WIT's School of Business in addition to representatives from TSSG met with the IDA's Financial Services and International Services Division to discuss skills and development requirements for the sector in the South East.

1 financial services related research proposal was submitted by WIT in the time period.

The 29th Annual Conference of the Irish Accounting and Finance Association (IAFA) took place in Waterford Institute of Technology on the 19th and 20th May 2016.

It should be noted that research funding specifically for financial services is a difficult area to target at the European level (H2020) as there is no specific targeted programme for financial services as is the case in ICT or agriculture.

## Construction

**Action 57:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Develop specific county level approaches to ensure that new office and industrial developments can come on stream quickly working with the private sector.

**Update:** On-going

Tipperary County Council have completed a Workspace Study and mapping exercise, which is updated on a 6 monthly basis.

Kilkenny County Council Economic Development unit works with the private sector to assist in the pre-planning phase, resulting in reduced time, cost and administration during the statutory planning application process.



**Action 58: Solas**

**Measure:** Increase, as appropriate, capacity for training of apprentices for construction as the sector recovers, together with addressing the continued need for upskilling of craft persons and training for the unemployed.

**Update:** On-going

Waterford Training Centre provides training across a wide range of apprenticeship courses and are responding to increased demand as identified and agreed by SOLAS for the Construction Industry. This is complemented by a range of training interventions for the unemployed i.e. Construction Ground Work Skills, Technical Employability Skills.

ETBs in this region are currently engaged in the national Phase 3 transfer of training from WWETB to Kilkenny/Carlow ETB and Tipperary ETB. When this transfer is complete, there will be new opportunities for apprenticeships and training opportunities in these ETBs, as they become available. In accordance with the SOLAS Further Education and Training Strategy, these ETBs are also committed to upskilling the unemployed with 60% of funding aimed at Levels 1-4 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The long-term unemployed are a key target group for this funding.

Institute of Technology Carlow delivers apprenticeship training in four trades; electrical installation, instrumentation, electrical instrumentation and carpentry and joinery. The Institute is the National Centre for Instrumentation and Electrical Instrumentation apprentice training. Allocation of apprentice numbers to the Institute is carried out by the HEA. Overall numbers bottomed out in 2011/12 at 96. In 2015/16 the number will reach 160. 60 in electrical instrumentation and the balance divided across the other trades.

In addition IT Carlow offers two programmes that provide an opportunity for apprentices to study for degree (level7) qualifications. The BSc in Craft Management provides the cross-training skills for a craftsperson to operate in the modern working environment, and, enable them to progress onto supervisory or management roles within employment or to pursue self - employment opportunities. The BSc in Energy Management (Buildings) provides a range of energy-related skills and will extend the students skills base to include significant areas of relevance to the Green Economy.

These programmes are offered through a combination of distance learning, on-site learning and work-based learning. The programmes have to date been available through Springboard. Springboard is a government initiative offering free, part-time Higher Education courses to eligible individuals at Certificate, Degree, Higher Diploma and Masters Levels which lead to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy.

ETBs in this region are in the middle of the national Phase 3 transfer of training from Waterford Wexford ETB to Kilkenny/ Carlow ETB and Tipperary ETB. Future opportunities will present themselves in Apprenticeships. In the meantime, it is hoped the newly appointed Regional Skills Forum Manager will provide strategic direction for this action.

**Action 59: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Ensure sufficient land for residential development and infrastructure in the region shall be provided for in the City or County Development Plan of each local authority as set out in the Core Strategy of the Development Plan, which shall be consistent with the regional population targets.

**Update:** On-going

The South East Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 currently set out the population targets for Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary (South), Waterford City and County. These population targets are presented below in Table 1.1 and Table 1.2 presents the population trends over the last intercensal period.

Each Development Plan in the region has incorporated a Core Strategy which provides a Settlement Strategy and zoning framework based on the targeted residential growth, and has ensured that sufficient, serviced residential land is provided to meet regional level targets. Furthermore, the zoning framework has taken account of necessary infrastructure to facilitate the development of residential zoned land. The Core Strategies as currently in place are set out in the County Development Plans, as follows; Carlow County Development Plan, 2014-2020; Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020; North Tipperary County Development Plan 2009-2015 (as varied); South Tipperary County Development Plan 2010-2016 (as varied); Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019; Waterford County Development Plan 2011-2017 and Wexford County Development Plan 2013-2019.

The Residential Land Availability Survey 2014 published by the DECLG provides a national survey of all lands zoned for residential purposes, and the quantity of lands that may be regarded as undeveloped and available for residential development. Table 1.3 sets out the summary of the findings of this survey.

Each Development Plan provides a quantum of residentially zoned land which has been informed by the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines and County Settlement Strategies. Furthermore, residential densities and headrooms differ between plans as they are determined on the basis of the role and function of each settlement within the hierarchy and taking into account local requirements. (See Appendix 2.)

**Action 60: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop mechanisms for working closely with the construction industry, local government and building owners to enhance the energy efficiency of buildings and to remove barriers to retrofitting.

**Update:** On-going

Action 8.5 of the Kilkenny LECP outlines the expansion of the 'Better Energy Communities' in Kilkenny. This will involve working with the Carlow Kilkenny Energy agency to promote energy efficiency best practice. Action 8.5 of the Kilkenny LECP outlines the expansion of the 'Better Energy Communities' in Kilkenny. This will involve working with the Carlow Kilkenny Energy agency to promote energy efficiency best practice.

Waterford City & County Council (WCCC) have upgraded 128 social / fuel housing units under the 2015 SEAI BEC scheme, measures installed as part of the upgrades included external / attic insulation, windows / doors, air sourced heat pumps, gas condensing boilers / heating control upgrades and insert stoves.

WCCC have worked with a number of businesses in improving energy efficiency and have sourced funding for energy efficiency upgrades. WCCC have developed an energy efficient building at local enterprise office, with innovative led lighting, dimming system and motion control of light fittings.

In Tipperary a pilot SEAI Better Energy finance scheme for 2015 has been completed, which supported the delivery of engineer led deep retrofit. The Council have applied for funding towards a pilot in 2016. The first course was introduced in March 2016 as part of the implementation of the EU Qualibuild project to enhance construction skills for low energy building. LIT are leading on this initiative. Research Bursaries are available through LIT for identifying and removing barriers to retrofit.

## Manufacturing

### **Action 61: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop a showcase of the region's manufacturing base, with a dual focus on attracting young people to careers in manufacturing. The skills demand is for a mix of apprenticeships and third/fourth level qualifications. Manufacturing companies to promote more STEM participation in primary and secondary schools.

**Update:** On-going

This action will be implemented through the South East Regional Skills Forum. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) initiated work in 2015 on a proposal to establish regional structures

for engagement between DES providers (ETBs, Institutes of Technology, Universities, Skillnets), employers and other stakeholders on skills and related issues.

The Departments objectives for the Regional Skills Forum are to:

- *Foster better engagement between DES providers (ETBs, Institutes of Technology, Universities, Skillnets) employers and other regional stakeholders in building the skills of their regions;*
- *Provide a framework to enhance and support individual education and training providers and groups of providers in establishing and maintaining connections and relationships with employers;*
- *Focus on building more robust labour market intelligence and analysis of employer needs.*

The South East Regional Skills Forum (RSF) was established in May 2015. A steering group comprising senior staff from South East education providers and regional employers was formed. Reporting to this group is an education providers group. ETBs are represented on the Forum where this action is discussed. The current concentration of work has been assisting the HEIs with the creation of job specification and recruitment details for the new Regional Skills Forum. Action 61 will form part of the work plan of the new manager. The Steering Group has already highlighted the need to strengthen the links between students, education providers and employers and to use these links to develop the showcase as indicated in Action 61.

ETBs in this region are in the middle of the national Phase 3 transfer of training from Waterford Wexford ETB to Kilkenny/ Carlow ETB and Tipperary ETB. Future opportunities will present themselves in Apprenticeships.

It is anticipated that the showcase event will be held in Q2 / Q3 2016

## **WIT**

WIT's Schools of Engineering and Science have an active programme of schools engagement in order to promote careers in science and engineering amongst second level students in the South East. Also the Institute through CALMAST ([www.calmast.org](http://www.calmast.org)) lead a number of regional events e.g. Engineering Week, Science Week, Sci-Fest in order to encourage the uptake of science, maths and technology among primary and second level students. Furthermore a number of workshops have taken place between WIT's school of engineering and employers in the region (including the manufacturing sector) in the last 6 months as part of the School's 5 year Programmatic Review Process currently ongoing.

The attraction of students into engineering careers is a challenge both on a regional and national level. In particular investment is needed within the third level sector in order to upgrade equipment and infrastructure within the teaching environment to ensure continued relevance of the facilities and programmes for industry needs and also to attract students into engineering and science programmes.

WIT continues to collaborate with local industry in promoting STEM to primary schools. For example WIT supports the Junior Achievement and Challenge Science initiatives run by Genzyme in Waterford. WIT is involved in a consortium with industry in the South East and IMDA in the development of an apprenticeship programme in medical devices - a skills gap identified by industry both regionally and nationally. In Q3 2016 IMDA, WIT's Technology Gateway SEAM and the Schivo Group hosted a day long workshop on 3D Metal Additive Manufacturing involving participation from more than 30 medical device companies from the South / South East regions.

**Action 62: Solas**

**Measure:** Increase, as appropriate, capacity for training of apprentices for manufacturing and engineering together with addressing the continued need for upskilling of craft persons and training for the unemployed.

**Update:** On-going

There has been an increase in the number of Mechanical Automation Maintenance Fitters, and various Mechanics trained in Waterford Training Centre. Waterford/Wexford Training Centres are providing training in Welding, Engineering Skills, and Fabrication Skills for unemployed clients through Full time Day courses and Evening Courses for the unemployed. Plans are being made for the development of a Career Traineeship for the Engineering Sector. Training is also provided for the manufacturing industry through Clean Room Operations, Pharma Manufacturing Technologies and CAD. The provision of these interventions can be increased at any time in line with demand. We also respond to demand from industry for the provision of training i.e. Training course completed in partnership with Waterford Crystal for the development of crystal blowers, cutters, glass sculpture and Engraving.

ETBs in this region are currently engaged in the national Phase 3 transfer of training from WWETB to Kilkenny/Carlow ETB and Tipperary ETB. When this transfer is complete, there will be new opportunities for apprenticeships and training opportunities in these ETBs, as they become available. In accordance with the SOLAS Further Education and Training Strategy, these ETBs are also committed to upskilling the unemployed with 60% of funding aimed at Levels 1-4 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The long-term unemployed are a key target group for this funding

Institute of Technology Carlow delivers apprenticeship training in four trades; electrical installation, instrumentation, electrical instrumentation and carpentry and joinery. The Institute is the National Centre for Instrumentation and Electrical Instrumentation apprentice training. Allocation of apprentice numbers to the Institute is carried out by the HEA. Overall numbers in 2011/12 were 96. In 2015/16 the number will reach 160. 60 in electrical instrumentation and the balance divided across the other trades.

In addition IT Carlow offers two programmes that provide an opportunity for apprentices to study for degree (level 7) qualifications. The BSc in Craft Management provides the cross-training skills for a craftsperson to operate in the modern working environment and enable them to progress onto supervisory or management roles within employment or to pursue self - employment opportunities. The BSc in Energy Management (Buildings) provides a range of energy-related skills and will extend the students skills base to include significant areas of relevance to the Green Economy.

These programmes are offered through a combination of distance learning, on-site learning and work-based learning. The programmes have to date been available through Springboard. Springboard is a government initiative offering free, part-time Higher Education courses to eligible individuals at Certificate, Degree, Higher Diploma and Masters Levels which lead to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy.

**Action 63: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop case studies of collaboration between HEIs and enterprise, showcasing increased efficiency and reduced cost.

**Update:** On-going

A number of potential case studies have been identified and will be carried out in the next six months. These case studies are proposed to be delivered through the Regional Skills Forum. Institute of Technology Carlow has taken the lead on the South East Regional Skills Forum (SERSF) as proposed through the South East Action Plan for Jobs in 2015. The Institute holds the chair of the Regional Skills Forum Steering Committee and the Regional Education and Training Providers Group. The latter is the designated employer for the SE RSF manager. A series of meetings from May 2015 to date of the South East Regional Skills Forum- Education Providers Group has highlighted the need to develop ‘structured engagement pathways’ through FET / HE and into employment. Progress has been made on developing the mapping of FE and HE provision in consultation with multiple stakeholders. This project will be progressed by the SE RSF manager who took up position in May 2016. Prior to this the mapping and data collection was facilitated through a funding proposal from the SE RSF to the DES for administrative support which was approved in October 2015. This work facilitated the production of a baseline report.

WIT’s Technology Gateway Centres (TSSG, PMBRC and SEAM) and RIKON have produced case studies highlighting research collaborations which have taken place with industry.

<https://www.tssg.org/industry/industry-engagement/case-studies/>

<http://pmbrc.org/index.php/industrial-collaboration/case-studies/>

<http://www.seam.ie/index.php/industry/case-studies/>

<http://rikon.ie/testimonials/>

Similar case studies are in the process of development as part of the South East Regional Skills Forum to demonstrate collaboration on training, education and skills programme between the regional education partners and industry.

**Action 64: EI**

**Measure:** Target manufacturing companies in the South East Region to scale, innovate and develop international markets.

**Update:** On-going

Enterprise Ireland works with clients in the region to develop annual growth action plans focussed on export opportunities/NPD and jobs growth. A new series of business diagnostics and business development plans for 2016/2017 have commenced with manufacturing companies in the region with all sector teams. This process is on-going.

**Action 65: IDA**

**Measure:** Build global services base around manufacturing base already in the region and explore growth opportunities in finance, supply chain, HR and procurement.

**Update:** On-going

IDA Ireland continues to engage with the manufacturing base in the South East Region in order to maximise opportunities for a more services led agenda. These discussions are actively explored with the existing client base, and those new companies looking at investing in the region.

**Action 67: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** As part of a programme of upgrading of the industrial strengths of the region, expand capability through targeting potential strategic infrastructure investment opportunities available through SFI and EI in order to accelerate the adoption and integration of 3D printing and additive manufacturing technologies in relevant engineering businesses.

**Update:** On-going

Institute of Technology Carlow was successful in an application for an Enterprise Ireland funded technology gateway. The gateway, **DESIGN+** revolves around core disciplines of Engineering, Bio-Sciences and ICT with design objectivity at the creative heart of a four pillar process:

Creative Product Development delivers solutions to problems and identifies design opportunities. It captures consumer attention and provides critical differentiation to companies entering new markets or launching new product.

User Insight ensures successful product development. An understanding of user expectation is the essential ingredient in delivering a great user experience. It secures brand loyalty. It increases sales and it grows the balance sheet.

Aesthetic Design is the union of practical utility and aesthetic appeal and from the user's perspective; it represents the essence of product innovation. By harnessing the emotional response of users we inform the fourth pillar of the DESIGN+ offering.

Prototyping is essential to building knowledge. It adds insight and value to the development process. It brings proof of concept and rationale to decision-making. It also identifies and eliminates potential issues at an early stage. It enables the correction of design flaws and tooling errors and it eliminates associated production costs.

**DESIGN+** has a strong, skilled and experienced core team that has an established track record of delivering design led industry projects. To date the team have successfully delivered over 200 industry projects. With a full suite of prototyping technologies in place, **DESIGN+** can meet industry needs. Prototyping itself may be a multistage iterative process. Each prototype developed aims to address and deliver on the minimum viable product. The prototype is then tested with the user in context and the responses and reactions are evaluated. Additional prototyping may be required until the user requirements are fulfilled.

Prototyping may require a mix of design and technical expertise to implement a commercially viable, satisfactory solution. The relevant mix of expertise and skills required to deliver on a project will be identified at product development stage and this will determine the level of design and technical involvement required for prototyping. It will also impact on project timescale.

Special attention will be given during the prototyping stage to key product features identified during the product development phase.

At this stage **DESIGN+** delivers:

Functional prototypes (e.g. a 3D printed part, a user interface, a manufacturing process or workflow model);

Electro mechanical, sensor, and software design required for prototype functionality;

Supporting scientific underpinnings (and justifications) required to support prototype design;

Identification of supporting material that would assist in the protection of key product features (registration of designs, patents, etc.).



As part of a programme of upgrading of the industrial strengths of the region, expand capability through targeting potential strategic infrastructure investment opportunities available through SFI and EI in order to accelerate the adoption and integration of 3D printing and additive manufacturing technologies in relevant engineering businesses.

#### WIT

In Q2 2015 SFI launched the SFI Research Infrastructure call which aims to support the research community in building the required research infrastructural capacity to accomplish high quality, high impact research. WIT is submitting 5 proposals seeking approximately €6m to purchase large scale research infrastructure. The deadline for submission to SFI is 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016. 2 of these proposals are being submitted by the South East Applied Materials Centre (SEAM), targeting the acquisition of strategic infrastructures [(1) high power 3D Metal Printer for design and prototyping of wide ranging material components and (ii) high power X-ray systems for validating these parts] to enhance the manufacturing competitiveness of companies in the South East and nationally.

#### **Action 68: WIT**

**Measure:** Collaborate with companies to develop their capabilities in the area of design, prototyping, validation and scale to manufacture of 3D additive components and provide assistance to other engineering manufacturing companies in enhancing their overall capabilities.

**Update:** On-going

SEAM is Ireland's **leading Technology Gateway Centre**. Seed funded by Enterprise Ireland, it facilitates the development of technology solutions through collaboration and access to expertise in the Irish research infrastructure. SEAM provides innovative materials engineering solutions for industries from wide ranging sectors such as Biomedical, Pharma, Precision Engineering, Energy and Electronics. SEAM's unique strength lies in its ability to anticipate, understand, respond quickly and professionally to industry needs through provision of competitive customised solutions and more importantly, act as a **one-stop-shop for getting the job done**. SEAM creates value added competitiveness to industries using the latest technologies to deliver real solutions for real problems.

SEAM undertook more than 115 projects with industry in the last year. These projects vary in scale from small consultancy projects of €1.5k in value to large scale R & D collaborative projects in excess of €500k.

Continually supporting the transfer of knowledge and expertise to companies throughout the region, SEAM hosted an information seminar on **Additive Manufacturing** for a select group of industries in July, 2015. 14 companies participated in the seminar. The objective of the seminar was to educate small and medium size companies of the potential benefits of additive

manufacturing technologies. SEAM successfully hosted an Industry Day cum Metal Additive Manufacturing Lab in May, 2015. Over 70 companies participated in the event. The agenda for the day included morning session presentations from three client companies followed by separate session presentations on additive manufacturing technology by experts in the field. In the afternoon Minister Damien English formally opened Additive Manufacturing Laboratory and all the industry had the opportunity to tour SEAM Laboratories. SEAM also actively participated at the Tech Gateway Annual Showcase event held in Cork on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015 which was targeted at industry.

SEAM also provides technical expertise to the degree in manufacturing engineering so that students graduating from WIT have an understanding of the importance and advantages of additive manufacturing. With the aim to collaborate with companies in the area of 3D Additive Manufacturing (AM) and other areas of materials engineering, SEAM held two dedicated workshops in Q3 and Q4 of 2015 for select group of companies in the precision engineering and tool manufacturing sectors. Every workshop had representatives from 15 companies and involved presentations from SEAM staff on design requirements, build process methodology and validation techniques that are required for implementing this technology. Line tour of SEAM AM facility gave these companies opportunity to physically see, absorb and connect how this technology could be incorporated in their manufacturing processes. SEAM has currently signed NDAs with couple of the companies who attended the workshop and soon SEAM plans to design and prototype components of their interest. Few companies were interested in other technologies that were on offer and SEAM is already assisting those companies through feasibility studies/projects.

**Action 71: IT Carlow**

**Measure:** IT Carlow to establish Design+ Technology Gateway in order to support and enhance technology driven disciplines, linking that technology to business opportunities and user needs. Design+ will develop an inclusive design-led regional and national industry portal which will complement existing Technology Gateways.

**Update:** On-going

Approval was given by the Enterprise Ireland Industrial Research and Commercialisation Committee (IRCC) to fund the Design + IT Carlow proposal for the Technology Gateway Network to commence on January 1st 2016. Design + (Applied Design) is part of the Technology Gateway Network, a nationwide resource for industry based in the IoTs delivering solutions on near to market problems for industrial partners. The Design + Gateway from IT Carlow is applying its Industrial Design capabilities for companies based in the midlands, southeast and nationally. The technology offer to industry is Engineering: Prototype design and scale to manufacture; ICT & Software: Integration of user experience and interface design Bio Lifesciences: product design orientated by end user needs.

## Retail

### **Action 72: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop plans for each of the key town centres in the region with collaboration with business and representative organisations and incorporate social and community development aspects. These will include proposals to enhance the consumer experience and attractiveness of town centres for shopping and to develop world class retail centres throughout the region.

**Update:** On-going

Wexford County Council is working with the four Chambers of Commerce in the County to develop plans for enhancing the attractiveness of town centres for shopping and to enhance the consumer experience. District Managers in the 4 main towns – Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross are developing plans to improve town centres and improve consumer experience.

The Tipperary Town Centre initiative (TCI) focused on two parallel approaches – facilitating town centre groups and consolidating a range of other council supports to town centres, backed by additional, innovative measures. The TCI is being rolled out across the 9 towns included in the initiative. Public meetings have been held in Clonmel, Tipperary and Cashel. In January 2016, Tipperary Council adopted the Commercial Incentive Scheme with the objective of reducing the number of vacant retail units and to stimulate a differing and engaging retail mix. The scheme is open to applicants.

Carlow County Council is actively engaged in the development of relationships with key stakeholders in order to plan the effectively development of its urban centres. The Council via its Local Enterprise Office is delivering a variety of schemes such as festivals and events , co-ordinated marketing , paint schemes , start up grants and general individual business specific supports such as mentoring , web vouchers and training specifically targeted at these sector. Carlow County Council is currently progressing this agenda. Carlow County Council in partnership with Carlow Chamber is currently rolling out Carlow Town Team which is collaborative group aimed to provide solution based actions for Town Centre Regeneration.

Municipal District plans will be developed in 2016 under the work of the LECP. The plans will examine the economic & social issues and opportunities and develop granular plans. Establishment of Retail Fora in 9 Towns in Tipperary. TCC will support the development and roll out of the Town Centre Initiative to aid retail sector and will implement the revised all county CIS Scheme.

Waterford City & County Council - City Town Centre Management Groups in City, Dungarvan and Tramore. Dungarvan Town Centre plan published; City Plan under review and Tramore Town Centre Plan to be finalised in Q1 2016.

Kilkenny County Council is actively engaged in the development of relationships with key stakeholders in order to develop urban centres. A number of town developments are being progressed. A 'Streetscape Paint Scheme 2016' fund to assist with the cost of painting the front façade of commercial / business buildings and/or hand painted shop signage within the Municipal District of Kilkenny City - East & West is currently open and will support street scape enhancements in towns such as Callan, Thomastown, Ballyhale, Bennettsbridge, Dungarvan and Graignamanagh. The LEO actively supports businesses development with co-ordinated training, marketing, financial assistance and business specific supports such as mentoring, online trading etc.

### **Action 73: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Local Authorities and Retail Associations to develop collaborations to support the regeneration/development of their town and city centres through Town Centre Strategic Development Plans.

**Update:** On-going

Wexford County Council in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce in New Ross and Enniscorthy is developing Post By-Pass Strategies for both towns.

Tipperary County Council - The development of the additional supports for retailers involves a consultative process, obtaining views and feedback which will be implemented throughout the process of developing the Strategy. A meeting has been held with the Economic Development SPC to review the objectives and agree a timeline. Terms of Reference are being finalised and research has commenced in the preparation of a composite discussion paper. In terms of maximising the take up of at least 12 on line trading Vouchers by retail sector in 2016, 5 have been approved to date.

Carlow Chamber of Commerce are actively progressing the development of an action plan for Carlow Town. Carlow County council are fully engaged in this process.

Waterford City & County Council support City Centre Management Group in Waterford (e.g. with Plans). They also involved in Town Centre liaisons in Waterford City, Dungarvan & Tramore. Retail Fit out Incentive scheme for retail extended to Tramore,

Kilkenny County Council is actively progressing the next phase of the medieval mile initiative, in addition to supporting a number of developments such as the MM museum, festival supports, enhancing the development of a number of towns/ heritage attractions as tourist destinations and promoting Kilkenny for retail and conferencing. Kilkenny stakeholders are engaging in this process. The plans to develop the Abbey Creative quarter on the former Smithwicks/Diageo site are progressing. The paint scheme is open for applications and a number of festivals throughout the county are being supported financially and administratively via the Council.

Kilkenny County Council has developed a master plan for the regeneration of the old Brewery site in Kilkenny City Centre.

Action 5.2 of the Kilkenny LECP commits to the development of strategic development plans for key towns in each municipal district.

**Action 74: LEOs**

**Measure:** Promote the move to ecommerce and double the number of on-line vouchers drawn down by retailers in the region.

**Update:** On-going

All of the LEOs in the South East continue to roll out the approval of Trading Online Vouchers to enable small businesses set up or enhance their existing on-line presence (See Appendix 3).

**Action 75: ETBs**

**Measure:** ETBs will work in collaboration with a number of new partners to develop and deliver targeted responses to local skills needs, such as Retail. These approaches will be piloted in 2015.

**Update:** On-going

Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) has included Accountancy, Book-keeping and Accounts, and Business Calculations to programmes (as a direct result of DSP meetings in Kilkenny). By only offering component programmes on a part time basis it better serves the demands of learners and industry, and allows for progression to full time further education programmes.

A Further Education fulltime L5 in Office Informatics is currently advertised. This will offer a direct progression pathway to a range of IT Carlow and WIT Degree provision. The accreditation is aligned to the QQI 5M18294 award.

Waterford Wexford Education and Training Board is currently delivering training in partnership with employers in Waterford and Wexford. WWETB are delivering training in skills required and specific to the business needs of these companies. The companies involved are in the manufacturing, insurance and engineering sector.

This partnership approach has worked successfully in the past and WWETB will continue to work in partnership with local companies where appropriate.

In WWETB, the Senior Services to Business Training advisors liaise with 300 Waterford and Wexford companies on an ongoing basis.

## BioPharma and MedTech

### **Action 78:** Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Exploit the potential of convergence opportunities in the SE, linking life-sciences with pharma/med devices/engineering/ICT/Telecoms.

**Update:** On-going

LIT is commencing a process of engagement with the Life Science companies in the Tipperary area and has assigned personnel resources to this exercise.

Design + (Applied Design) is part of the Technology Gateway Network, a nationwide resource for industry based in the IoTs delivering solutions on near to market problems for industrial partners. The Design + Gateway from IT Carlow is applying its Industrial Design capabilities for companies based in the midlands, southeast and nationally. The technology offer to industry is Engineering: Prototype design and scale to manufacture; ICT & Software: Integration of user experience and interface design Bio Lifesciences: product design orientated by end user needs. The gateway will promote convergence opportunities and work with other gateways to communicate the various offerings to companies available from HEIs.

In WIT increasingly more interdisciplinary research projects involving linking experts in life sciences, engineering and ICT are emerging. Discussions with many companies within the region have taken place focussing on the interdisciplinary requirement for skills provision within the region.

### **Action 79: IDA**

**Measure:** In the Life Sciences area, IDA will expand the Life Science Value Proposition for the South east Region to attract investment from new companies.

**Update:** Complete

New investments secured in 2015 from West Pharma (300 new jobs), Amneal (300 new jobs), Valeant (125 new jobs), and in 2016 from Opko (200 new jobs) & Eurofins Lancaster (160 new jobs). New marketing materials have been developed to support a regional value proposition for Life Sciences.

## ICT Sector

### **Action 80:** Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Explore the extension of existing campus incubation capacity in the Region.

**Update:** On-going

LIT is involved in five enterprise centres at present including two in Tipperary. These enterprise centres are focused on start-up and developing enterprises. An increased focus on up-coming graduates is now being implemented with the intention of enhancing the collaboration between LIT and new enterprises with the view of creating more campus companies inter alia.

IT Carlow undertook an analysis of the incubation capacity available in the town and catchment area found that there was sufficient space available to meet the projected pipeline of activity in the locality. There are three other incubation centres in Carlow all with capacity for various types of start-up. This situation is kept under constant review.

WIT, through the Pharmaceutical & Molecular Biotechnology Research Centre and the South East Applied Materials Centre, is inputting to the feasibility study currently being undertaken by SEBIC to assess the market need and feasibility of establishing an incubation centre in the South East for start ups in the pharma / med device sectors. In Q 1 2016 a regional accelerator proposal was submitted from the South East to Enterprise Ireland. This is currently undergoing evaluation.

### **Action 81:** Wexford CoCo

**Measure:** Pursue the development of an ICT innovation Hub in North Wexford capitalizing on location south of Dublin and building the SE capacity around cutting edge IT, through Wexford County Council working in partnership with industry and education sectors.

**Update:** On-going

Wexford County Council has entered into a public / private partnership with Redmond Brothers to build an ICT Innovation Hub on a site beside the Amber Springs Hotel, just off the motorway in Gorey Town.

This 30,000 square feet prime office block will include a 5,000 sq ft Co-Working space aimed at technology based start-ups. The building is currently under construction with a completion date by the end of 2016 / early 2017.

## Design and Craft

### **Action 83: DCCoI**

**Measure:** Position Waterford as a centre of excellence in glass design and production, working with key stakeholders in planning the development of other such centres in jewellery and ceramics

**Update:** On-going

DCCoI in association with Waterford Institute of Technology and Waterford Viking Triangle Trust submitted an application to the “Creative Europe” fund through the Directorate General Education and Culture Programme of the European Commission. Entitled “[THE EUROPEAN GLASS ROAD : PEOPLE & PLACES](#)” the proposal would involve working with several other European partners over four years with a specific objective of developing glass related facilities in Waterford, with contributions from glass specialist industrialists, which would assist towards centre of excellence in glass design and production facilities. Centre of excellence developments within Kilkenny focused on ceramic and jewellery production have been initiated, which are being piloted ahead of glass production. Industry days have been held with a wide representative attending from across Ireland. Links with higher education and other skills related organisations have taken place with education representatives keen to see this initiative develop.

### **Action 84: DCCoI**

**Measure:** Develop a ‘Design Thinking’ initiative for young people, through partnership between LEOs, culture and arts venues and education to deliver enterprise skills to young people using existing resources, similar to the coder dojo model for enterprises and drawing on the success of the creativity programme in Sligo.

**Update:** Delayed

IT Carlow DesignCORE personnel have held discussions with stakeholders on this action. It is proposed to roll out a pilot scheme in Q4 2016.

DCCoI in partnership with third level institutions and the wider design sector will deliver and produce design thinking projects, resources and activities based on the designED, CraftEd and Future Makers programmes. Young people, teachers and pupils will engage in hands-on design challenges that focus on developing empathy, promoting a bias toward action, encouraging ideation, developing metacognitive awareness and fostering active problem solving through design thinking.



**Action 85: DCCoI**

**Measure:** Develop and promote the Design capability in Carlow.

**Update:** On-going

Design and Crafts Council of Ireland are working with Local Carlow Enterprise Office in supporting FORM Carlow, a Creative Craft Cluster in their business and artistic development maximising contribution to Irish Economy and culture.

DCCoI have submitted an application to Fáilte Ireland for a new three-day International Design Festival in the South East Region (incorporating Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Tipperary and Waterford), centred around an International Design Summit featuring thought leaders from across the world as well as award-winning, internationally renowned designers from here at home.

DCCoI are currently working on the development of a Design Centre of Excellence for the South East based on the hub & spoke model incorporating Carlow. The Centre will be focused on the training, production and dissemination of high quality research and knowledge transfer in contemporary design and craft making and manufacturing in Ireland. The Centre will provide industry focused training to meet industry needs, provide CPD training, helping to up-skill the existing sectoral workforce, as well as provide incubation and mentoring facilities and training to help creative start-ups.

## Energy, Green Economy and Natural Resources

**Action 86: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Expand the Better Energy Communities (BEC) initiative in the SE, to promote energy efficiency measures to the Local Business Community. LEOs will work with the Economic Development Units of the local authorities and the Energy Agencies in the region to build on the work already undertaken.

**Update:** On-going

WCCC in 2015 were successful in sourcing funding under the BEC for a number of SMEs in Waterford, innovative technologies installed as part of the works included gas fire chp, solar photo voltaic, led lighting etc.

WCCC in 2016 submitted an application under the BEC for a number of SMEs in Waterford, innovative technologies included within the application were led lighting, process control systems etc.

Action 8.5 of the Kilkenny LECP outlines the expansion of the ‘Better Energy Communities’ in Kilkenny. This will involve working with the Carlow Kilkenny Energy agency to promote energy efficiency best practice.

In Tipperary: Complete Energy awareness events for SMEs LEO & TEA 2 no. events complete May 2015; Complete series of events to encourage SME’s to take up Energy efficiency grants. NTLTP/ TEA 2. No BEC events (Dec 2015 complete); Investigate potential of animator funded under Leader program for BEC actions- TEA/ NTLTP by Mid 2016; Complete EU Intelligent Energy program Eu enterprises climate cup- TEA by end 2016; Run an event with Tipperary Green Business Network on resource efficiency with TEA/ LEO Q2 2016 ( complete); Complete a brochure on energy efficiency supports for SME’s and circulate to SME’s TEA & LEO by Q3 2016; Complete workshop with LEO/ EDU’s on identifying key target businesses for energy efficiency investment – Q 2,2016; Energy efficiency awareness workshop organised in conjunction with Nenagh Chamber in May; SEAI co-funding with LEO 10 Energy audits for small scale indigenous enterprises; Investigate whether EPA green Enterprise funding could support Shared resource manager services TEA by end Q2 2016; Run Tipperary SME Energy Expo, to educate SME owners on energy efficiency measures, as well as available support structures planned for Q3 2016

**Action 87: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Work with SEAI and local Energy Agencies to develop and promote Sustainable Energy Communities model in the region and identify willing early adopter community to act as an exemplar.

**Update:** Complete

Action 8.5 of the Kilkenny LECP outlines the expansion of the ‘Better Energy Communities’ in Kilkenny. This will involve working with the Carlow Kilkenny Energy agency to promote energy efficiency best practice.

(WCCC / Waterford Energy Bureau submitted a funding application to SEAI under the Sustainable Energy Communities Model in partnership with other Local Authorities )

WCCC have prepared a Renewable Energy Strategy for Waterford City and County Council, which examines the current energy demand within the county and renewable energy potential within the years 2015-2030. The strategy matches the national White Paper on Energy 2015-2030. The strategy is currently out for consultation at present.

Tipperary: Expand Energy Communities Tipperary to South Tipperary

Compete application to SEAI for Sustainable energy communities funding for Energy communities Tipperary

Complete application to SEAI for or Sustainable energy communities funding for Tipperary SEAP development.

FTE job to stimulate further investment in sustainable energy

Identify actions in Tipperary to implement fuel poverty via Health strategy as per LECP 8.2d

Implement Tipperary Warmer homes programme under BEC funding to leverage 1M investment/ 20 job years

Implement Energy communities programme under BEC funding to leverage 1.5M investment/ 30 job years

Investigate Funding promotional campaign for SEAI Better energy supports to increase work in private sector.

**Action 88: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop a platform for resource sharing for small organisations to promote the circular economy in the region.

**Update:** Not Now Being Progressed

At its meeting held in September, 2016 the AMC agreed that this action as articulated is no longer relevant and should therefore be deleted.

**Action 89: Eirgrid**

**Measure:** Ensure that the electricity transmission grid in the South East is strengthened to enable maximum investment by industries that rely on large energy consumption

**Update:** On-going

EirGrid are continuing to ensure that required grid strengthening initiatives are undertaken in the South East and nationwide. This includes, where required, the upgrade and refurbishment of the existing transmission network, including both line and station improvements. These ongoing works will ensure that the South East region has a secure and reliable supply of electricity in order to maximise the potential for investment in the region.

**Action 90: SEAI**

**Measure:** Promote and assist the delivery of costs savings through energy efficiency programmes and training for businesses and public sector organisations in the region.

**Update:** On-going

At its meeting held in September, 2016 the AMC noted that there is a lot of good work being undertaken and planned in energy efficiency across the region (including under the LEADER Programme), and the lead for this action needs to be locally based to ensure this is captured and reflected in the Plan. The Director of the SEAPJ will engage with the Energy Agencies in the region to get their input..

**Action 91: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Commence pilot upgrade of public lighting by replacing the existing LA stock of sodium lamps with high efficiency LED units to reduce energy consumption costs and also to reduce lamp maintenance costs.

**Update:** On-going

Carlow County Council is currently engaged initial meetings in respect of the concept of upgrades. Kilkenny County Council are at the early stages of carrying out a pilot scheme of retrofitting local authority public lighting in Kilkenny City and County to energy efficient LED. This pilot project is carried as part of the Intelligent Energy Europe Streetlighting EPC project. Kilkenny County Council is one of 9 city partners from across Europe on this project. WCCC have replaced some and in the process of replacing others, these however are in specific areas that receive upgrades. WCCC have 14,000 public lights approx, 80% of those can be replaced in the future.

Wexford County Council has replaced some lighting around the county with LED units where it was necessary to replace the lighting. Where new lighting is being installed LED lighting is being used in all cases.

**Action 92: Coilte**

**Measure:** Assess the economic value added potential of the forestry sector in the region. Promote research opportunities for added value product development for timber harvested in the region

**Update:** Delayed

At its meeting held in September, 2016 the AMC noted this is an important action for the region. The Director of the SEAPJ will continue to engage with Coilte to ascertain their plans for the action. DJEI will pursue this issue with DAFM.

## BRANDING AND MARKETING THE SOUTH EAST REGION

### **Action 93:** IDA

**Measure:** IDA Ireland will proactively update its online marketing “Invest in” series for the South East Region.

**Update:** Complete

IDA has developed a regional brand – South East Region Your Job, Your Home, Your Life. This brand sits across all five counties in the region and messages are adjusted as appropriate to reflect location strengths depending on the FDI opportunity presented.

### **Action 94:** Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Regional approach to raising awareness of job opportunities in the region and qualifications required and available in the region.

**Update:** On-going

In the context of Tipperary, LIT worked with a variety of stakeholders to carry out a training needs assessment and a training provision analysis of Tipperary.

This action will be delivered through the Regional Skills Forum. Institute of Technology Carlow has taken the lead on the South East Regional Skills Forum (SE RSF) as proposed through the South East Action Plan for Jobs in 2015. The Institute holds the chair of the Regional Skills Forum Steering Committee and the Regional Education and Training Providers Group. The latter is the designated employer for the SE RSF manager. A series of meetings from May 2015 to date of the South East Regional Skills Forum- Education Providers Group has highlighted the need to develop ‘structured engagement pathways’ through FET / HE and into employment. Progress has been made on developing the mapping of FE and HE provision in consultation with multiple stakeholders. This project will be progressed by the SE RSF manager who took up his position in May 2016. Prior to this the mapping and data collection was facilitated through a funding proposal from the SE RSF to the DES for administrative support which was approved in October 2015. This work facilitated the production of a baseline report.

WIT School of Engineering in conjunction with Waterford Chamber, local industries, IDA and Enterprise Ireland hosted #ThinkWaterford Engineering Showcase on March 5th. The objective of the event was to showcase job opportunities in engineering /manufacturing which exist in Waterford and other regional based companies.

**Action 95: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Convene a South East Enterprise Conference with themes to include the strengths of the region and branding with a focus on investors.

**Update:** On-going

*[This action is closely linked with Action 151. See Action 151 for update.](#)*

**Action 96: LEOs**

**Measure:** Deliver an annual set of South East microenterprise Events for the South East

**Update:** On-going

The 5 LEOs in the region have now in place a total of 169 enterprise training and management development programmes for Q1 and Q2, 2016 (see Appendix 3). These range from pre-start-up programmes such as the Business Pathway Programme run by LEO Carlow and sectoral programmes, such as the HACCP Food Management Programme offered by LEO Kilkenny, through to specialist programmes such as the Exporting Programme being run by LEO Tipperary and the Tech-Start Programme being delivered by LEO Wexford.

The national LEO Network is also organising a 'Local Enterprise Week' from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March next, which will incorporate a range of programmes and initiatives, as well as national, regional and local media campaigns aimed at getting more people to think about enterprise and entrepreneurship.

These programmes are complemented by the Business Advisory Sessions provided by LEO staff and the mentoring support provided to entrepreneurs, and also by other support schemes such as the Trading On-Line Voucher (TOV) initiative. (See Appendix 3)

**Action 97: Fáilte Ireland**

**Measure:** Establish a programme for large employers to collaborate to brand the region as a tourist destination.

**Update:** On-going

Ireland's Ancient East Signature Experience Workshops in central locations: Waterford (60 participants), Wexford (44 participants) and Kilkenny (50 participants) and Dwell in Ireland's Ancient East - Cross-Selling Programme targeted at trade (accommodation, food and attractions) events were held in: Wexford, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny, 'Dwell' is a self-replicating programme, participants have undertaken to train further personnel in their businesses or communities.

**Action 98: IDA**

**Measure:** Continue to use relevant data (for example Maynooth University's AERO) to inform evidence based planning and identify development opportunities in the region.

**Update:** On-going

IDA remains informed of all research completed on the region that may assist its FDI efforts. IDA has engaged with SOLAS on regional data reports produced.

**DRIVING ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**Action 99: LEOs**

**Measure:** Each of the Local Enterprise Offices in the South East region will aim to increase employment in its baseline through increased startups and scaling of existing clients. Annual Business Plans setting out clear targets and objectives across a range of services and for 2015 these include:

- €2.6 million will be available in grant assistance and enterprise development supports;
- Almost 400 training courses run, for up to 3,800 participants;
- 1,150 one-to-one mentoring assignments will be arranged;
- 50 MicroFinance Ireland applications to be received;
- Up to 2,000 female entrepreneurs to avail of LEO training and soft support programmes;
- 121 schools to engage with the LEO Student Enterprise Programme, with just under 2,600 participants

**Update:** On-going

Table 3 in Appendix 4 provides a combined summary of the outputs for 2015 and targets for 2016 across the main indicators for the 5 LEOs in the region.. The targets are based on current resources.

**Action 100: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Promote the supports available to companies, from startups to established businesses through [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie). For startups, the key services required and available include, funding and proposal writing advice, incubation facilities and technical expertise. For established companies, the key information required relates to access to R&D, info on export markets and on business networks. Encourage more startups through better leveraging of 3rd level expertise for

funding proposals, including for incubation facilities and providing access to technical expertise (3rd level). For established companies, promote access to R&D experience in the region and greater information on export opportunities. Develop a database portal and a central event guide 'meet-up', to highlight the means to access all the required information.

**Update:** On-going

Through its enterprise centres in Thurles and Clonmel, LIT is providing support to new and developing enterprises in the region. This support includes the TESS (Tipperary Enterprise Start-up Support) programmes, access to incubation space of varying sizes, promotion of Innovation Vouchers and Innovation Partnerships, the provision of mentoring and business development support. LIT also delivers the New Frontiers programme in Limerick to which suitable Tipperary-based businesses have access.

This action is already being delivered on through the Research and Commercialisation Support Centre at IT Carlow. The Institute works closely with LEOs across the region and EI to deliver services to industry. This will be enhanced through the newly established Design+ technology gateway at IT Carlow which will promote convergence opportunities and work with other gateways to communicate the various offerings to companies available from HEIs. This provides south east companies with greater access to national networks and expertise.

WIT is actively engaged with the start up community through the activities of ArcLabs both in Waterford and Kilkenny. Both centres are currently full. In Q1 2016 9 new participants commenced on Phase 2 of the New Frontiers Programme in WIT. In Q 2 2016 ArcLabs launched the ArcAcademy Programme, a pilot programme run over the summer period for graduate entrepreneurs.

The WIT Research Community continues to host workshops / events targeted at entrepreneurs, start ups and more established companies. Examples of such events run in Q 1 and Q2 included:

WIT (TSSG & School of Business) & SEBIC Industry Business Workshop (Kilkenny based)

(April) TSSG, Vodafone, Kilkenny & Waterford Chamber host workshop on the Internet of Things (Venue: Lyrath Kilkenny)

(April) 'Connect 2016' Maynooth University, WIT, IT Carlow and Athlone Institute of Technology jointly host seminar to showcase how entrepreneurs, SMEs and MNCs can access funding, expertise and infrastructure to enhance in-company research and innovation capabilities.

(May) 'Building Your Business', hosted by WIT in conjunction with the National Patent Office, Waterford LEO and Enterprise Ireland (Waterford based.)



**Action 101: ETBs**

**Measure:** Inputs in entrepreneurship will be provided to all ETB participants on relevant further education and training programmes. The Adult Guidance Service will promote self-employment options.

**Update:** On-going

Kilkenny and Carlow Adult Educational Guidance Service provides individuals and groups with an opportunity to identify, explore and review educational and career options. The service endeavours to support individuals and enable them to make decisions for their future learning and/or career progression.

A new Further Education (Full time) Level 5 in Product and Industrial Design is enrolling for September. This offers a direct progression pathway to IT Carlow Degree provision, and local employers in engineering sector. The accreditation is based on QQI 5M2061 engineering, with specific design and making emphasis.

Also advertised and taking enrolments is a new Further Education (Full time) Level 5 in Organic Gardening Enterprise. This offers a direct progression pathway to WIT Degree provision, and employment in market-gardening/artisan production. The accreditation is based on QQI 5M2586 Horticulture.

VTOS Carlow currently run a 'Start Your Own Business' course as part of their academic year. This is proving successful and is offered as part of the QQI Major Award.

Duiske College run a QQI accredited Level 5 award in Outdoor Sports and Recreation. This award has work experience and outdoor activities which lead to further development of entrepreneurship in this career cluster. The component in Outdoor Leadership and Safety promotes not only leadership but self employment and business development.

The Professional Cookery training course offered by the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI), Kilkenny has built in a range of work-based practices that supports learners to come up with entrepreneurial ideas and group activities. Since course start up in October, learners have engaged in activities such as "Savour Kilkenny", and catered for a range of fund raising events in Thomastown.

WW ETB The Adult Educational Guidance Service supports individuals and groups in exploring options and making decisions with regard to their career, education/training and life choices. Depending on the needs and interests of clients, this can include informing clients of supports and training available if starting a business, e.g. Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, Local Enterprise Office supports and training, group sessions on enterprise supports where it seems appropriate as a progression option. In this way the service is involved in promoting self-employment opportunities.

A Food Production Operatives Programme has been developed by WWETB and this course will start in August 2016. The programme was developed in direct response to the needs of a number of local and national food manufacturers. This course will include a Start your Own Business module to give the learners who are interested in pursuing the self-employed route the knowledge and tools to start their own business in the food industry.

**Action 102: EI**

**Measure:** Participate in the five days of Startup Ireland's 5 Cities initiatives taking place in the 2nd week of October including in Waterford. Leverage and augment many of its existing activities, events and projects that are themed around entrepreneurship & startups to coincide with the running of these events. This will include startup boot camps.

**Update:** Complete

Waterford was part of the Government's Start-up Ireland's 5 Cities (Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Waterford and Cork) initiative ran in October 2015. Over 400 events were ran nationally as part of this initiative. Enterprise Ireland provided both financial and non-financial support for this national initiative. On October the 6<sup>th</sup>, the Startup Ireland's 5 Cities initiatives was held in Waterford. Highlights included:

**The Start-up Island Forum:** 130 people from across the business community attended this event. The keynote speaker was Professor Willie Donnelly, President of Waterford Institute of Technology and Director at TSSG who stressed the importance of creating a healthy startup ecosystem to benefit local enterprise, but also to attract businesses to the area.

**The Enterprise Village for New Frontiers:** This event was an opportunity to meet New Frontiers participants, see their business ideas and learn how they secured funding to accelerate their start-up.

**The Enterprise Playground:** Ran in partnership with the Waterford City and Dungarvan Enterprise Centres, this workshop was designed for those in a start -up phase or those adding new products/services to an existing offering.

**Find Your Dream Job in Waterford:** In partnership with the Startup Gathering, CPL Waterford held an event to showcase employment options available in the area.

**The Big Pitch:** Created and hosted by Bank of Ireland, the Big Pitch was an opportunity for Waterford-based businesses to pitch their big ideas to industry leaders and win a cash prize.

**Waterford's Start-up Gathering Recognition Awards:** 85 representatives from the local and regional business community attended this event. Two Startup Gathering Recognition awards were awarded, one to Patsy Carney, CEO of EirGen and the other to Eugene Crehan, Waterford City Coordinator.

As part of this initiative Enterprise Ireland hosted 2 workshops; these were:

1. First time export awareness workshop; and
2. Securing Competitive Start funding.

Both events recorded strong attendance.

**Action 103: EI**

**Measure:** Agree and implement a Services Level Agreement with all Business Innovation Centres (BIC) to ensure their interaction with startups in the South East region is deepened and the value maximised.

**Update:** Delayed

Enterprise Ireland is currently drafting a Services Level Agreement with the Business Innovation Centres. This process requires significant consultation with DJEI and the individual BICs in advance of the final Service Level Agreement being presented for sign-off with respective stakeholders. Given the level of consultation required, it is envisaged that the Service Level Agreement will be delivered by Q2 2016.

**Action 105: LEOs**

**Measure:** Implement a regional programme to inform secondary schools of the key enterprise sectors in the region and consequential career opportunities in the Region and create awareness amongst Career Guidance teachers. All schools and industry to participate in an 'Adopt a School' programme for the South East.

**Update:** Delayed

At its meeting held in September, 2016 the AMC noted that the LEOs are not best placed to deliver this action. It was also noted that there is a lot of good work already being undertaken involving LEOs, Local Authorities, HEIs, IDA, industry and employers in schools across the region.

It was agreed that given their remit, the South East Regional Skills Forum is perhaps a better conduit through which this action can be progressed and that the Forum can identify local stakeholders to lead the action. The Director of the SEAPJ will liaise with the Manager of the Forum.

**Action 106: EI**

**Measure:** EI will implement findings from the review of the New Frontiers Entrepreneurial Development Programme. EI will work to evolve the programme & maximise its positive impacts on entrepreneurship in the South East in conjunction with IT Carlow & WIT.

**Update:** Complete

**EI:** New Frontiers is Enterprise Ireland's national entrepreneur development programme for innovative, early-stage startups. It is a three-phased programme, based in 14 campus incubation centres across the country. Each year, New Frontiers funds 150 companies nationally. Enterprise Ireland's Board has approved the funding of a revised New Frontiers programme for the period 2016-2020.

**Higher Education Institutes:** IT Carlow and WIT submitted a joint application to EI for a further New Frontiers programme. In line with the Action Plan for Jobs 2015 the objectives and actions are designed to achieve impacts in terms of jobs, exports for start-ups.

The Programme is being delivered across the South East region in 2016 by WIT and IT Carlow.

The Programme Managers act as network brokers by connecting start-up promoters with valuable contacts in the consortium's eco-systems both within and external to the Institutes. In the past three years, this consortium has worked with over 240 start-up promoters across the South East region from 2012 to 2015 through the New Frontiers Programme. Projects supported ranged from technology-based products, pioneering medical components and devices to original food products. The consortium Programme staff and their consortium colleagues have significant experience in supporting SMEs, giving programme participants access to a wealth of practical sector-specific knowledge. Programme participants will also have access to support from the Technology Transfer Offices on matters pertaining to IP and commercialisation and also the Incubation Centre Managers. Both Institutes have worked on over 35 innovation vouchers with New Frontiers participants. The Institutes together provide physical infrastructure in five locations across the South East region to support the effective operation of the New Frontiers programme.

Programme Achievements 2012-2015 outlined in Appendix 5.

**Action 107: Crowd Funding Ireland**

**Measure:** Encourage greater use of alternative funding sources, such as crowd-funding for startups.

**Update:** On-going

*This action is merged with Action 180*

**Action 108: EI**

**Measure:** Run a “Project Assessment Day” in 2015 for Startups in the South East Region. This will be done in partnership with SEBIC to assess early stage startup projects with potential for growth.

**Update:** Complete

Enterprise Ireland and SEBIC have run a Project Assessment Day. Five early *stage* projects were reviewed by EI & SEBIC and LEO. As appropriate the projects were progressed to either New Frontiers Program or Local LEO and SEBIC. The projects were also offered mentor support.

**Action 109: LEOs**

**Measure:** Ensure that as many potential entrepreneurs as possible in the region avail of and benefit from LEO supports. (e.g., through a collaborative working relationship with Department of Social Protection (DSP) case officers to target participants on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance and to encourage these startups to participate in SYOB training. encourage bank advisers to refer startups for SYOB training, etc.)

**Update:** On-going

There is on-going partnership with DSP to refer BTWEA participants to LEO supports.

Kickstarter initiative working well in Tipperary with almost half of participants referred to Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) for further support. The scheme operates as follows:

DSP Job Facilitator/ Case Worker refers the unemployed individual thinking of starting their own business to the LEO/ Local Development Companies for business advice. Alternatively, the unemployed Promoter may approach the LEO directly. The LEO organises and funds monthly half day “Kickstarter” workshops at 2 locations - Clonmel & Nenagh. The workshop covers the basics of starting your own business including:- business structures, self assessment/ taxation & vat, market research, sales & marketing, finance, business plan and regulatory environment. “Kickstarter” participants are provided with a number of guides, business plan and cash flow templates and other resources.

At the end of the workshop participants are screened and their development needs catered for as follows: In the case of a LEO qualifying project, a Business Adviser is assigned to advise and support. Aid may include the provision of Mentor or further training supports, business plan or help with a grant or loan application and gain Access to BTWEA or Short Term Allowance & Enterprise Support Grant through DSP and Non Qualifying Projects e.g. Local Services, Retail etc.. Participant elects (by completing a form) to be referred on to SICAP where they will register with Local Development Company and benefit from up to three individual Mentor Sessions. Gain

Access to BTWEA or Short Term Allowance & Enterprise Support Grant through DSP. If deemed appropriate, the Promoter may avail of a training place free of charge (if certified by DSP) on any LEO business skills training course e.g. 10 week SYOB or 1 day SYOB Boot Camp to develop a Business Plan.

LEO Carlow works in partnership with the Carlow County Development Partnership under SICAP to deliver the Business Pathway programme. The scheme operates on the basis of:

- Monthly 1 day pre-SYOB Course.
- Diagnostic Support Meetings.
- Free SYOB participation.
- On-going supports provided under SICAP.

It is also agreed that LEOs in each of the 5 counties in the south east will engage with their Local Community Development Committee on this action.

#### **Action 110: LEOs**

**Measure:** LEOs to develop partnerships with all frontline access points for business in the region, including banks and accountants refer startups, to ensure there is maximum awareness of the supports available from the LEOs.

**Update:** On-going

During Enterprise Week LEO Tipperary held an expo entitled “Who To Talk To” aimed at Financial Institutions and Professional Service Providers (see Appendix 7). In recent months, LEO Tipperary has participated in 3 “Enterprise Town” events with Bank of Ireland, presented to both AIB and Ulster Bank Clients and key account managers. The LEO and AIB co-sponsored the Women in Business Network Ireland Awards. All LEOs have a local bank represented on their Evaluation Committees.

There is ongoing engagement with banks, accountants and other professional bodies through Chambers of Commerce and other business bodies. The banks are represented on the Evaluation & Approvals Committee of each LEO. During Enterprise Week Tipperary LEO held a workshop titled “Who to Talk” to specifically aimed at Financial Institutions and Professional Service Providers. In recent months, LEOs have participated in “Enterprise Town” events with Bank of Ireland, and staff have presented to both AIB and Ulster Bank clients and key account managers.

AIB co-sponsored the Women in Business Network Ireland Awards and BOI are sponsoring the Bizfest Regional Conference to be held in October.

LEO Kilkenny have developed point of information material which will be distributed to all banks, accountants and all frontline access points throughout the county in order to provide details and contact information. Members of the Banks and Credit Unions deliver modules as part of the Start Your Own Business Programmes in the region.

**Action 112: ÚnaG**

**Measure:** Údarás na Gaeltachta will develop annual enterprise development plans for each Gaeltacht area setting out targets to support entrepreneurship, enterprise growth and job creation.

**Update:** Complete

This Action is complete.

**Action 114: LEOs**

**Measure:** LEOs in conjunction with the Economic Development Units of Local Authorities will carry out an audit of industrial and incubation workspace in the region. A key part of this approach will be to work with the CECs across the region to develop local protocols for enterprise support (co-working spaces and hotspots)

**Update:** On-going

LEO Tipperary retained external consultants to provide research support, independent analysis and conclusions in the format of a Tipperary Workspace Study. This scoping study employed a comprehensive mix of primary and secondary research and Tipperary Co Co now has available an extensive database of available workspace (public, private and community owned), which has been mapped on GIS.

Wexford Co Co commissioned a similar study of the existing office and industrial stock in Wexford Town, Gorey, Enniscorthy and New Ross. This resulted in the 'Vacant Industrial and Commercial Land Study', which has been used to help inform the Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan.

LEO Kilkenny will assist the Economic Development Unit of Kilkenny Co Co to put in place a system to regularly monitor vacant commercial property, using existing sources (e.g. daft.ie).

LEO Carlow under its remit for Economic Development has conducted a survey of property suitable for FDI clients and continues to update same. The LEO is proactively working with the IDA in respect of the location and development of a ATB as announced as part of the Action Plan for Jobs. The LEO has completed a study in respect of Town Centre properties, which is updated on a quarterly basis and conducted a feasibility study in respect of the conversion costs for private landlords to make properties suitable for office space.

Waterford City and County Council, in conjunction with LEO Waterford, monitors the availability of incubation, enterprise and industrial space and intends to develop a new Waterford Business and Enterprise Website. In particular, the following bodies have local incubation space: ArcLabs and TSSG (WIT); SEBIC; Fumbally Exchange as well as the Kite Studios, which are managed directly by LEO Waterford.

Each of the local authority areas have a significant portfolio of ready and developable space including IDA Technology and Business Parks and IDA Industrial Parks, as well as retail and business parks. There are also a number of Community Enterprise Centres spread right across the region and the LEOs work closely with these.

#### **BUILDING ENTERPRISE CAPABILITY AND CONNECTIONS**

##### **Action 115: LEOs**

**Measure:** Development of a Strategy to Growth Programme for microenterprises to encourage the progress pathway to Enterprise Ireland

**Update:** On-going

One of the fundamental goals of the LEOs is to assist clients move up the ‘value chain.’ LEOs are committed to growing companies of high potential (e.g. those that can transfer to EI.) Significant successes have been achieved in this regard around the region over the years.

LEOs will develop a formal progression pathway protocol with EI. This will include an annual review of the LEO portfolio to identify clients that have the potential to progress/transfer to EI to develop a ‘Strategy for Growth.’

LEOs in the south east are engaged in a project to highlight the level of HPSU’s identified as part of their on the ground interactions with clients. LEOs have conducted an overview analysis of the issues for progression and proposals are being considered in respect of a streamlined process for information sharing. This includes LEO executives on EI Competitive funding panels. LEO Carlow and Tipperary will also shortly receive training in respect of same.

South East LEOs are also currently considering a variety of solutions, including the development of a Regional Lean for Micros Programme. This would complement a number of local projects, for example LEO Kilkenny has reviewed its client portfolio in conjunction with EI, and a number of clients have been identified that could potentially transition to EI. In these cases, the South East Business Innovation Centre (SEBIC) will engage with these clients and report back with an assessment of their potential.



**Action 116: EI**

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland will promote the information services offered by its Market Research Unit to a wider cohort of companies, ensuring companies based in the South East can access those services through EI's Office. The LEO will utilise and make available a number of On line Resources such as Local and National LEO Websites, NUBIE.ie, SME Online Tool.

**Update:** On-going

Enterprise Ireland promotes the availability of Market Research Facilities at a national and regional level through our website, social media, The Market Magazine (e-zine distributed to all clients on quarterly basis) and through referrals at 1:1 meetings between Development Advisers/Market Advisers/Regional Development Executives and client companies embarking on expansion in to new or existing export markets. In the South-East headquarters in Waterford EI have a dedicated resource who schedules and provides relevant preparatory advice to all clients who wish to access data bases via the local office. EI are actively trying to increase the number of companies utilising this facility at present through its post Brexit 5 point export support package of initiatives.

**Action 117: LEOs**

**Measure:** Support the development of early-stage ICT businesses by establishing mentorship and support.

**Update:** On-going

Each LEO in the region has an established panel of business mentors which is made available to early stage businesses including ICT companies. This mentorship is supplemented with support from colleagues in the South East BIC and the two New Frontiers in the Region, namely, WIT and IT Carlow. Early stage ICT businesses are actively directed towards New Frontiers as a first step in developing investor ready business plans. The Enterprise Ireland Competitive Call Funds include a number of initiatives such as the Embark programme lead by LEO Kilkenny and the TakeOff programme lead by LEO Wexford which will also be of benefit to early stage ICT Companies.

**Action 119: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Introduce and promote ICT adoption, innovation and investment in R&D across all sectors to drive transformational change in key enterprises in the region.

**Update:** On-going

Through its Enterprise and Research Centre Questum which is based in Clonmel, LIT has facilitated a number of high-tech start-up companies in the region. A number of these are

engaged in R and D within their field and are facilitating this R and D through the application of ICT.

IT Carlow has a long history of meeting the intent of this action and has led innovation in ICT and engineering projects involving national and international partners. The INSPIRE project is seen as a 'best practice' project in innovation management. Aspects of this programme are being rolled out to start up and SMEs in the region. Engagement with larger firms will be channelled through Design +. Design + (Applied Design) is part of the Technology Gateway Network, a nationwide resource for industry based in the IoTs delivering solutions on near to market problems for industrial partners. The Design + Gateway from IT Carlow is applying its Industrial Design capabilities for companies based in the midlands, southeast and nationally. The technology offer to industry is Engineering: Prototype design and scale to manufacture; ICT & Software: Integration of user experience and interface design Bio Lifesciences: product design orientated by end user needs. The gateway will promote convergence opportunities and work with other gateways to communicate the various offerings to companies available from HEIs.

**Action 121: EI**

**Measure:** Implement the National Mentoring Strategy in the region by supporting networks and increasing the provision of mentoring sessions for businesses in the region.

**Update:** On-going

Enterprise Ireland is working closely with DJEI to implement the National Mentoring Strategy, with key areas of focus currently being (1) merging of EI and LEO mentor panels, (2) setting up a volunteer mentoring portal and (3) delivering the current Microsoft Volunteer Mentoring Pilot with EI and LEO clients.

In addition, Enterprise Ireland continues to work with a panel of mentors from the South East Region who collectively cover areas of business competency, such as, Finance, HR, Marketing, Production, Strategic Planning, Design and R&D.

**Action 122: IMDA**

**Measure:** IMDA (Irish Medical Devices Association) to expand its HPSU and cross sectorial lean mentoring programmes established in 2014 and 2015 respectively, aimed at raising the bar with respect to manufacturing.

**Update:** On-going

IMDA's Lean Mentoring Programme is open to all Ibec members to participate. This involves a company who are at the initial stages of their lean journey, being mentored by another company

who are further along on the journey. They use the industry-developed MÓRTM Benchmark Model as a guide to identify the areas of the business on which to focus.

The model was used as part of the pilot IMDA Lean Mentoring Programme. The partnership between Waters Technologies, Wexford and Lake Regional Medical, New Ross, was highly successful and will guide future approaches to mentoring programmes. James Browne, Lean/6-Sigma Programme Manager, Waters Technologies Ireland and Eddie Kiely, Director of Operations, LRM said that one of the key benefits was the approach took two years off their lean journey giving them a competitive advantage.

Following on from the success of the Waters / Lake Region Pilot Lean Mentoring programme, IMDA have received numerous requests for lean mentoring from member companies. As many as 20 companies have requested lean mentoring since the IMDA Manufacturing Conference was held in April 2015, and the showcase presentation of partnership at the European Shingo Conference in October 2015.

Three new partnerships have been established with a number of other partnerships ready to commence. Companies will provide updates on their progress at each quarterly meeting of the IMDA Op Ex Working Group. The scope for partnerships has expanded to reflect interest from other sectors. The cross-sectoral linkages have been formed thanks to IMDA's work with colleagues in other Ibec groups. IMDA are now seeking lean mentors, to fulfil this demand from industry and welcome support in this great initiative.

Having demonstrated the value of Lean Mentoring at the recent Manufacturing Conference, an additional 20 companies have expressed an interest in participating. James Browne, Lean/6-Sigma Programme Manager, and Eddie Kiely, Director of Operations, Lake Regional Medical presented a compelling case study on the benefits of taking part. An informational is now available to businesses who wish to find out more about what the programme can do to help them grow and thrive. A full case study of the Waters – Lake Region Medical Lean Mentoring Programme is available on the IMDA website.

IMDA and Enterprise Ireland entrepreneurship mentoring programme: Phase two of the mentoring programme is making progress.

There have been meaningful discussions with more structured plans being developed by some to improve their capacities in the particular skills area identified to meet their individual needs. Others have visited mentor sites to meet the teams working in these areas to learn from best practice.

Since the programme was launched 8 HPSUs have been matched with experts in the industry. To date eight partnerships have been established, IMDA will meet again with Enterprise Ireland in October 2016 to further refine the process and set up the next set of HPSU partnerships. Feedback from last years programme was exceptional.

**Action 123: LEOs**

**Measure:** Develop and promote existing networks across the region to take advantage of LEO EEN (Enterprise Europe Network) status to ensure supports to assist microenterprise across the South East region to enter new markets.

**Update:** On-going

The EEN helps businesses to grow through tailored support, new business and technology partnerships, commercial opportunities, licensing deals, and partner searches for EU funded R&D. The EEN service in Ireland is a partnership between EI, Cork Chamber of Commerce, Dublin Chamber of Commerce and the 31 LEOs (a partnership that formally commenced last November). Each LEO has a dedicated staff member designated to promote and provide the service to small businesses in their locality.

The EEN provides an important gateway into the EU and a bigger footprint globally. Through the service, businesses can get advice on EU funding and support on bringing their products and technologies to a global audience. LEO staff have now been trained on the service and the LEO offices will proactively promote the service in the coming months, including hosting information seminars.

Notwithstanding the above, it is proving difficult to get businesses to engage with the EEN. LEOs will endeavour to host an event in the south east to promote the opportunities.

**Action 124: EI**

**Measure:** EI will deliver an Export Awareness Event for the South East in cooperation with South East LEOs and other key stakeholders

**Update:** Complete

Enterprise Ireland runs *Get Export Ready* awareness events throughout the country. The purpose of these events is to assist companies thinking about exporting for the first time, now, or in the future, to understand the steps that are required to drive their export potential. In addition, information is presented on programmes available to support new and early stage exporters. As part of this event, the Local Enterprise Offices also outline their available supports. In November 2015, EI held a *Get Export Ready* Event awareness event in the South East Region. This event had in the range of 60 participants from 40 companies. As committed to in the Action Plan for Jobs for the South East, Enterprise Ireland will run one *Get Export Ready* event in the region in 2016.

**Action 125: EI**

**Measure:** To maximise the impact of the South-East export event, EI will deliver a follow-on Export Workshop for a select number of pre- Exporting companies to drive their export capability

**Update:** Complete

Enterprise Ireland delivered an Export Awareness event in Waterford on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015 to help companies develop export growth plans – 60 participants attended from 40 companies. Further Awareness Events are planned for September 2016 in Wexford and an Exploring Exports Workshop in October 2016.

LEO Kilkenny is also the lead in the EMBARK Programme which has been recently approved funding under the LEO Competitive Fund. EMBARK is aimed at proactively preparing a select group of small businesses with potential for growth and export.

#### **Action 126: EI**

**Measure:** Promote the use of EI 'hot desk' facilities in overseas markets to businesses in the region.

**Update:** On-going

Enterprise Ireland's international office network has access to more than 60 countries around the world. Enterprise Ireland can support companies to increase their sales in the global market. Enterprise Ireland's overseas office have experienced business personnel with a wide network of in-market contacts and access to the most up-to-date market information. Enterprise Ireland also have their own and / or existing relationships to in-market office facilities and incubator units. EI overseas offices continues to promote the use of their facilities (subject to booking) for companies to use while in the region for, meeting customers, hot-desking and short term incubator office lease (where available). Enterprise Ireland also operate a network of consultants who can support company's market development needs in markets where we do not have offices. EI is also currently developing a map of available office space across its overseas network which will be promoted through all existing channels.

#### **Action 127: InterTrade Ireland**

**Measure:** InterTradeIreland will promote cross border trade opportunities to small business in the region. InterTradeIreland will promote its Acumen, Trade Accelerator Voucher scheme n and Elevate programmes.

**Update:** On-going.

InterTradeIreland have interacted with every LEO on the island to promote their trade supports. Going North workshops have been delivered in various locations aimed at companies in Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, Mayo and Roscommon to highlight the opportunities in Northern Ireland. These initiatives will continue in other regions during the remainder of 2016. ITI

also work very closely with Enterprise Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the chambers of commerce to ensure their clients are aware of the range of supports available to them.

#### FOSTERING INNOVATION

##### **Action 128: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Increase participation by enterprises in the region in National Research Centres and target an increase in enterprise RDI investment to levels comparable to other regions. All HEIs in the region to draw up metrics to support enterprise innovation upgrading including number of industry engagements and by company size, category of industry engaged with and level and type of investment by enterprise and outputs.

**Update:** On-going

As part of its strategic dialogue process with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and its contract with Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) WIT has agreed annual metrics for the following:

Research expenditure, Number of spin outs created, Number of licences, options and assignments executed, Number of patents filed, Number of Collaborative / contract services and projects with industry

Furthermore each of the Institute's National Centres under the Technology Gateway Programme (TSSG, PMBRC and SEAM) all have specific targets re projects with industry. For the year end 2015 the Institute has exceeded its metrics set in this regard.

It is difficult at a national level to get a breakdown of business expenditure in R & D at regional level to identify specifically the existing baseline level of business expenditure on RDI within the South East region.

Appendix 6 outlines the level of expenditure on RDI in 2015 at a regional level through the Higher Education Institutions. Out of the 8 regions including Dublin, the South East is placed 5th after Dublin, the South West, the West and the Mid- West. The baseline information is published as part of the Knowledge Transfer Ireland Annual Review ([www.kti.ie](http://www.kti.ie)).

##### **Action 129: EI**

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland will facilitate an intra- Regional Innovation Process to encourage peer-to-peer interactions and SME-HEI linkages (people, resources, training and research). HEIs involved in this event will include: Maynooth University (MU) working with Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), Institute of Technology Carlow.

**Update:** Delayed

Regional SME Innovation Forum seeks to foster regional collaboration between industry and the higher education sector to drive the innovation agenda at a regional level. During 2015, Enterprise Ireland piloted this process in the West and South West Regions. These events were well attended by SMEs and the higher education sector has been supportive of this initiative. Enterprise Ireland is currently reviewing the pilot with a view to rolling it out, in a sustainable manner, nationwide. The Monitoring Group will be kept informed on progress relating to this action. WIT will also be involved in this initiative.

**Action 130: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Explore the expansion of existing ICT incubation facilities available in the region to further serve the growth of the indigenous base and potential FDI investment in ICT

**Update:** On-going

IT Carlow supports the development and growth of innovative enterprises, be they indigenous companies or IDA clients. The Enterprise & Research Incubation Centre, located on the IT Carlow Kilkenny road campus, is a purpose built, fully serviced building providing 831 sq. m of industrial and commercial space dedicated to the growth of young knowledge-based companies. Its goal is to accelerate the development of start-up companies through a comprehensive combination of infrastructure, business support services and specialised resources before and during their foundation.

The Enterprise Research & Incubation Centre assists start-up companies in the region through its Incubation/Office Space and Supports and the provision of the New Frontiers Programme. The New Frontiers Programme is co-located at the Enterprise and Research Incubation Centre (ERIC) in IT Carlow and at the ArCLabs Research & Innovation Centre in Waterford Institute of Technology and participants also have access to hot desk spaces in Kilkenny and Wexford. Both Centres have strong track records of successfully providing a business incubation environment that supports entrepreneurial development and company growth. The partnership between the two incubation centres provides an extensive support network for wider regional business development. The Campus Innovation Centre also provides fully equipped units for renting to small companies, while the Dargan Centre houses IT Carlow's Centres of Research and Enterprise (CORE) research groups.

IT Carlow are presently working with Carlow LEO & Carlow Enterprise Centre in Carlow to review existing facilities in the county – location and facilities, demand for incubation facilities and infrastructure required, and supply of same. This will inform any future plans for expanding existing business incubation facilities by indicating where a case can be made demonstrating unmet demand from indigenous companies or FDI clients. IT Carlow supports the IDA and its programme of site visits and seeks to actively take on board the needs of potential investors

when planning. In addition the review will assist IT Carlow Technology Gateway, DESIGN+ in its objective to increase enterprise outcomes in the region and nationally.

#### **WIT**

WIT submitted a proposal to Enterprise Ireland under the Campus Incubation Extension Programme in Q3 2015. The proposal's objective is to secure funding of €2.3m in order to extend the incubation capacity of ArCLabs Research & Innovation Centre (currently home to 27 ITC / services companies). This funding will allow WIT to double its current incubation facilities from 572m2 to 1252m2 to serve the growth of indigenous and potential small scale FDI ICT investments into the region. This proposal was approved at Enterprise Ireland's board meeting in February.

#### **Action 131: LEOs / Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Develop a Regional Management Development & Innovation Programme for microenterprise in partnership with the HEI's & the LEOs

**Update:** On-going

IT Carlow is committed through its Faculty of Lifelong Learning to responding to the CPD and upskilling needs of the region. An application in connection with this action was submitted for funding through the competitive funding rounds in 2015. This submission was not successful and a new proposal is being developed by the Institute in partnership with LEOs. The new programme will be validated by IT Carlow and will run subject to demand in Q4 2016 and Q1 2017.

There is also ongoing collaboration between the region's LEOs and the HEI's in particular through collaboration on the New Frontiers Programme run in both WIT and ITC.

#### **Action 135: Higher Education Institutes**

**Measure:** Public research organisations and higher education institutions to work with enterprises, in particular SMEs in developing proposals for Horizon 2020 funding, with the objective of increasing participation and drawdown from EU programmes by SE businesses. Promote greater engagement at regional level by enterprises and research teams in collaborative research and to participate in EU Horizon 2020 projects.

**Update:** On-going

Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) is an integral part of ITC's activities and is a vital aspect of the interaction of the Institute with industry and other HEIs, nationally and internationally. It's collaborative RDI programmes have been variously funded by various Irish Government departments, the European Union Programmes, the Higher Education Authority



(HEA), Industry, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Irish Research Council for Science Engineering & Technology (IRCSET), the Technological Sector Research Programme, Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland. Programmes are managed through a dedicated Research & Commercialisation Support Centre.

IT Carlow has a strong commitment to developing lasting relationships with industry and continuously engage with enterprises and public bodies. A major initiative aimed at driving this strategically important area of activity was introduced by IT Carlow in Q4 2015. Leading academic researchers with strong industry links were appointed to the position of Director of COREs (Centre of Research and Enterprise). COREs have been established in the areas of:

- Design Innovation (DESIGNCORE)
- Engineering Solutions (ENGCORE)
- Bio-environmental Technology (ENVIROCORE),
- Advanced Software and Networks (GAMECORE)
- Rehabilitative Sciences and Men's Health (HEALTHCORE)

Eight of these positions have been created and their work with the business representative organisations and the national contact points is already proving fruitful in developing potential H2020 applications with SMEs. Instruments such as the IRC Employment Based post graduate programme are being used to support such developments.

The Institute is using a number of initiatives to form networks involving its research centres and SMEs. These include using INTERREG V applications to build networks. Project applications collaborating with UK based research centres and Irish and UK SMEs and covering areas including sectoral clustering and building centres of expertise in life sciences are at late stages of development. These collaborations are developing, in parallel with the Ireland Wales funded projects, networks that will work with IT Carlow's COREs to build H2020 partnerships. IT Carlow researchers are recognised internationally in the particular field of Biotechnology and Molecular Environmental Science where IT Carlow's Field Weighted Citation Impact is among the highest of any Irish HEI (across both University and IOT sectors) and this validates the strategy of concentrating effort on establishing key areas of excellence. Institutionally, strategy has been used to foster key areas of effort and excellence as a focus for ongoing development in other cognate research areas and this becomes evident as the research ecosystem of the institution expands and develops.

## WIT

In Q4 2015 as part of the **Startup Gathering**, WIT's Telecommunications Software and Systems Group (TSSG) and South East Business & Innovation Centre (South East BIC) co-hosted the seminar '**Driving Business Forward: Funding & Innovation Supports for Start-ups and SMEs**'. The event was designed to help individuals and small business drive their business forward by hearing how to access the funds and innovative ideas. As part of '**European SME Week**' organised

by Waterford Chamber and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), WIT hosted a number of free workshops aimed at local business and potential entrepreneurs including “Working with the Technology Transfer Office in WIT” as well as how to engage with Academic Institutes to take your business to the next level; understanding Intellectual Property (IP) and opportunities for SMEs and all size organisations in Horizon 2020. Another such workshop was the “**SME Instrument in Horizon 2020**” along with an overview of the technical areas of expertise of TSSG and SEAM; engaging in the EU; new opportunities for ICT in H2020; the SME Instrument as well as providing advice on how to engage with TSSG. <https://www.tssg.org/files/2014/09/H2020-DIGITAL-A6.pdf>

WIT works closely with Horizon2020 National Delegates including the National Contact Point for SMEs in Enterprise Ireland, Mr Sean Burke, to access the most up to date EU work programmes dedicated to the SME Instrument; organising information workshops; SME H2020 Proposal Clinics and webinars. Over 25 SMEs from the South East region attended the one day event held in March in conjunction with key researchers across three of the Technology Gateways PMBRC, SEAM, TSSG and the RIKON Research Group. The event provided an insight into the H2020 SME Instrument work programme; the Innovation Capacity of the SME; Technology Readiness Levels; Impact: both short term and long term; Dissemination; IP and regulatory issues and Building a Consortium.

A critical obstacle for SMEs engaging in H2020 is the lack of capacity/expertise within many SMEs ranging from innovative capacity, time, technology readiness and the increasing competitiveness across Europe in accessing H2020 funding.

In the year end December 2015 WIT research expenditure was €17.2m. 18% of new research awards were directly sponsored by industry. WIT signed 134 research agreements with companies in 2015.

## **LIT**

LIT is committed to innovative applied research in partnership with industry, supporting international operators as well as indigenous players. Such applied research focuses on existing or emerging areas of academic expertise within our organisation. LIT focus is on research excellence with impact on industrial leadership and societal challenges. Across the Institute research activity occurs within 16 dedicated research centres and groups which encompass a critical mass of expertise within specific discipline areas under the LIT Research Centres and Groups Designation Policy. They have a focus on developing niche areas of expertise to attract international researchers and external funding to provide innovative products, services and processes for LIT’s partners and develop postgraduate research opportunities.

These centres and groups align with the National research priorities. Working through the Office of the Vice President for Research Enterprise and Development the heart of LIT’s research strategy is the ambition to be a strategic knowledge generator and technology transfer partner of

choice for companies and organisations facing the challenges of achieving sustainable competitive advantage in their marketplace.

In line with the EU's research and innovation program, Horizon 2020, LIT focuses on research excellence which impact on industrial leadership and societal challenges. Research at LIT is funded through a number of national and international agencies and programs including Enterprise Ireland, HEA, SFI, IRC, DAFM, EPA and Horizon 2020. In fulfilment of its research objectives to strengthen and grow our research, enterprise and development centres and groups in support of our strategic industry partners LIT engages in a number of initiatives through the Enterprise Ireland Innovation Voucher and Partnership schemes to provide technological solutions to our research partners.

LIT also engages with the industry academia research partnership scheme and the Interreg Programme to develop existing and promote new industry academia partnership projects to drive economic recovery in our region. LIT works in tandem with their National Contact Points for Horizon 2020 to develop consortia bringing Irish SMEs to projects they are developing in their areas of expertise. Indeed a number of centres have had notable success in European Funding Programmes: the Shannon Applied Biotechnology Centre (Shannon ABC); the Controlled Environment Laboratory for Life Sciences (CELLS); Sustainable Energy in a Rural Village Environment (SERVE) and the centre for research into Art, Curatorial Studies, Applied Design and Art and Design Education (ACADEMY). This success has led to increases in the total research funding envelope and in postgraduate research numbers. We are actively pursuing emerging opportunities under EU Horizon 2020, building on existing strengths and developing international networks and collaborations. LIT will continue to focus its efforts on systemising our research and development successes through Centres and Groups enabling them build the scale and capacity to compete meaningfully not only in Ireland but in Europe and with existing Universities. LIT will encourage and support each Centre and Group to produce its own Strategic Plan appropriate to its own stage of development and growth.

#### ATTRACTING AND EMBEDDING FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

##### **Action 136: IDA**

**Measure:** IDA Ireland will target a 30% - 40% increase in investments by overseas companies in the South East Region over the period 2015-2019. This will result in a minimum of 44 investments in the region over the period.

**Update:** On-going

IDA Ireland reports targets on an annual basis, and we are currently one year in to a five year strategy. Results expected December 2016 on performance to date. 2015 was a strong year for the region with a number of new name and expansion projects announced.

**Action 137: IDA**

**Measure:** IDA Ireland will drive Transformation with IDA client companies across the South East Region through increased client interaction with the established base of companies to sustain, support and grow their operations and support increased employment in the region. This is particularly relevant to manufacturing operations.

**Update:** On-going

Transformation is core to the work of IDA. IDA Ireland works closely with the existing operations of 71 companies in the region in order to ensure their operations remain relevant to parent HQ.

**Action 139: IDA**

**Measure:** Through its involvement in the South East Enterprise Strategy, IDA will work with the South East Regional stakeholders to enhance and differentiate the regions offerings for overseas companies from other Regions both in Ireland and other international competitor locations. IDA will convene a “FDI Forum” with Stakeholders and Industry representatives on an annual basis to ensure that that region is maximising its strengths and opportunities to attract additional FDI.

**Update:** Complete

Brand created. IDA engages with key stakeholders on the importance of the branding of the region for FDI purposes on an on-going basis. IDA Ireland will work with the branding sub-committee once created to ensure the FDI message is incorporated into the wider regional brand themes.

**Action 140: EI/IDA**

**Measure:** As part of their Global Sourcing initiative, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland will work together to increase collaboration - including the sourcing of goods - between Multinational and indigenous companies. The agencies will ensure that their clients in the region, where appropriate, are engaged in this initiative.

**Update:** On-going

***It is recommended that this action be merged with actions 141 and 144.***

Enterprise Ireland & IDA Ireland in collaboration with DJEI ran a series of workshops in Athlone, Sligo on the 18th May, and in Limerick on the 19th in Thomond Park. During the course of the two days the EI Global Sourcing Team had delivered 365 1:1 meetings between 180 Enterprise Ireland clients and 64 IDA clients. The mission was led by Minister Mitchel O'Connor DJEI. The

outputs are to grow the linkages between strong indigenous EI technology companies who can fulfil the supply chain needs of the IDA companies and help differentiate their product offering and improve their plant and R&D efficiencies within their corporate groups. South East based companies were actively involved in these events.

**Action 141: EI**

**Measure:** As part of its Global Sourcing initiative and the drive to foster SME supply opportunities into MNCs, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland will embark on a major sectoral Trade Mission to the SE region.

**Update:** Complete

This action is complete.

**Action 142: InterTrade Ireland**

**Measure:** As part of its Global Sourcing initiative and the drive to foster SME supply opportunities into MNCs, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland will embark on a major sectoral Trade Mission to the SE region.

**Update:** On-going

InterTradeIreland will participate with other agencies in the design and delivery of these events.

**Action 144: IDA / EI**

**Measure:** IDA and EI to work on developing a “skills bank” to assist companies which may be facing downsizing in order to identify job opportunities across other client companies.

**Update:** On-going

Both agencies are actively working on this action, especially given the closure of 2 IDA client companies in Q1 2016 in the region. An Interagency Work Group has been established to help address new opportunities for employment for those directly affected. As part of the current process of dealing with company downsizing and closure a protocol is in place with all of the state support agencies including DSP/Solas/ IDA/EI/LEO/ etc., to ensure a consistent and cohesive response is provided to those affected. This includes an opportunity of a 1:1 Session with DSP/Solas where a skills mapping exercise is completed. Enterprise Ireland will then support those who wish to seek alternative employment and agree to share their details, by passing them on to local employers who may have vacancies.

**Action 145: IDA**

**Measure:** Develop and implement an information/networking event across the South East region for clients with EI clients to be invited also.

**Update:** Complete

An initiative was agreed on Global Sourcing to be run in autumn 2016. This is a follow up on the Global Sourcing Trade Mission held in Waterford last year. IDA and EI are currently engaging on the format for 2016.

**Action 147: UnaG**

**Measure:** Growing on the successful strategy of providing property solutions, the Údarás will continue a building and refurbishment programme to help support the attraction/expansion of Foreign Direct and Indigenous Investment in the South East Region.

**Update:** On-going

Discussions are ongoing with public and private sector partners in relation to the funding of an integrated development centre, which will provide additional infrastructure and services in the Déise Gaeltacht region. It is proposed that the initial concept planning will be completed before the end of Q3, 2016.

**Action 148: Connect Ireland**

**Measure:** Develop a Regional Connect Ireland Plan that is integrated with the Local Authorities' enterprise development and job-creation activities.

**Update:** On-going

Connect Ireland have been working extensively in the South East region, particularly individually with the counties in the region to create a diaspora focused business message. In particular, Connect Ireland have worked on brochures and videos promoting a business message aimed at the diaspora and attending business events organised in the region. The next step for this project will be to bring together local liaison officers to convert this county focus into an overall regional message. This is scheduled to take place between Q3 and Q4 2016.

**Action 149: Connect Ireland**

**Measure:** Announce and run the Connectivation competition, inviting Third Level students to share their ideas for the future development of the Succeed in Ireland initiative.

**Update:** Not Now Being Progressed

This action is not now being progressed due to a change in Connect Ireland's contract.

#### **Action 150: Connect Ireland**

**Measure:** Liaise with HEIs with a view to holding partnership events to create a network that will allow greater communication between the institution and its alumni. Develop initiatives with the alumni of colleges, diaspora networks and Connect Ireland to promote and attract skills back to the Region.

**Update:** Delayed

This action has not yet commenced.

#### **Action 151: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Develop an overarching brand and value proposition for the South East and build awareness of all that the connected region has to offer.

**Update:** On-going

*This action is closely linked with Action 95.*

At its meeting held in June, the South East APJ Implementation Committee considered a proposed 'value proposition platform' as presented by the Committee's branding champion Colin Gordon, Glanbia: the south east – closer than you think. Work is underway in sourcing resources and expertise in order to refine and develop this value proposition to help the region close the significant gap that exists between the south east and the state across a range of economic indicators, including: unemployment levels; gross value added per capita; Proportion of FDI employment; third level education provision and research funding; etc. A comprehensive marketing strategy for the region is needed.

#### **Action 152: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Further develop Diaspora networks (including databases) in the region with clear objectives and deliverables in the areas of trade promotion, attracting investment and advice and support to entrepreneurs.

**Update:** Complete

Wexford County Council supports the Connect Ireland programme. A Connect Ireland Wexford Ambassador has been appointed and is Liam Griffin of the Griffin Group. Connect Ireland pull up banners at key tourist sites such as Hook Lighthouse, Irish National Heritage Park, 1798 Centre, Dunbrody Famine Ship. The Council is developing a database of diaspora contacts and is

engaging with these contacts through formal and informal ways such as newsletters and direct mail postcard campaign and through social media platforms such as LinkedIn.

Connect Tipperary was launched on November 26 2015. The launch was a culmination of 3 months project work involving the local Chamber (TIRD), the Tipperary town steering group, Tipperary Co-op and the Tipperary Co Co. The initiative was funded by the Local Diaspora Engagement fund, TCC and Tipperary Co-op through the provision of a management resource to drive the promotional aspects locally and with West Tipperary connections nationally and internationally. Over 100 people have logged on to the connect Tipperary website and aside from these connections, four solid leads from the finance sector are being followed with a view to further connections in business. Tipperary Co Co is actively promoting the second round of the Local Diaspora Engagement fund and is supporting at least 6 locations to make application under the scheme using the Tipperary town model as a means of commencing the process of attracting prospective inward investment. Under the 2015 Scheme, Terryglass, Clonmel and Tipperary Town were successful and hope to build on progress made with support under the 2016 scheme. All beneficiaries are actively working with Connect Ireland.

‘Gathering Kilkenny’ social media channel promotes and engages with the Kilkenny diaspora network. Gathering Kilkenny has completed in a new diaspora brochure and online video to promote connections with the Kilkenny Diaspora and promote the Connect Ireland initiative.

During 2015, Carlow County Council worked with Connect Ireland to develop a variety of materials for investment and awareness of activities in County Carlow. Connect Ireland were a partner on Bizfest 2015 which was a 350 person B2B Regional Networking Event Hosted by Carlow County Council in partnership with Kilkenny & Tipperary County Council. Carlow County Council is in the process of establishing an Ambassadors Forum and developing a Council Diaspora Strategy.

#### **Action 153: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Aligned with the proposed value proposition initiative, tailor ‘quality of life’ communications directed primarily at our Diaspora to equip them with up-to-date information to ‘sell’ the region as a good place to live and work.

**Update:** On-going

Wexford County Council has developed a magazine entitled Our Wexford – a showcase of all that is good in Wexford - Our People, Our Place and Our Passion – This magazine has been used to engage the diaspora and potential investor in the ‘quality of life’ of the region, as well as a great place to do business. Along with the magazine a suite of Foreign Direct Investment brochures have been developed in Life Sciences, Financial Services and further brochures to come in Agri Food and ICT. All are available on [www.wexfordmeansbusiness.ie](http://www.wexfordmeansbusiness.ie)



A brochure, website and social media presence was developed for Connect Tipperary which emphasises the quality of life aspects of West Tipperary as a great location to live, work and do business. Marketing packs have been designed to sell the location from a quality of life perspective as well as the infrastructural / services to industry. A similar information pack was developed for Cashel as part of the Amneal sell in mid-2015. The Tipperary Chamber in Clonmel has established an international Chapter in London and following a number of briefings and events will hold the Tipperary Breakfast in London in April. The Terryglass reaching Out Project which has strong links to Ottawa have produced a booklet, website and social media campaign which will be launched by the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland in the coming weeks. In 2016, Tipperary Co Co will develop and launch a suite of marketing material designed specifically to attract FDI and indigenous business to the County.

The 'Gathering Kilkenny' social media channel promotes and engages with the Kilkenny Diaspora network. Gathering Kilkenny has completed in a new diaspora brochure and online video to promote connections with the Kilkenny Diaspora and promote the Connect Ireland initiative.

During 2015, Carlow County Council worked with Connect Ireland to develop a variety of materials for investment and awareness of activities in County Carlow. Connect Ireland were a partner on Bizfest 2015 which was a 350 person B2B Regional Networking Event Hosted by Carlow County Council in partnership with Kilkenny & Tipperary County Council. Carlow County Council is in the process of establishing an Ambassadors Forum and developing a Council Diaspora Strategy.

Since Christmas 2015, WCCC has run the *#thinkwaterford* campaign with Waterford Chamber and partially funded through the Department of the Taoiseach. This social media campaign is aimed at encouraging the Irish Diaspora thinking about returning to Ireland to consider Waterford as a location to live, work and invest.

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

### **Action 154:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Devise an action plan to promote and support Social Enterprise in the region.

**Update:** On-going

A number of REDZ pilot projects were approved around the region in December 2015.

The Support of Social Enterprise is included in the Rural Development Strategy and under SICAP. Carlow County Council provides support to a variety of social and economic social enterprises in a variety of sectors such as Music Education, Enterprise Centres, Meals on Wheel's Services etc.

In 2015, LEO Tipperary in conjunction with LIT organised a Social Enterprise Information Evening which was held in TCEC, Thurles. The event provided information and advice to those interested in establishing a Social Enterprise and explored the key steps involved in setting up and running a Social enterprise and featured a number of case study presentations. In Q1 2016, Tipperary Co Co will begin to scope out a strategy for Social Enterprise and undertake an assessment of its potential in the County. In support of this objective, during Enterprise Week, Q1, the LEO will organise a Social Enterprise Event in conjunction with stakeholders at the Tipperary Community Centre, Tipperary Town to offer information and advice to those interested in establishing a Social Enterprise and to hear from some of Ireland's leading Social Entrepreneurs.

Action 2.8 of the Kilkenny LECP commits to the development of a social enterprise strategy, including social enterprise supports and services, utilising the REDZ initiative and examining co-op style community shops.

Currently, Waterford City and County Council is conducting a series of consultations at local level in respect of Town and Village planning and regeneration and as part of the delivery of the county's Local Economic and Community Plan. The County's Local Development Strategy as submitted has also received government approval and both of these strategies/plans will support the development of social enterprise, particularly in rural environments. The SICAP programme will also facilitate social enterprise development and the closer alignment in this area of supports and services offered by the Local Enterprise Office, Waterford Leader Partnership and Waterford Area Partnership.

LIT is involved in an ERASMUS+ project examining the training needs of business advisers who work with Social Enterprises. This will result in a programme to be made available to such advisers throughout Europe.

The Institute is also part of the national organisation Communities Creating Jobs which seeks to mobilise communities to create social and community-based enterprises.

The Institute is also part of two consortiums seeking social enterprise funding under the Interreg Atlantic Area programme and the ERASMUS+ programme.

**Action 155: LEOs**

**Measure:** Provide a co-ordinated support mechanism and linkage to assist existing and new rural/community enterprise groups

**Update:** On-going

LEO Tipperary has agreed to take the lead on this action on behalf of the 5 LEOs in the south east.

In 2015, LEO Tipperary in conjunction with Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) organised a Social Enterprise Information Evening. The event explored the key steps involved in setting up

and running a Social Enterprise, including the likely challenges and how to overcome them. The information evening featured case study presentations by Loughmore Tearooms, Tipperary Energy Communities and Limerick Community Grocery. The presentations gave an insight into what is required to initiate and develop a project and was followed by a panel discussion and Q&A Session.

The 5 LEOs in the region were proactively involved in assisting local communities make application under the recent REDZ Pilot Initiative (e.g. Annacarthy Tea Rooms and Shop, Tipperary; Castlecomer Discovery Park, Kilkenny; etc.) The LEOs also provide training and mentoring to facilitate local communities to set-up and develop their social enterprises.

In Q1 2016, Tipperary CoCo will begin to scope out a strategy for Social Enterprise and undertake an assessment of its potential in the County. Likewise Kilkenny CoCo, in conjunction with the local development company, as part of the LECP will develop a social enterprise strategy. These initiatives will help inform the development of social enterprise in the region.

As part of 'Local Enterprise Week,' LEO Tipperary will organise a Social Enterprise Event to offer information and advice to those interested in establishing a Social Enterprise and to hear from some of Ireland's leading Social Entrepreneurs. LEO Tipperary is also committed to implementing a series of Master classes and other supports as envisaged in the proposal submitted under the RES Competitive call in 2015 and to work with local development companies etc. to maximise the job creation potential of Social Enterprise in the region. Contact is ongoing with LIT in this regard.

LEO Waterford worked closely with the Waterford Leader Partnership (WLP) in the development of the successful Local Development Strategy proposal and will equally be directly involved with WLP in the delivery of the programme. LEO Waterford has also been involved in a pilot rural development collaboration with Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board; the Irish Council of Fashion Designers; Waterford City and County Council; the Crawford School of Art and Design, as well as the local community in the development of Lismore Atelier Ltd, a fashion manufacturing and training institute.

LIT is part of a working group including The Plunkett Foundation and the North Tipperary LEADER Partnership which is examining the possibilities of establishing the Plunkett Foundation in Ireland in order to support the development of social enterprises and particularly social enterprise co-ops.

The Institute is also part of the national organisation Communities Creating Jobs which seeks to mobilise communities to create social and community-based enterprises.

**Action 157: Community Enterprise Centres**

**Measure:** Measure: Community Enterprise Centres in the region to develop a combined strategy for promotion and management of available space so as to increase startups and entrepreneurship in the regions.

Update: On-going

The South East Enterprise Centre Association (SEECA) are working on a joint initiative to develop software that will enable them all to share their collective resources (including workspace; hot desks; and training rooms) and promote their services to potential clients.

**Action 159: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Evaluate the 'Boomerang Recycling' initiative and explore potential for it to be further rolled out in the region and extended to other forms of reuse.

**Update:** Not Now Being Progressed

*The Implementation Committee at its meeting held on 25th February, 2016 decided to delete this action as it was deemed to be no longer relevant.*

**Action 160: NGOs**

**Measure:** Develop collaborations with civic groups, NGOs and statutory bodies through the enhancement of existing community projects such as Community-Academic Research Links (CARL) and the initiation of new projects with the community sector. Enhance access to artistic citizenship through consolidation and development of arts-in-community projects, such as FUAIM Arts and Community.

**Update:** Not Now Being Progressed

At its meeting held in September, 2016 the AMC agreed that given the range of positive initiatives already being progressed throughout the region (including by Local Authority Arts Officers), this action as articulated is no longer relevant and should therefore be deleted.

**Action 161: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Promote the value of Social Enterprise as means of direct job creation and to contribute to a wide range of community and social services

**Update:** On-going

Carlow County Council engages in the development and sustainability of social enterprises with a variety of stakeholders. The New Leader Programme delivered by

Carlow LCDC in partnership with Carlow County Development Partnership & Carlow County Council will further enhance the support of these projects.

## ENHANCING SKILLS AND LABOUR MARKET ACTIVATION

### Action 162: SE Skills Forum

**Measure:** Establish a Regional Skills Forum in the SE to undertake a structured programme of activities to promote closer liaison between employers and the education system and prioritise strengthening the outreach activities of education providers in the region, including strengthened industry liaison functions generally and develop structured programmes of awareness raising of the capabilities and assets available to enterprises in the region and develop common projects so as to best deliver on the skills requirements of the region.

**Update:** Complete

The SE Regional Skills Forum has been established and will meet quarterly. It last met on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016. A manager has been appointed to lead the implementation. Edmond Connolly commenced in the role on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016.

Close and in depth co-operation from all the education and training providers in the south east has been forthcoming and committed. An action plan has been prepared and will be approved by the SE Regional Skills Forum. Close cooperation with the SE Action Plan for Jobs has commenced. Both initiatives will work collaboratively in address current and future skills needs. The SE Regional Skills Forum has a new website [www.regionalskills.ie](http://www.regionalskills.ie) which will be used as a repository of relevant information for stakeholders.

### Action 163: Higher Education Institutes

**Measure:** Continue to build on the progress achieved through the process of engagement and consultation undertaken in relation the development of a Technological University for the South East.

**Update:** On-going

Following on from the decision earlier this year of the Governing Bodies of Waterford and Carlow Institutes of Technology to recommence discussions on the creation of a Technological University of the South East, in Q 1 2016 the Institutes submitted a proposal for funding to support the creation of a support infrastructure in line with the recommendations of the Kelly report – *Engagement and Consultation Process on a Technological University for the South East (Report to the Minister for Education and Skills, July 2015)*.

In June 2016 the HEA approved funding of €1.5m to support the progression of the South East Technological University Project.

The investment of €1.5mn will enable the Institutes to develop and implement an action plan to lead to Technological University. Both Chairs and Presidents welcomed the allocation of funding and stated that the funding was a vote of confidence in the South East TU process by the HEA

Board. The two South East Institutes are committed to delivering a university of international standing for the region in support of economic and social development and this investment by the HEA will help advance this process. Legislation is required to enable the creation of the Technological University for the South East.”

**Action 164:** Solas

**Measure:** Boost apprenticeship recruitment by industry in the region as there is a growing demand across key sectors of the economy from manufacturing to construction and develop initiatives to build awareness of the different forms of apprenticeship and career paths linked to apprenticeships.

**Update:** On-going.

Services to Business Department in WWETB actively promote Apprenticeship with Employers through the interaction of the SOLAS Authorised Officer Training Adviser.

In WWETB we have three Training Advisers working with 800 apprentices and 300 Companies.

WWETB are currently working on a pilot initiative with the Construction Industry Federation to promote recruitment of Apprentices to the trades of Bricklaying and Plastering.

WWETB work closely with the Society of Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) by promoting Apprenticeship at events in our area.

Training Advisers attend all second level schools in our area to promote Apprenticeship as a career choice.

Apprenticeship is demand driven and employers are encouraged to view Apprentices as an asset to the company.

SOLAS are currently reviewing proposals for new Apprenticeships. This may provide new career paths and opportunities to employees and employers.

Senior Training Advisers provide HR Management Support to employers with apprentices.

**Action 165:** IT Carlow

**Measure:** Accelerate the development of the Wexford Campus so as to best deliver on the skills requirements for the region.

**Update:** Complete

On October 8th 2015 former Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Brendan Howlin announced approval to acquire a new site for the Institute of Technology Carlow Wexford

Campus. The new campus will be located on a 35-acre site in a prime location in Wexford Town. Since its opening in 1995, the Wexford Campus has been based at Summerhill Road and, more recently, opened its School of Art and Design on Hill Street in Wexford town. The campus offers a range of programmes from Higher Certificates to Masters Degrees in Business, Humanities, Art, Cultural Heritage and Computing. Two new degree programmes will be launched in Sustainable Farm Management and Agri-business tomorrow. Currently, 850 full-time and part-time learners are studying at the campus.

The development of Wexford Campus has involved close interaction with key stakeholders in the county including Wexford County Council, Wexford Waterford Education and Training Board, Diocese of Ferns, and various agencies involved in enterprise development and education.

**Action 166: LIT**

**Measure:** Accelerate the relocation of the LIT Clonmel campus from its current location so as to best deliver on the skills requirement for the region and to support existing FDIs in the area

**Update:** On-going

Discussions with the various parties involved in the creation of the new campus are ongoing and some progress is being made. A key element of the re-location is the disposal by LIT of the current Clonmel campus. A public sector organisation is the most likely appropriate body to take over the existing campus and steps under the Planning Acts have been recently taken by the Local Authority with the consent of LIT to secure an alternative use for the existing campus in the event of its being vacated by LIT. Ongoing meetings regarding the use of the Barracks site are taking place and further meetings are arranged regarding this matter.

**Action 168: PCI / IMDA**

**Measure:** PCI and IMDA to deepen industry links with schools and third level institutions in the region including careers promotion, promotion of STEM and support for development of supporting promotional materials and outreach activities in STEM.

**Update:** On-going

IMDA's PR taskforce have set up a detailed industry promotion campaign to promote the sector amongst the general public and potential career fairs. IMDA conducted a RedC poll to understand the public perception about working in the industry. Outreach events are key to connecting with people and getting the message out. Giving students, parents and teachers a chance to ask questions can have a meaningful impact. Our focus is on:

- Smart Futures: 1,500 STEM volunteers and 79,000 students have engaged in programme.
- BT Young Scientist: 71% of people were aware of the event and approximately.

•Higher Options: 170 universities and higher education institutes as well as 25,000 students attend.

One page guide: Young people, parents and career guidance counsellors are not aware of the full range of career opportunities in medtech. A handy guide to medtech careers should be produced and designed which shows the range of jobs from technicians to engineers, from services to software. This should include the education pathways needed, including second level science subjects, required for third level.

IMDA will host an event with WIT (SEAM) on 31st August on 3D printing.

**Action 170: Ibec**

**Measure:** Promote the development of manpower plans at firm level so as to be better positioned to engage with education and training providers and to provide skills development pathways for their staff.

**Update:** On-going

Ibec has been actively engaged in the provision of best practice advice in this area directly to business. Ibec is also engaged in the South East Regional Skills Forum in the development of training to address skills shortages.

**ENHANCING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**

**Property Solutions**

**Action 171: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Compile a profile of all available office and industrial space in the region and assess gaps and/or need for additional space so as to better inform the market and highlight zoned and serviced lands.

**Update:** On-going

Wexford County Council commissioned a property report from Lisney Estate Agents in September 2015 which profiled all available office and industrial space in the County and assessed gaps or needs for additional space throughout the county.

Tipperary CoCo engaged Consultants in 2015 to undertake an assessment of workspace provision in the county within the context and opportunities of the wider economic environment. In addition to the Study findings, Tipperary County Council has now available an extensive database



of available workspace and land bank which has been mapped on GIS. Study being updated on a six monthly basis taking into account new solutions as they appear on online property platforms.

Carlow County Council's Local Enterprise Office maintains a database for the marketing of property solutions in association with stakeholders such as IDA. Carlow County Council will actively engage in this regional exercise.

Waterford City & County Council - As needs arise utilize online resources to identify property solutions. Business Technology Park with ATB and additional ATB planned for 2017; MRF site in Dungarvan. Working with IDA to secure additional strategic investment sites in the County.

The Economic Development Unit of Kilkenny County Council works in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Office and maintains a knowledge base of commercial, retail and services property solutions closely liaising with auctioneers as well as internal knowledge resource, private interest, IDA etc. This is On-going and active. Carlow County Council has been worked with IDA in respect of a Property Solutions Database for FDI. This has included extensive engagement with the private sector in respect of development of marketing materials and advisement of planning issues. Kilkenny County Council currently uses on-market and off-markets property resources to provide up-to-date property advice and opportunities in Kilkenny. Work is underway to add development opportunities to this resource bank.

As needs arise utilize online resources to identify property solutions Business Technology Park with ATB and additional ATB planned for 2017; MRF site in Dungarvan. WCCC is working with IDA to secure additional strategic investment sites in the County.

Wexford County Council commissioned Future Analytics Consulting and Lisney to prepare a report on the vacant office and Commercial land in County Wexford. This report was completed in September 2015.

**Action 173: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Investigate how best to incentivise upgrading of industrial properties..

**Update:** On-going

Kilkenny County Council has entered into early exploration with the IDA.

## Integrated Licensing Applications

### **Action 175:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Licensing bodies to be among the first to adopt and promote the use of the new national Integrated Licensing Application System.

**Update:** On-going

Wexford County is one of the pilot Local Authorities to adopt the national licencing application system. This pilot is currently up and running for Casual Trading Licences and Water / Well Grants. The other Local Authorities in the region support the adoption of the System.

Waterford City & County Council will support the adopting of the Integrated Licensing System

## Public Procurement

### **Action 176:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Local authorities and other public bodies such as the HSE to work with LEOs and others to promote greater SME engagement in public procurement.

**Update:** On-going

The South East Local Authorities Local Enterprise Offices have engaged in a variety of interventions in respect of the development of greater engagement with SME's in the areas of Public Procurement. This has included the delivery of workshops for awareness of the potential benefits of procurement for SME's, mentoring provided to clients. A targeted North/South Procurement Trade Mission was also conducted by Kilkenny / Waterford & Carlow LEO's in partnership with Intertrade Ireland

The South East LEO's are fully engaged with the Procurement Ambassadors Programme and Carlow County Council represents the LEO on this forum. The CCMA has arranged for Procurement Awareness Training for all LEO staff during Qtr. 1, 2016 to further increase the awareness of opportunities for public procurement for SME's.

The support of this action with continue during 2016 with the continued roll out of procurement workshops, mentoring and a variety of supports including the support of the Enterprise Ireland Procurement Workshops for the Government Schools Building Programme which is scheduled for Carlow in Qtr. 1, 2016.

### **Action 177:** EI

**Measure:** Enterprise Ireland will work with NDFA and Consortium members on specific procurement opportunities

**Update:** Complete

In 2015 Enterprise Ireland, the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) and the Department of Education and Skills in partnership with Inspired Spaces, held a Meet the Buyer (MTB) event for the construction sector focusing on the Schools PPP Bundle 5 in the South East Region. This event was designed to source local procurement and promote supply chain opportunities to SMEs and social enterprises interested in Schools PPP Bundle 5. The event also provided networking opportunities for local, qualified sub-contractors and suppliers with professional experience in Groundworks, Building Fabric, Civil and Structural, Mechanical and Engineering, Facilities Management Finishes, Fit out and Fixed Furnishings & Equipment (FF&E). In addition, the event incorporated a series of short 5 minute “pitch” meetings where attendees found out more about the process of becoming a sub supplier.

#### **Action 178: InterTradelreland**

**Measure:** InterTrade Ireland will promote public tendering opportunities to SME’s in the region including cross border public sector opportunities, consortia building for larger contracts and below threshold contracts.

**Update:** On-going

InterTradelreland has delivered three two day workshops in the region over the course of the period: Waterford 8 on 15 Sept 2015 attended by 15 participants / Wexford 7 and 14 Dec 2015 attended by 14 participants and Kilkenny 8 and 16 March 2016 attended by 16 participants. These workshops provide a comprehensive programme of education awareness and competence building that prepares SMEs to “Find, Bid and Win” public tenders.

#### **Action 179: InterTradelreland**

**Measure:** Intertrade Ireland will explore the organisation of a ‘meet the buyer event’.

**Update:** On-going

InterTradelreland has been instrumental in delivering significant “Meet the Buyer” events annually in Dublin and Belfast respectively. Planning for such events has considered the South East region. The partnership responsible for successful delivery of these events has chosen to run this year’s event in Cork. Going forward the All Island steering group are exploring the opportunities presented by sector specific workshops and pipeline led “opportunity driven” tender opportunities.

EI will liaise with InterTradelreland on this action to include Public Sector Buyers.

## Finance for Growth

### **Action 180: LEOs**

**Measure:** Promote participation by SMEs in MicroFinance Ireland, Loan Guarantee and Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) funding.

It is recommended that Action 107 be merged with this action.

**Update:** On-going

See Table 2 in Appendix 3 for LEO MFI out-turn figures for 2015 and targets for 2016.

In addition, LEOs are involved in developing alternative sources of finance. For example, LEO Kilkenny partnered with St. Canice's Kilkenny Credit Union (CU) to launch the Small Business Support Loan Scheme in 2009. Since then, almost 100 businesses have been approved total loan finance of over €2 million. Many of these businesses were unable to access credit from the mainstream banks. The partnership involves LEO Kilkenny assisting the credit union undertake due diligence and to evaluate all loan applications. The LEO also assists applicants prepare their application, including preparing evidence of potential customers and sales, as well as financial projections. As part of the scheme all successful loan applicants are appointed a mentor to assist them implement their plans and achieve the targets they set. The CU in turn provide loans from €10,000 up to €50,000 over a repayment period of 5 years, with a discounted variable rate currently of 6.4%. Such has been the success of the partnership that the loan scheme has recently been rebranded and launched as the Smart Options business loan, and a number of other CUs are exploring the possibility of similar schemes.

### **Action 181: SEBIC**

**Measure:** Promote HBAN, the Halo Business Angel Network to offer local high growth potential companies the opportunity to pitch for funding from high network individuals and business angel syndicates

**Update:** On-going

South East BIC delivers the HBAN programme in the region and since 2008 it has delivered 29 deals raising some €9.9m for early stage companies. €4.5m of which was raised from Angels and the balance from other sources including VCs. Through its HBAN partnership it has access to a growing number of national Angel Syndicates - Boole, Bloom, Irrus, NXSW, MedTech and Food as well as access to EBAN, Europe's most successful business angel network.

### **Action 182: SEBIC**

**Measure:** Develop the Business Angel ecosystem with particular reference to Regional Angel Syndicates

**Update:** On-going

Building on its success to date with Halo Business Angels, South East BIC is in the early / exploratory stage of developing syndicates in the region. In the interim it is leveraging its linkages to the already established syndicates - Boole, Bloom, Irrus, NXSW, MedTech and Food.

**Action 184:** InterTradelreland

**Measure:** Promote the SeedCorn Competition to give HPSUs the opportunity to improve their investor readiness by taking them on a comprehensive mentoring journey and introducing them to investors.

**Update:** On-going

Two Seedcorn workshops took place in April 16 in Carlow and Waterford. A Business Planning workshop and an equity clinic took place in Waterford in June 16. Funding for Growth workshop scheduled for Waterford in October 2016.

**KEY INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS**

**Broadband and eCommerce**

**Action 185:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Local Authorities, through the CCMA and the NRA to work DCENR, DTTS and TIF to facilitate the rollout of high speed broadband. Develop demonstration initiatives with operators to stimulate demand for broadband, such as the enterprise-led initiatives.

**Update:** On-going

Carlow County Council has supported a variety of public awareness projects in respect of the roll out of High Speed Broadband. Action 6.4 of the Kilkenny LECP is an undertaking to carry out a broadband needs analysis and facilitate the rollout of high-speed broadband. This includes small scale pilot projects with local providers. Wexford Council has engaged with SIRO on the installation of high speed broadband – 1GB to residential and business customers in Wexford Town as part of phase 1 of the project. This is expected to be delivered in Quarter 2 2016. Wexford County Council is developing a pilot initiative with a Local Authority housing estate in Wexford Town with the installation of high speed broadband throughout the estate.

Kilkenny County Council has commenced internal ICT management discussions on supporting and disseminating awareness of activity providers and product services and how best to support the needs of end user while cognizant of legislation and competitiveness regulations. Commenced but early stage.

**Action 186: Local Authorities**

**Measure:** Complete a targeted broadband needs analysis of the region targeting specific areas for shorter term economic gain.

**Update:** On-going

Action 6.4 of the Kilkenny LECP is an undertaking to carry out a broadband needs analysis and facilitate the rollout of high-speed broadband. This includes small scale pilot projects with local providers. TCC has reviewed issues of broadband and has made a submission to the current national initiative. Provision is also made in the LDS to support innovative broadband pilots in the area.

TCC has reviewed issues of broadband and has made a submission to the current national initiative. (NBP map for Co. Tipperary outlines broadband provision in the county)

Waterford City & County Council - Analysis of availability of broadband throughout the county being carried out.

### Strategic Transport Corridors

**Action 188: Southern Assembly**

**Measure:** Continue to address infrastructure upgrading requirements in the region as resources become available to strengthen connectivity and the efficiency of the labour market in the region.

**Update:** Ongoing

As part of the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region we have initiated a Technical Working Group for the South East. Membership includes the LAs, NTA, IDA, EI, SEAPJ & SERSF, Failte Ireland and Rural/Agri interests. The TWG is preparing a Draft Economic Strategy (Sept 2016) for consideration.

The Economic Profile will consider a range of issues including infrastructural, and connectivity requirements to enhance the economic performance of the South East by maximising potential, addressing deficits and tackling barriers.

It is intended the Economic Profile will help inform SRA input to the National Planning Framework and contribute to the Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy, and associated investment commitments.

**Action 189: Port Authorities**

**Measure:** Promote the excellent port infrastructure in the region, most notably Rosslare, Waterford, Belview and New Ross and develop long-term strategic plans for each of the ports to ensure they can grow traffic volumes and activity over the coming decades.

**Update:** On-going

Port of Waterford are currently in the process of finalising their corporate/strategic plan for 2016/2020 in conjunction with DTTAS and will go to their Board for approval on the 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. The strategic plan when in place will clearly set out how the Port intends to grow traffic volumes and activity over the next 5 years, and will set out the structure to deal with the infrastructure challenges for the next 25 years (i.e. Port Masterplan).

Rosslare Europort is the State's second biggest passenger port, and the fourth biggest port in terms of freight tonnage handled. It also handles more strategically-important unitised freight than all the other ports, except Dublin, combined. National Ports Policy categorises Rosslare Europort as one of only five Ports of National Significance and the Europort also forms part of the EU Trans-European Comprehensive Network of ports. Clearly the Europort is an important part of the economic infrastructure of the State and of the South East, and National Ports Policy is committed to ensuring that the full commercial and operational potential of Rosslare Europort is achieved.

Rosslare Europort is unique among the State-owned ports as it is not a commercial company operating under the Harbours Acts, but is instead operated as a division of Iarnród Éireann. This is due to a complicated legislative history as the Europort technically forms part of an Anglo-Irish company dating back to the 19th Century known as the Fishguard & Rosslare Railways & Harbours Company.

In 2013 the Department of Transport Tourism & Sport (DTTAS) appointed Indecon Economic Consultants to conduct a strategic review of the Europort. That review concluded that the creation of an independent port authority for Rosslare would be extremely difficult given the legal structure of the Europort. Instead the report recommended that the Europort continue in public ownership through Iarnród Éireann, but that the possibilities for private sector involvement and management of the Europort through a concession structure should be investigated. The report and its conclusions were noted by Government and Iarnród Éireann undertook to examine further the feasibility of implementing its recommendations.

In order to assist Iarnród Éireann's overall consideration of how best to move forward, we engaged consultants in 2015 whose interim findings were presented to DTTAS in early 2016. Those findings include a number of issues which require further consideration and Iarnród Éireann and DTTAS officials are engaging with the company on those issues with a view to a speedy resolution.

**Action 190:** Southern Assembly

**Measure:** To explore the potential of establishing a South-East Freight Forum to develop a more co-ordinated, efficient and sustainable approach to freight transport and access to ports (Air/Rail/Road/Sea)

**Update:** Complete

The Regional Assembly invited key stakeholders to a Freight Forum Initiation Meeting in April 2016. 15 organisations attended. There was general agreement that there is a need for a Freight Forum type engagement process to help ensure the SE maximises opportunities from the Freight Industry and that the industry itself is well positioned to provide the appropriate supports for economic growth. In this regard it was noted that currently there is no national Freight Transport Policy – as a result it was felt the sector is not operating to maximum potential.

It was agreed at the Forum Meeting that the attendees would make submissions to the SRA such that an 8-10 page policy document could be prepared. When the document is prepared and issued consideration would be given as to whether a follow-up meeting was required.

The SRA will prepare a report based on submissions received which will be issued to the SE APJ .

Specific suggestion was made in relation to contact being made between the SE Regional APJ and Skills Forum to help ensure there is appropriate training and educational opportunities available to support the Freight/Logistics Industries, particularly given the strength of the sector in the region.

**Action 191:** Waterford Airport

**Measure:** Complete a review of business and tourism air routes for SE region and their potential for development, in particular to connect to Britain and near continental central Europe to meet business needs.

**Update:** On-going

Following the discontinuation of the VLM Airlines services to Birmingham at the end of April, the London Luton service on the 7th June and the company's subsequent bankruptcy in mid-June, Waterford Airport currently has no scheduled air services. Airport management has already begun in earnest to seek replacement air services with a number of airlines, in particular for



London Luton, but also for Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh, to be put in place in the coming months or by early next year.

The Greater London Area and the UK is the primary focus for both business connectivity and tourism for Waterford Airport. In time as airline links are developed and if an airline is based at the Airport, then a range of other destinations to near continental Europe (e.g. Paris, Amsterdam and Northern France) can be considered.

Waterford Airport's role in the South East APJ is as a vector for business development and tourism in the South East, creating jobs in these key sectors of the regional economy by delivering people to these activities.

## Water Services

### **Action 193:** Irish Water

**Measure:** Ensure that provision is made for water supply and waste water treatment to meet the requirements of development proposed under Local Authorities Development Plans and the commercial and industrial demands arising from proposed job creation activities in the region.

**Update:** On-going

At its meeting held in September, 2016 the AMC agreed this action is of critical importance, in particular in relation to the future planning and servicing of sites for industrial and commercial development across the region. The best forum to raise any issues concerned is through the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy process currently being undertaken by the Regional Authority. This matter might also be raised through the CCMA.

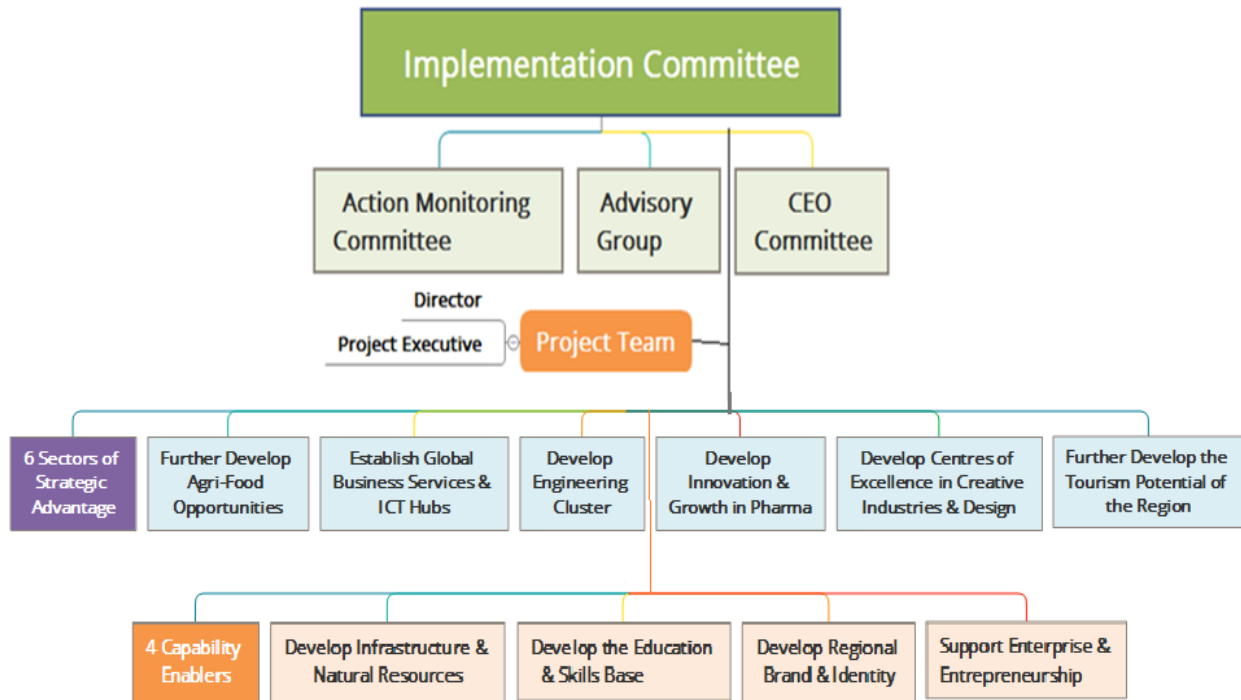
### **Action 194:** Local Authorities

**Measure:** Prioritise the development of a water supply source and reservoir for areas in the region as required.

**Update:** On-going

Kilkenny County Council is liaising with Irish Water to prioritise water infrastructure projects in the county.

APPENDIX 1: IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE



**APPENDIX 2: POPULATION**

**Table 1.1: South-East Region Population Targets 2010-2022**

	2006	2010	2016	2022
Carlow	50,349	56,155	59,451	63,536
Kilkenny	87,558	98,872	105,598	111,903
Tipperary (South)	98,221	91,302	96,863	104,483
Waterford City	45,748	48,500	51,000	55,000
Waterford County	62,213	69,932	73,223	79,495
Wexford	131,749	146,139	156,065	166,083

**Table 1.2: Recorded Population in the South East Region**

	Census 2006	Census 2011	% Change 2006-2011
Carlow	50,349	54,612	8.5
Kilkenny	87,558	95,419	8.9
Tipperary	149,244	158,754	6.4
Waterford	107,961	113,795	5.4
Wexford	131,749	145,320	10.3

**Table 1.3 Residential Land Availability Returns, 2014**

County	Stage 1*		Stage 2**	
County	Area (Ha.)	Potential No. Dwellings	Area (Ha.)	Potential No. Dwelling
Carlow	515	8,168	515	8,168
Kilkenny	622	14,690	200	4,587
Tipperary (South)	920	13,569	920	13,569
Waterford (City)	394	8,166	281	6,156
Waterford (County)	951	15,383	499	8,598
Wexford <sup>2</sup>	1,132	17,954	1,105	17,481

\*Stage 1: Total level of undeveloped lands that were residentially zoned as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2014, regardless of the sequence of the development of those lands or phasing under development plan core strategies.

\*\*Stage 2: Lands potentially available for development in relation to the order or priority of phasing indicated under the relevant Development or Local Area Plan period.

<sup>2</sup> Since this survey was completed c. 100ha of undeveloped land has been de-zoned due to the expiration of Local Area Plans.

**APPENDIX 3: LIST OF ENTERPRISE TRAINING & MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

**Table 2: List of Enterprise Training & Management Development Programmes Offered by the 5 LEOs in the South East (Q1 & Q2, 2016)**

Action 96	No. of Programmes
Pre-Start-Up Enterprise Training	13
SYOB Programmes	15
Financial Training	22
Sales & Marketing	51
Social Media	29
Food Sector	17
Other	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>

## APPENDIX 4: SUMMARY OF KEY INDICATORS FOR LEOs IN SOUTH EAST FOR 2016

Table 3: Summary of Key Indicators for LEOs in South East for 2016

Action 99: Main Indicators	Total for 5 LEOs in Region	
	2015 Outputs	2016 Targets
<b>Value of Grants Approved:</b>	€2,656,633	€2,350,000 <sup>3</sup>
Feasibility Grants (Number)	32	28
Priming Grants (Number)	75	62
Business Expansion Grants (Number)	67	57
Jobs Associated with Funding Approved	447	389
Total Employment in LEO Portfolio	5,510	5,894
<b>Student Enterprise:</b>		
No. 2nd Level Schools Participating in Student Enterprise Awards	87	83
No. Students Participating	5,642	4,920
<b>Start Your Own Business (SYOB):</b>		
No. of SYOB Programmes Run	32	36
No. of SYOB Participants	538	595
<b>Core Enterprise Training:</b>		
No. of Courses Run	299	279
No. of Participants	3,529	3,460
No. of Female Participants	2,166	2,025
<b>Micro Finance Ireland (MFI):</b>		
No. of Entrepreneurs Assisted to Make Application to MFI	66	66
<b>Mentoring:</b>		
No. of Assignments	899	1,005
No. of Mentor Clinics	39	42

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that LEOs have fully utilised Own Resource Income that was available to them in 2015.

**APPENDIX 5: NEW FRONTIERS ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

**Programme Achievements 2012-2015:**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>ITC</b>	<b>WIT</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Jobs Created	65	65	130
Total Turnover	4,308,470	2,385,000	6,693,470
Exports	3,307,520	1,121,000	4,428,520
Investment Secured	3,355,500	1,803,000	5,158,500
IP	4	4	8
HPSU	2	3	5
Competitive Start Fund (CSF)	5	8	13



APPENDIX 7: LEAFLET USED BY LEO TIPPERARY FOR EXPO



# WHO TO TALK TO EXPO

ANNER HOTEL, THURLES

07 March (10.00am-1pm) **FREE**

This event is designed to inspire and encourage individuals considering self-employment in all sectors and to inform new and existing business promoters about supports available for business creation and development.

The 'Who To Talk To' event will include 30 information desks/stands from agencies such as Department of Social Protection, Local Enterprise Office, North Tipperary Leader Partnership, LIT, Education and Training Board, Teagasc, Enterprise Ireland, Craft and Design Council of Ireland, Food Safety Authority along with representatives from Financial Institutions, Microfinance Ireland, Chambers, Business Networks etc.

The morning will also feature a **Funding Workshop** with presentations from the main support agencies. This session is designed to inform entrepreneurs and professionals e.g; **Accountants, Solicitors, Bankers, and Business Advisors** in relation to the key state supports available for enterprise creation and development in the county.

### Funding Workshop Schedule

Chaired by Mr Joe Mac Grath, Chief Executive, Tipperary Co Co.

10.30am	Local Enterprise Office
10.45am	Enterprise Ireland
11.00am	Department of Social Protection
11.15am	InterTrade Ireland
11.30am	Local Development Company – NTLP
11.45am	Microfinance Ireland

Email: [enterpriseweek@tipperarycoco.ie](mailto:enterpriseweek@tipperarycoco.ie) Phone: 076 106 5000

For further information and online booking go to: [www.localenterprise.ie/tipperary](http://www.localenterprise.ie/tipperary)

Full calendar of events for Local Enterprise Week available through

[www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie) and by searching [#localenterprise](#) on social media.