

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS

2014



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Commentary

This is the fourth report of 2014 from the Monitoring Committee established by Government to monitor and drive implementation of the measures contained in the *Action Plan for Jobs 2014* (APJ 2014). It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the fourth quarter of 2014. It also includes an update on measures described in the Plan as “ongoing in 2014” and a summary overview of the implementation of the APJ 2014 across the full year, including measures from previous quarters that remain delayed.

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

The Government published the third in its multi-annual *Action Plan for Jobs* series in February 2014. This Plan, which contains 385 actions to be implemented in 2014 by all Government Departments and 46 agencies, builds on the progress made in 2012 and 2013 and continues to improve supports for job-creating businesses and remove the barriers to employment-creation across the economy. The 2014 actions are additional to the actions already implemented under *Action Plan for Jobs 2012* and the *Action Plan for Jobs 2013*, and reported on by the Monitoring Committee in eight quarterly reports covering those two years (see <http://www.djei.ie/enterprise/apj.htm>).

As the final review of the implementation of the Action Plan for Jobs 2014 in its entirety, this report also provides a synopsis of the implementation of the Plan as a whole over the year, and shows that 611 of the 668 measures committed to in the Plan have been delivered over the year giving rise to an overall implementation rate of 91%. As detailed below, 1 measures from Quarter 1, 8 measures from Quarter 2, 10 measures from Quarter 3, 32 measures from Quarter 4 and 3 “ongoing” actions have not been completed as scheduled.

Action Plan for Jobs 2014: Supporting economic growth and job creation

The 2014 Plan is the third instalment in an ambitious multi-year process which aims to create the environment where the number of people at work will increase by 100,000 by 2016 (from Quarter 1, 2012 base). In addition to the 100,000 target by 2016, the Government has recently stated its ambition to have total employment in Ireland restored to 2.1 million by 2018.

Progress made during 2014 in supporting job creation and addressing unemployment is clear from the latest employment data:

- In Quarter 3 2014, there were 1.927 million people in employment in Ireland, the largest number in employment since Quarter 3 of 2009;
- In total, there were 27,700 more people in employment in Q3 2014 compared to the same quarter in 2013, an increase of 1.5% over the year. Of the 27,700 increase, 26,100 (or 94%) were in full-time employment;

- Based on seasonally adjusted data, there were close to 80,000 (78,400) more people in employment in Quarter 3 2014 compared to Quarter 1 of 2012, when the Action Plan for Jobs and the Pathways to Work strategies were first rolled out;
- The sectors with the largest increases in employment since the start of 2012 include:
 - Agriculture, forestry and fishing (+27,300);
 - Professional, scientific and technical activities (+19,500);
 - Accommodation and food service activities (+16,200);
 - Construction (+6,600);
 - Human health and social work activities (+6,500);

in total, there were increases in employment since the start of 2012 in 10 of the 14 sectors recorded in the CSO QNHS.

- Each of the Ireland's regions have recorded some increase in employment since the start of 2012 with the largest increases recorded in Dublin (+35,000); South-East (+21,300) and Border region (+16,200).
- Total unemployment as measured by the CSO QNHS stood at 245,500 in Quarter 3 2014, down by 37,400 when compared to the same quarter in 2013 and (on a seasonally adjusted basis) total unemployment has reduced by 87,100 since the start of 2012 when the Action Plan for Jobs and the Pathways to Work strategies were first rolled out;
- The rate of unemployment in December 2014 was 10.6%, down from 12.2% in December 2013 and down from a high of 15.1% in February 2012.
- The number of people unemployed for a period of one year or more has fallen in absolute terms from 204,300 in Quarter 1 2012 to 139,200 in Quarter 3 2014. The proportion of long-term unemployed (as a share total unemployed) has also fallen over the same period from 64.0% to 57.6%.

The Action Plan process is having a positive impact on the enterprise environment and job creation, which can be seen in the significant level of net job creation in the enterprise agencies' client companies. In 2014, client companies of Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland created 8,476 and 7,131 net new jobs respectively; this represents the highest levels of net new job creation by agency client companies in over a decade. Total employment at IDA client companies now stands at 174,488 people and total employment in Enterprise Ireland client companies stands at 180,072; this is the highest level of employment recorded in the history of both agencies.

Actions due in Quarter 4

In the fourth quarter of 2014, Departments and agencies were to deliver 202 measures under the Action Plan. 32 of the measures due in Quarter 4 2013 have not been delivered on schedule, giving a completion rate of 84%. In delivering 170 fourth quarter measures under the Plan, the Government has, for example:

▪ **As part of Disruptive Reform 2.1 – Entrepreneurship:**

- Under Action 12, supported 101 High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) companies, companies with the potential to create at least 10 jobs and €1m in sales within 3 to 4 years of starting up;
- Under Action 13, rolled out six rounds of the Competitive Start Fund in sectors including manufacturing, aviation, lifesciences and Internet and Games as well as targeted calls for graduates and female entrepreneurs, in total approving investments in 81 additional start-ups;
- Under Action 14 launched the Competitive Regional Feasibility Fund for the Mid West providing funding of up to €25,000 for successful applicants; and launched the National Agri-Food €250,000 Competitive Feasibility Fund which also provides funding of up to €25,000 for successful applicants;
- Under Action 19, developed an Entrepreneurial PhD programme with a view to training more scientists in SFI-supported research teams to launch their own businesses, which will be implemented and launched in 2015 as the 2015 Academic Entrepreneurial Mentorship Scheme for Young Scientists;

▪ **As part of Disruptive Reform 2.2 –Winning Abroad:**

- Under Action 27, commenced the deployment of an additional 20 Enterprise Ireland staff to support the export plans of client companies in international priority markets including China, South Korea, the Gulf States, Turkey and South Africa;
- Under Action 30, provided the International Selling Programme, which focuses on enhancing skills to access new markets and accelerate export sales growth, to an additional 51 companies;
- Under Action 32, supported 93 First Time Exporters to new markets overseas, of which 52 exported for the first time into high growth markets (China, Russia, Brazil, Gulf States etc.);
- Under Action 33, delivered the Access to Silicon Valley Programme, which is designed to fast-track Irish technology companies that are targeting Silicon Valley and San Francisco, to a further 44 participants;

- Under Action 40, launched the Official Programme of Irish Design 2015 (ID2015) which marks the beginning of the wide-ranging programme of events planned throughout 2015 to promote the Irish Design & Craft sector;
- **As part of Disruptive Reform 2.3 –Manufacturing: National Step Change:**
 - Under Action 47, supported through Enterprise Ireland more than 130 firms across all levels and activities through its LeanStart, LeanPlus and LeanTransform Programmes;
 - Under Action 48, supported 109 companies in manufacturing and services in IDA Ireland’s Client Transformation Programme through a range of instruments including Employment, Capital, Training and R&D assistance;
 - Under Actions 53, held the inaugural NSAI ‘Excellence in People Development Awards’ in Dublin in December to promote take-up of business management systems;
 - Under Action 55, commenced the roll-out of Lean principles to companies supported by the Local Enterprise Offices including making available “how to” guides on the LEO web portal;
- **As part of Disruptive Reform 3.1 –Big Data and Data Analytics:**
 - Under Action 65, the INSIGHT Research Centre has signed industry contracts with 34 companies representing a total commitment of €2.4 million in-cash and €3 million in-kind, including companies such as RTE, IRFU, Fujitsu, Nitrosell, Adidas, CISCO and Microsoft amongst others; the INSIGHT Research Centre has also created 161 posts to date;
- **As part of Disruptive Reform 3.5 – Energy Efficiency:**
 - Under Action 83, reviewed the National Energy Services Framework, which provide “best practice” models for organisations to follow to achieve energy efficiency savings.

And more broadly, in Quarter 4, for example:

- Under Action 102, delivered Pilot workshops as part of the final phase of 100Mbps schools broadband programme, to principals and teachers from 33 schools in 12 counties with a combined enrolment of 14,500 students;
- Under Action 112, launched a single online Workplace Relations Complaint Form and associated e-complaint facility; some 75% of all complaints are now made using the e-complaint facility;
- Under Action 129, supported through Enterprise Ireland 878 collaborative research projects between industry and academia;

- Under Action 149, delivered 3 Smart Futures STEM careers roadshow during Science Week, UCC, Athlone IT, and UL, which involved 9 STEM volunteers and engaged approximately 540 students; and developed and provided an online coordinated booking system for post-primary schools to request a visit from a STEM volunteer;
- Under Action 158, launched a further round of Momentum in October 2014 providing up to 6,000 education and training places for the unemployed, as well as ring-fencing 2,000 of these places for those under 25 years of age as part of the Youth Guarantee initiative;
- Under Action 187, reviewed the ICT Action Plan model in terms of how it could be applied to skills shortages in other sectors, and is prioritising skills needs in Springboard 2015 including manufacturing, data analytics, international financial services and international trade;
- Under Action 206, carried out two SME Credit Demand Surveys for the periods October 2013 – March 2014 and April – September 2014;
- Under Action 228, facilitated 406 mentor assignments with Enterprise Ireland client companies - mentors are successful senior executives who advise clients based on their own business experience;
- Under Action 270, carried out a 5 day trade mission to China, involving 37 Companies and key executives from state agencies and officials from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Under Action 283, achieved a target of 75% of food and drinks exports being supplied by companies participating in the Origin Green Sustainability Programme;
- Under Action 293, published a Draft Bioenergy Plan in October 2014, setting out the Government's medium term plans in relation to this area;
- Under Action 340, finalised a new Tourism Policy Statement, "People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025"; and
- Under Action 364, created 737 new jobs and 7,053 jobs retained in Údarás client companies in 2014.

However, as stated above, **32** of the Q4 measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *Develop and implement a strategy for commercially managed accelerators to support the quality of start-ups and increase the number of innovative start-ups; Implement the strategy to support and develop commercial accelerators in the entrepreneurial ecosystem – Action 11.* Considerable work has been undertaken in exploring and developing a strategy for commercially managed accelerators to support start-ups. A new action in the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs will bring forward this action and the work that has been completed to date.

- *Support the voluntary youth work sector in accessing the proposed new Youth Programme and the Youth Entrepreneurship Fund by facilitating links between local youth services and the LEOs/Microfinance Ireland so that young people, especially those who are furthest from the labour market, can be supported and mentored in entrepreneurial initiatives – Action 20.* In order to progress this action, it is planned to make these links initially via consultation and discussion fora in the context of consultation on the National Youth Strategy. The planned consultation process will take place in early 2015.
- *Develop and publish a languages education strategy, including foreign language education – Action 37.* The Department of Education and Skills (DES) published a framework for consultation on a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy in Ireland in August 2014, to determine the views of stakeholders. In all, some 72 submissions have been received to date, and DES is currently evaluating the submissions and intends to publish its findings in 2015.
- *Commission a survey of overseas Government scholarship opportunities, to identify potential for highly targeted actions in emerging markets for international education services – Action 45.* As the recently announced reform measures relating to the International Education Sector have been the subject of litigation, the Review of the International Education Strategy cannot be published, pending the outcome, as amendments may be required. This in turn has delayed the survey.
- *Publish report on public sector energy usage – Action 80.* The Public Service Energy Efficiency Action Plan is in the process of being finalised with a view to submission to Government and publication in Q1 2015.
- *Establish a data collection facility sufficient to facilitate analysis of the effectiveness of the waste management policy and/or competition in the waste sector; Establish data collection facility or facilities accessible on a cross-agency basis – Action 97.* Following completion of an assessment of data currently available in relation to waste collection, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission has set out the data considered necessary to undertake a meaningful study/analysis of competition in the household waste collection sector. The Commission is currently assessing the nature and quality of the data currently available. Pending this, any progress or decision on the establishment of any further data collection facility or facilities will not occur until Q1/Q2 2015.
- *Establish the Legal Services Regulator – Action 98.* The Dáil Report Stage is to resume on 24 February 2015, with the intention to complete the Legal Services Bill so that the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority can come into operation in the first half of 2015.
- *Following outcome of EU discussions on the proposed Single Telecommunications Market, initiate Communications Policy/Regulatory Mandate Review – Action 107.* The Irish review is delayed as the EU Commission's STM proposals have not advanced sufficiently at EU Council level.

- *Develop a National Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy; First draft with a view to a final draft Q1 2015 – Action 106.* The Stakeholder Consultation, completed in Q4 2014, took longer than anticipated, and the first draft of the strategy is now rescheduled for Q1 2015.
- *Introduce a requirement for mandate and objectives review by the bodies concerned with regulation of rail, bus and SPSV services – Draft Heads of a Bill approved by Government – Action 108.* Draft Heads of a Bill have yet to be approved by Government. The legislative arrangements will be pursued in 2015.
- *Review the regulatory framework for airport charges; Engage consultants to undertake the review – Action 109.* The procurement process was delayed, due to issues arising from latest regulatory determination and request for an appeal of the determination. Engagement of consultants is now envisaged for Q1 2015.
- *Enactment of Workplace Relations Bill – Action 110.* The Workplace Relations Bill was published on 30 July, 2014. The Bill has completed Second Stage and Committee Stage in the Dail in 2014. Report and Final Stages in the Dail are scheduled to resume on 21 January, 2015. The Minister aims to have the Bill enacted during Q1 2015 with a view to having the new workplace relations structures in place shortly thereafter.
- *Develop LEADER elements of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme to address Priority 6 of the Union priorities for rural development i.e. promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas – Action 119 (2 measures):*
 - *Hold information sessions for interested parties re qualifying criteria, mandatory elements, purpose, structure, content, selection process of LDS's:* Following discussions with the European Commission who have expressed some concerns regarding our proposed LDS selection process, this process will be delayed. It is envisaged that these sessions will now take place in February 2015.
 - *Develop detailed operating procedures to cover all aspects of programme delivery including - eligibility criteria, operating rules, sanctions for non-compliance, responsibilities etc:* Some initial work has begun on the development of the relevant documentation however the finalisation of such documentation is significantly dependent on the finalisation of the LDS selection system. It is envisaged that the LDS selection process will be finalised in the early part of 2015 and more comprehensive work on the programme documentation will begin in Q1 2015.
- *Develop a new applied disruptive scheme in line with the Danish INNO+ programme to address issues that are important to Irish society - Action 132.* As part of the development of a new disruptive, societal impact scheme, SFI will commence a public consultation process in 2015 to identify research areas of priority to the Irish public.
- *Establish a European Space Agency incubator to house and support new (start-up) companies to further expand the space sector in Ireland – Action 151.* It is anticipated

that the ESA Business Incubator will be established by Q4 2015, subject to the outcome of the ESA procurement process and agreement with ESA on budgetary aspects. The revised schedule takes account of the need to align well-established EI incubation and start-up company supports with those of the European Space Agency and for ESA to accommodate the specific natures of the Irish space industry strategy and the Irish research landscape.

- *Publish the Health Information Bill – Action 153.* Because of changes to the general scheme of the Health Information Bill originally approved by Government, a revised scheme is being prepared for Government approval. Work on this revised scheme is well advanced.
- *Take steps to establish Clinical Research Facilities (CRFs) in Dublin, Cork and Galway and provide a collaborative framework to link all CRFs by 2016; Complete the construction of the HRB Galway CRF in conjunction with NUI Galway and UCHG – Action 154.* This measure is delayed, however, it is expected to be complete in Q1 2015.
- *Take steps to establish a national biobanking system and support infrastructure by 2016; Agreement from all relevant funders and issue call – Action 155.* It was not possible to reach agreement during 2014 with the relevant funding agencies on this issue.
- *Develop and commence the delivery of a new national manufacturing supervisory development programme leading to a major award at Level 6 on the NFQ to meet manufacturers' requirements for upskilling operatives for those supervisory roles in the sector – Action 163.* The Award was approved by QQI in April 2014. It has now been agreed that Letterkenny IT will develop an appropriate programme which will, subject to procurement and academic approval procedures, commence delivery in 2015.
- *Finalise specifications for Junior Cycle Business Studies, Irish and Science – Action 178.* In January 2014, in response to concerns about the pace of change, the implementation date for Irish and Business Studies was revised to September 2016. This in turn allowed more time for the curriculum development process and it is now expected that these subject specifications will be available in 2015. The science specification is likely to be finalised early in 2015.
- *Publish a national framework for higher education engagement with enterprise, identifying next steps, relevant stakeholders, responsibilities and timescales – Action 183.* As indicated in Q3, the next major stage in development of the engagement strategy is to undertake a further consultation exercise on a draft strategy in order to secure maximum buy-in from key stakeholders to the strategy. The Department of Education and Skills expect the enterprise engagement strategy to be finalised and published in Q1 2015.
- *Develop a new Youth Strategy in 2014 which will, inter alia, review youth funding schemes to ensure that the youth work and non-formal education sector contributes to youth employment and youth employability policy objectives, including skills development and experiential learning opportunities for young people and the provision of valuable*

volunteer opportunities – Action 195. Work on the new Youth Strategy is at an advanced stage and is scheduled for completion in Q2 2015.

- *Develop/Procure a new employer services website and vacancy matching service* – Action 199. A Tender for a new job matching system was issued on 8 September 2014; responses were received and the Department of Social Protection are currently in the process of evaluating tenders.
- *Publish Bi-annual Strategic Investment Portfolio Reports* – Action 211. To be completed by end Q2 2015 after ISIF investment strategy has been approved in the manner required by legislation.
- *Increase the number of aquaculture licence determinations to 200-250* – Action 281. There has been a slowdown in licence determinations due to the non-availability of finalised Appropriate Assessments in respect of which there needs to be broad consensus between the Marine Institute and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, on the scientific inputs. Outstanding Appropriate Assessments were received from the Marine Institute in Q4 2014 which will enable the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to resume momentum in respect of licence determinations in Q1 2015.
- *Launch agreed Rural Development Programme and commence implementation* – Action 282. Ireland's draft RDP was submitted in July 2014. Having received the EU Commission's formal observations on 20 October an intensive bilateral process is now underway with a view to the formal agreement and adoption of the RDP in early 2015.
- *Introduction of legislation to revise the regulation of household waste collection as set out in national waste policy, informed by the waste consultation undertaken* – Action 303. Providing enabling powers to reform the regulatory framework applying to household waste collection will first necessitate primary legislation by way of amendments to the Waste Management Act 1996. It is proposed to introduce such amendments at the 3rd (Committee) Stage of the Environment (Miscellaneous) Provisions Bill 2014. The passage of that Bill has been delayed, however it is due to go to Second Stage shortly. It is still the intention that the provisions of the new legislation will apply from 1 July 2015, notwithstanding this delay.
- *In collaboration with key stakeholders (public and private sector) we will consider and report on the potential for latent defects insurance as an ultimate form of redress for consumers and homeowners* – Action 326. A draft position paper has been prepared for approval by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, and the Minister for Finance. Following feedback from the Department of Finance, consultations will be arranged with industry stakeholders to obtain their views and a report will be prepared with recommendations in the matter. It is anticipated that the proposed report will be complete by end Q1 2015.
- *Issue Circular on Phase 3 of the DECLG Energy Efficiency Fabric Upgrade Programme* – Action 331. The Energy Efficiency Fabric Upgrade Programme, which commenced in June

2013, is being implemented very successfully by the Local Authorities with an approximate spend in 2014 of €30m. The aim of Phases 1 and 2 of the scheme is to ensure that the entire social housing stock will have, as a minimum, wall insulation and attic insulation. Phase 2 has not yet commenced on a nationwide basis and Phase 1 will continue into 2015. Phase 3, which is concerned with remaining steps for fully insulated homes, will not commence until completion of Phases 1 and 2.

- *Establish an eHealth stakeholder forum including key representatives of the enterprise sector and relevant Government Departments and agencies to work with the board and management of eHealth Ireland – Action 379.* A CIO/Chief Officer has been appointed and took up the post in December 2014; the CIO will be the Chief Officer of eHealth Ireland and responsible for the establishment of eHealth Ireland within the HSE and the establishment of an eHealth Stakeholder Forum. The structure and role for the eHealth Stakeholder Forum will be considered by the Board of eHealth Ireland in the context of the establishment of the eHealth Ecosystem.
- *Publish a plan with timelines for delivery of priority projects in the context of the overall ehealth strategy including roll-out of the national patient identifier infrastructure – Action 381.* A Health Identifiers Project Steering Group has been established in the HSE chaired by the National Director Primary Care. A Business Lead has been appointed and a project plan is expected to be available early in 2015. The Identifiers Project is included in HSE Service Plan 2015 as well as the HSE Corporate Plan 2015-2017.

Action Plan for Jobs 2014: Delivery of “Ongoing 2014” Measures

As noted above, this Fourth Progress Report is the final one dealing with 2014 and thus provides an update on the actions described in the Plan as “Ongoing 2014”. All but 3 of these 116 measures have been delivered over the course of the year, giving a completion rate of 97% for those “Ongoing 2014” measures.

In progressing these “ongoing” actions over the last twelve months Government has, for example:

- **As part of Disruptive Reform 2.1 – Entrepreneurship:**
 - Under Action 10, launched and delivered the ‘Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur’ competition through the Local Enterprise Offices network generating in excess of 1,000 applications from across the country;
 - Under Action 21, approved investment for 18 Female-led High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) companies, and co-funded 4 Development Programmes focused on optimising the business capabilities for women-led businesses, as part of its efforts to promote female entrepreneurship;

- **As part of Disruptive Reform 2.2 - Winning Abroad:**
 - Under Action 40, completed 25 Ministerial-led Trade Missions/Events (excluding St Patrick's Day events), including the first ever Trade Mission within Ireland; the Trade Missions have focussed on a broad range of sectors including, Aviation, ICT, Education, Financial Services, Life Sciences, Clean Technologies, Construction and Engineering, Food and Software & Services;
 - Under Action 41, developed and implemented country-specific annual Local Market Plans (LMPs) in priority markets, through teams chaired by the relevant Ambassador and bringing together representatives from the local state agencies in a fully coordinated approach;
- **As part of Disruptive Reform 2.3 – Manufacturing: National Step Change:**
 - Under Action 62, launched a themed Research Professorship Call, involving Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) working with the Irish Universities Association (IUA); the Call includes the following themes; Manufacturing, Bio-manufacturing, Smart Cities, Energy, Marine, ICT, Digital Platforms, Content and Applications, Connected Health, Medical Devices and Medical Technologies, Ageing, Sensory Food Science, Sustainable Food Production and Food Security and Climate Change;
- **As part of Disruptive Reform 3.1 – Big Data and Data Analytics:**
 - Under Action 68, continued to support the Cloud Computing Technology Centre (IC4) and the Data Analytics Technology Centre (CeADAR), who conduct research in collaboration with Industry members, as well as supporting several projects in collaboration with the enterprise sector through the Innovation Partnership and Innovation Voucher programmes;
- **As part of Disruptive Reform 3.5 – Energy Efficiency:**
 - Under Action 79, announced Better Energy Communities will be supporting 83 community energy projects which will receive €28m in financial support, resulting in substantial improvements in homes, community buildings, Local Authority premises, and sports facilities throughout Ireland;
 - Under Action 82, continued to support 19 Exemplars in the form of training, networking and access to legal and technical expertise;

And more broadly, over 2014, the Government has for example:

- Under Action 114, commenced building, through IDA Ireland, new advanced manufacturing facilities in Waterford and Athlone which will be completed in January 2015, and office space in Letterkenny, which will be complete in April 2015;

- Under Action 194, announced the Youth Developmental Internship (YDI), the Experience Your Europe (EYE) programme, and Intreo Activation of 18-24 year olds with an offer of training, education or work experience within 4 months, under the Youth Guarantee;
- Under Action 199, announced the Employment and Youth Activation Charter during National Jobs Week - Employers who sign up to the Charter commit that at least 50% of candidates considered for interview will be taken from the Live Register;
- Under Action 294, published 'Ireland's Sustainable Energy Supply Chain Opportunity' in June, and engaged extensively with industry to promote opportunities in the sustainable energy supply chain;
- Under Action 352, launched the Skillnets Building Financial Capability training programme for SMEs in February 2014 which is designed to help the owner-managers of small and medium sized businesses from all sectors, including Retail, to better present their business case when seeking finance for their business; and
- Under Action 355, supported some 500 individuals and made over 560 grants covering up to 490 organisations across a wide range of arts venues, festivals, arts organisations and touring initiatives around Ireland, through the Arts Council.

However, as stated above, 3 of the "ongoing" measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *Implement the policies and actions outlined in the Review of the International Education Strategy – Action 44.* The reform measures recently announced relating to the International Education Sector have been the subject of litigation. A preliminary judgment with adverse findings for the State was issued on 13 January 2015. The judgment will now be considered. Pending the outcome of these considerations the review cannot be published as amendments may be required.
- *Publish a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities; Draft comprehensive employment strategy, in collaboration with the Departments of Social Protection, Health, Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and Education and Skills and in consultation with relevant stakeholders – Action 203.* Significant work has been undertaken to date, and the drafting of the Strategy is at an advanced stage. Drafting is ongoing, with the identification and inclusion of realistic and specific targets being addressed.
- *Organise two regional events on consortia building for SMEs during the year – Action 249.* Enterprise Ireland held a 'Pitch-Network-Build Consortia' seminar in Dublin in June 2014 that was attended by 82 delegates from 66 companies; the seminar provided the attendees with insights on tendering as part of a consortia targeting national public sector construction projects. A review of the current capability building programmes is underway, and the next consortia building event will be held after the review has taken

place, and also after the 'Guide for SMEs to Consortium Bidding' has been published by the Competition and Consumer Authority; this is likely to be in the first half of 2015.

Update on actions delayed from Quarters 1, 2 and 3

The only previously delayed Quarter 1 measure outlined in the Plan for completion by the end of Quarter 1 remains outstanding as of end 2014:

1. *Establish Board and governance framework for eHealth Ireland – Action 379.* A CIO/Chief Officer has been appointed and took up the post in December 2014. He has been actively involved in various aspects of his role in the run up to his appointment date. The CIO role includes establishing eHealth Ireland within HSE and progressing the work of the ICT/eHealth function within the HSE.

In addition, as reported at the end of the second quarter, 13 of the measures outlined in the Plan for completion by the end of Quarter 2 were not delivered on schedule. While 5 of these have since been delivered (Actions 14, 50, 306 (2), and 345), 8 measures due by the end of June 2014 are still outstanding at the end of Quarter 4. These are:

1. *Develop a strategy to support and develop commercial accelerators in the entrepreneurial ecosystem - Action 11.* Considerable work has been undertaken in exploring and developing a strategy for commercially managed accelerators to support start-ups. A new action in the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs will bring forward this action and the work that has been completed to date.
2. *Launch a pilot entrepreneurship internship programme whereby a young person interested in starting their own business can shadow an entrepreneur – Action 16.* A suitable structure for delivery of the proposed programme is currently being developed and it will be completed by Q1 2015.
3. *Enact the Legal Services Regulation Bill – Action 98.* The Dáil Report Stage is to resume on 24 February 2015, with the intention to complete the Legal Services Bill so that the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority can come into operation in the first half of 2015
4. *Establish an Independent Economic Regulator for the Rail Market (assignment of additional functions to the Railway Safety Commission) – Action 108.* A requirement to draft other secondary legislation which was the subject of infringement proceedings has delayed delivery of this action. Drafting of the legislation providing for the establishment of an Independent Economic Regulator for the Rail Market is now underway, and it is anticipated that the Economic Regulator for the rail market will be established in Q2 2015.

5. *Publish Bi-annual Strategic Investment Portfolio Reports* – Action 211. This measure will be completed by end Q2 2015 after ISIF investment strategy has been approved in the manner required by legislation.
6. *Ministerial approval and signing of the Commencement Order for the Construction Contracts Act legislation* – Action 328. Responsibility for implementation of the Construction Contracts Act, 2013 has been transferred to the Minister of State for Business and Employment, in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and it is intended that the Act will be implemented in full by Spring 2015.
7. *Establish (initially within HSE) an entity called eHealth Ireland in line with strategy* – Action 379. The newly appointed CIO took up his position in December 2014. One of his priorities is the setting up an Office of the CIO and the arrangements for eHealth Ireland where he will be Chief Officer.
8. *Establish first eHealth ecosystem meeting and requisite longer term supporting structures* - Action 379. A consultation/pre-launch meeting of the Irish eHealth ecosystem with a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties took place in November 2014. This meeting outlined the possible role and scope for the Irish eHealth ecosystem. Proposals to move the project forward will be progressed with the CIO/Chief Officer eHealth Ireland.

Furthermore, 12 measures had not been fully delivered at the end of Quarter 3. 2 of these measures have since been delivered (Actions 168 and 331), however; **10** measures due by the end of September 2014 remain outstanding at the end of Quarter 4. These are:

1. *Develop and implement a pilot "execution focused" programme for HPSUs post their seed investment round to support and accelerate their development and growth* – Action 15. Substantial work was undertaken by Enterprise Ireland on the assessment of the detailed needs of companies in this very early stage of their growth. The development of an associated approach, to support these High Potential Start-Up companies and to accelerate their development and growth, led to the development of a pilot "execution focused" programme for HPSUs. The pilot programme is expected to launch in the second half of 2015.
2. *Prepare Heads of a new Data Sharing and Governance Bill designed to deliver improved digital transactional services* – Action 71. A decision to undertake a significant public consultation exercise on the proposed Data Sharing and Governance Bill necessitated postponing the drafting of the Heads of Bill. This consultation concluded with a public presentation on the exercise, and all submissions received have been published on the website of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Drafting of the Heads, to incorporate the results of the consultation exercise, is expected to be complete in Q1 2015.
3. *Deliver the Integrated Licensing Application Service for the retail sector* - Action 75. The LGMA, as contracting authority, has written to the successful tenderer to inform them

of the outcome of the competition and an award notice has been published in the EU Official Journal. The contract has been awarded to An Post with Escher as their technology partner. Contract conclusions have commenced and are scheduled to be completed early in 2015 and the contract signed by the LGMA. Contract conclusions have commenced and are scheduled to be completed early in 2015 and the contract signed by the LGMA.

4. *Prioritise the delivery of a single national IT-based road management and utility licencing system; Publish revised guidelines to support road management and utility licensing* – Action 105. Following local authority consultation over Summer 2014, draft revised guidelines were finalised and circulated to stakeholders, including Utility companies, in November prior to publication.
5. *Advertise the selection of Local Development Strategies (LDS) under the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP)* – Action 119. The Departments of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and Agriculture, Food and the Marine met with the European Commission on 20 November 2014 in the context of ongoing negotiations regarding the draft RDP. The Commission have a number of areas of concern with regard to the proposed selection process for LEADER LDS. Pending the successful outcome of further negotiations with the Commission it is envisaged that the process will begin no later than the end of the first quarter of 2015.
6. *Finalise the integrated language curriculum for infants to second class* – Action 177. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is currently finalising the specification for the primary integrated language curriculum for infants to second class. The findings of a public consultation on the draft integrated curriculum from the consultation process are informing the finalisation of the integrated curriculum. The NCCA is also working with specific schools to address particular issues that arose during the consultation process. The curriculum will be available to schools in Q3 2015 at the latest, possibly in Q2 2015.
7. *Develop and publish a strategy for enhanced engagement between HEIs and enterprise to include a framework of indicators for assessing HEI performance in this area. This strategy will include recommendations to ensure that priority skills needs can be responsively addressed within course provision; Benchmark internationally and define best practice in consultation with appropriate stakeholders* – Action 183. The Department of Education and Skills expect the enterprise engagement strategy to be finalised and published in Q1 2015.
8. *Enhance the take-up and impact of the Credit Guarantee Scheme on foot of the 2013 review of the Scheme by implementing the appropriate recommendations. Process revised legislation to enactment* – Action 208. Government approval for revision of legislation was received in Q2 2014. The Bill is on the A list of the Government's legislation programme for Spring, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is working with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel on drafting the Bill.

While a preliminary draft Bill has now been provided, there are still a range of drafting and legal issues to be resolved.

9. *Work with partners to implement a Beef Genomic scheme and roll out new sexed semen technology on dairy and beef farms. i) Develop sexed semen project proposal (ii) Achieve agreement with partners, including AI companies and Sexing Technologies (iii) roll-out of 2014 project deliverables – Action 276.* Due to problems with the sexing technology and the use of an American company, the pilot has been put on hold until 2016.
10. *Publish a new Aviation Policy Statement – Action 367.* Following an extensive public consultation process in 2013, the draft National Aviation Policy was published on 21 May 2014. Over 70 submissions were received by the consultation deadline of 31 July 2014 and taking account of those submissions the drafting of the final policy document is at an advanced stage and it is expected that the Aviation Policy will be adopted and published in early 2015.

Quarter 4 Measures

2. Disruptive Reforms in 2014

Disruptive Reform 2.1 Entrepreneurship

Background

As two thirds of all new jobs are created by companies in their first five years after formation, policy action to support entrepreneurship growth is core to our response to the jobs crisis. Our ambition is for Ireland to be among the most entrepreneurial nations in the world and acknowledged as a world-class environment in which to start and grow a business. Through this disruptive reform, we aim to:

- Build the pipeline - To increase the numbers of entrepreneurs, who will be actively engaged in creating business startups and employment across the country;
- Build entrepreneurial capability - To develop entrepreneurial skills among the general population and to nurture entrepreneurial thinking and talent; and
- Build the right conditions - To ensure survival and growth in employment and income from those entrepreneurial startups.

Summary of Actions in 2014

The Government committed to produce the first ever National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement, and this was published in October 2014. This represents the first time the Irish Government has published a comprehensive national strategy for entrepreneurship in Ireland. The key target contained in the plan is to double the jobs impact of start-ups in Ireland over the next five years, from 93,000 currently. In order to deliver on this there are three overarching aims –

- Increase the number of start-ups by 25% - representing 3,000 more start-ups per annum;
- Increase the survival rate in the first five years by 25% - 1,800 more survivors per annum;
- Improve the capacity of start-ups to grow to scale by 25%.

The Policy Statement sets out the Government's strategic objectives as a facilitator within the Irish entrepreneurship ecosystem in key areas that impact on entrepreneurs and start-ups and signposts the direction which policy will take in the coming years.

Objectives have been developed across each of the 6 elements that make up the framework for entrepreneurs to grow and flourish. These six elements are:

1. Culture, human capital and education

2. Business environment and supports
3. Innovation
4. Access to finance
5. Networks and mentoring
6. Access to markets

Next Steps

The various actions will be delivered and overseen through the Action Plan for Jobs 2015 process and the DJEI will monitor progress against key performance indicators and work with partners in enterprise to achieve the ambition. To drive the strategy, an Implementation Group has been established, chaired by DJEI, with membership drawn from the enterprise agencies and other Government Departments. This Group will have formal, structured engagement with industry partners and the National Competitiveness Council. It will meet quarterly, with sub-groups exploring certain issues or delivery as required. The Group will report annually to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs.

Action 11: Develop and implement a strategy for commercially managed accelerators to support the quality of start-ups and increase the number of innovative start-ups.

Q4 Measure: Implement the strategy to support and develop commercial accelerators in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. (EI)

Update: Delayed

Considerable work has been undertaken in exploring and developing a strategy for commercially managed accelerators to support start-ups. A new action in the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs will bring forward this action and the work that has been completed to date.

Action 12: Provide support for 155 high potential and early stage start-ups.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) is responsible for supporting High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) Companies. HPSUs are start-up businesses with the potential to develop an innovative product or service for sale on international markets and the potential to create 10 jobs and €1m in sales within 3 to 4 years of starting up. Funding supports from EI are closely aligned to a company's stage of development. Broadly, high potential start-up companies are

viewed as being at feasibility stage; investor-ready stage or growth stage. During 2014, EI supported 101 HPSUs and 81 early stage start-ups companies through the Competitive Start Fund.

Action 13: Launch three Competitive Start Funds (one of which will incorporate a manufacturing focus) to support thirty start-ups.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

During 2014, Enterprise Ireland (EI) rolled out six rounds of the Competitive Start Fund, approving investments in 81 start-ups. These six rounds covered sectors such as Internet and Games, Software, Lifesciences, Cleantech, Industrial, ICT, Manufacturing and manufacturing technologies, and Aviation. They also covered Graduates and Female entrepreneurs.

The Competitive Start Fund is aimed at accelerating the development of HPSUs and creating a strong pipeline of High Potential Start Ups (HPSUs). EI introduced the Competitive Start Fund in direct response to client needs in December 2010. Very early stage companies can face difficulties in raising external financing at this vital stage in the start-up and market launch process. This competitive fund is aimed at bridging that gap and is focused on providing start-ups with critical early stage funding to explore and determine the market fit of their business and progress to product launch. Under the terms of the Competitive Start Fund, start-ups will receive an equity investment of up to €50,000 for a 10% ordinary equity stake in the company. In addition to funding, each start-up is provided with an experienced business mentor to support them. The application process has been designed and improved over the course of 20 rounds to date to be fast and efficient to allow the new start-ups to concentrate on validating their business concept and getting to market entry stage as quickly as possible. The Competitive Start Fund marks one of the key recommendations in the Report of the Innovation Task Force which highlighted the need for greater support for very early stage start-ups.

Action 14: Build on the success of the Competitive Feasibility Funds and launch regionally targeted Funds in 2014 (Cork region, South East, North East and Mid West regions) and roll out Competitive Regional Feasibility funds to companies that produce products and services directed for sale to the wider Agricultural Sector.

Q4 Measure: Roll out Competitive Regional Feasibility to the Mid West. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Competitive Regional Feasibility Fund for the Mid West was launched on 26 October.

The objective of the Competitive Feasibility Fund for the Mid West is to provide successful applicants with funding of up to €25,000. This support is to assist the new start-up company or individual entrepreneur to investigate the viability of a new growth-orientated business proposition, to be located in the Mid West Region, which has the potential to become a High Potential Start-Up (HPSU)*. The fund will provide financial assistance to enable the promoter (and Enterprise Ireland) to reach firm conclusions regarding the project's viability and set out investor-ready plans and financials associated with developing and commercialising the innovative product or service on international markets. The Fund closed for applicants on 18 November 2014 and was open to applications from the ICT, Industrial, and Food sectors including the following sub-sectors: Internet; Games; Software as a Service (SaaS); Cloud Computing; Enterprise Software; Telecoms; Lifesciences; Cleantech, and Industrial Products.

*These are companies that can develop scalable innovative technologies, products or services for sale on world markets. Enterprise Ireland supports projects that are likely to achieve significant growth within three years (sales of €1m per annum and employment of 10 or more) or, where a company is required to have FDA or CE approval, to have €1 million in sales within three years of approval to sell.

Q4 Measure: Roll out Competitive Regional Feasibility funds to the Agricultural Sector. (EI)

Update: Complete

The objective of the Competitive Feasibility Fund for the Agricultural Sector is to provide successful applicants with funding of up to €25,000. This support is to assist the new start-up company or individual entrepreneur to investigate the viability of a new growth-orientated business proposition, in the Agricultural Sector, which has the potential to become a High Potential Start-Up (HPSU)*. The fund will provide financial assistance to enable the promoter (and Enterprise Ireland) to reach firm conclusions regarding the project's viability and set out investor-ready plans and financials associated with developing and commercialising the innovative product or service on international markets.

Enterprise Ireland's National Agri-Food €250,000 Competitive Feasibility Fund was launched at the National Ploughing Championships by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on 23 September. This fund, building on the success of the regionally targeted Competitive Feasibility Funds, is aimed at companies that produce products and services directed for sale to the wider Agricultural Sector.

*These are companies that can develop scalable innovative technologies, products or services for sale on world markets. Enterprise Ireland supports projects that are likely to achieve significant growth within three years (sales of €1m per annum and employment of 10 or more) or, where a company is required to have FDA or CE approval, to have €1 million in sales within three years of approval to sell.

Action 19: Develop an Entrepreneurial PhD programme with a view to training more scientists in SFI supported research teams to launch their own businesses.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFI, other relevant stakeholders)

Update: Complete

A memorandum on the development of an Entrepreneurial PhD programme has been approved by the SFI Executive Committee. This programme has been developed by the pre-award team and the SFI Board discussed this scheme in their meeting on 15 December 2014. The scheme will be implemented and launched in 2015 as the 2015 Academic Entrepreneurial Mentorship Scheme for Young Scientists.

Action 20: Support the voluntary youth work sector in accessing the proposed new Youth Programme and the Youth Entrepreneurship Fund by facilitating links between local youth services and the LEOs/Microfinance Ireland so that young people, especially those who are furthest from the labour market, can be supported and mentored in entrepreneurial initiatives.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Delayed

In order to progress this action, it is planned to make these links initially via consultation and discussion fora in the context of consultation on the National Youth Strategy. The consultation process will take place in early 2015.

Action 23: Attract overseas entrepreneurs including Irish emigrants to set up businesses in Ireland. Target support for 15 overseas entrepreneurs to establish their business in Ireland during 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) has continued to work intensively with overseas entrepreneurs throughout 2014 with over 15 overseas entrepreneurs being targeted for support in 2014. 10 projects were approved with the status of High Potential Start-Up (HPSU), and a number of other projects are close to reaching that status. A further three new projects were approved under the Competitive Start Fund. EI has a strong pipeline for the first half of 2015 where those overseas entrepreneurs that EI has already engaged with will convert to

approval status.

Action 26: Review the existing approach of the agencies to attracting overseas entrepreneurs to Ireland.

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

Update: Complete

In Q4 2014, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland jointly undertook to review the existing approach of the agencies to attracting overseas entrepreneurs to Ireland. As part of the review, which was completed at the end of December, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland looked at international best practice and in so doing identified areas of opportunity for greater collaboration and cooperation between the agencies. This includes greater sharing of competitor analysis information and examination of the possibilities for collaboration on social media marketing. The agencies will also examine the Succeed In Ireland (also known as Connect Ireland) initiative to ensure it is attracting the optimal number of overseas entrepreneurs to Ireland. It was agreed that, during 2015, the agencies will continue the existing collaboration which includes jointly marketing Ireland as a destination for entrepreneurs and early stage companies at a number of events, information sharing and referring projects to each other as appropriate.

Disruptive Reform 2.2 Winning Abroad

Background

The overall ambition of this Disruptive Reform is to invest in improving Ireland's trade performance both in existing and emerging overseas markets in order to achieve a target of creating an additional 10,000 new jobs over 5 years. The Government committed to allocating resources to support trade, tourism and investment in Ireland and to ensure these resources were focused on specific targets set out in the Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy. These targets covered export-related jobs; exports from companies assisted by Enterprise Ireland; diversification of export markets; tourism; and attraction of foreign direct investment (FDI) including FDI from emerging markets.

Summary of Actions in 2014

Publication of the review of the Government's Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy

The review of the Government's Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy was launched in February 2014. The review is the product of a comprehensive process of consultation with local market teams and the Embassy network, with Departments and State Agencies and

with the private sector. It is designed to ensure that the resources of the State, both the Embassy network and State Agencies, are positioned to take full advantage of new opportunities in key emerging markets and to keep delivering in Ireland's established markets.

Provision of additional resources to IDA Ireland

In the drive to have sufficient resources in order to achieve the target of creating an additional 10,000 new jobs over 5 years, IDA Ireland has been actively recruiting to fill "Winning Abroad" positions. Over 20 new recruits were engaged in 2014 and it is anticipated that a further tranche of new entrants under the programme will commence work with IDA Ireland in February / March 2015.

Enterprise Ireland working with 55 first time exporters in 2014

In 2014, Enterprise Ireland supported 93 clients that were first time exporters to markets overseas, well over the target of 55. Out of these 93, 52 exported for the first time into high growth markets (China, Russia, Brazil, Gulf States etc.).

The holding of potential exporters' events and engagement with the Enterprise Ireland Potential Exporters Division

During 2014, Enterprise Ireland ran eight Export Awareness Events and eight Exploring Exporting Workshops nationally with almost 400 participants. Some 674 companies have had significant engagement with the Enterprise Ireland Potential Exporters Division.

The roll-out of Trade Missions

The total number of overseas Ministerial Led Trade Missions / Events was 25 for 2014 (excluding Saint Patricks Day Events). The Trade Missions focussed on a broad range of sectors including Aviation, ICT, Education, Financial Services, Life Sciences, Clean Technologies, Construction and Engineering, Food and Software & Services. 2014 also saw the first ever Trade Mission within Ireland led by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mr. Richard Bruton, T.D.

Launch of the Year of Irish Design

The Official Programme of Irish Design 2015 was launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in December. This marked the beginning of the wide ranging programme of events planned throughout 2015 to promote the Design & Craft sector.

Next Steps

Further to the investment in resources in overseas markets, the development agencies will increase their focus and footprint in high growth and emerging markets and new areas of opportunities for exports and inward investment. Additional initiatives will be included in the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs.

Action 27: Appoint a new Enterprise Ireland marketing resource, following the approval of twenty posts by Government, in international priority markets including China, South Korea, United Arab Emirates and South Africa.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Following the approval of twenty posts by Government, Enterprise Ireland (EI) has made 17 appointments and a further 3 are under consideration to support its activities in international priority markets including China, South Korea, the Gulf States, Turkey and South Africa. EI's clients continue to extend their operations into ever more challenging, geographically and culturally distant markets. During 2014, EI strengthened its ability to support the export plans of its clients with the appointment of these additional staff in high growth markets (China, Russia, Brazil, Gulf States etc.).

In 2013, exports by Enterprise Ireland client companies continued on an upward trend reaching €17.1bn in export sales and 2014 saw strong export activity amongst the indigenous sector. Exports have been the main engine of jobs growth by Irish-owned companies over the past number of years. In order to grow and scale, companies need to internationalise and grow exports. Enterprise Ireland works with indigenous Irish industry to help them win export sales in global markets. To this end, the agency has a network of over 30 international offices around the globe. These offices are staffed by a combination of Irish and local staff, with intimate sectoral and local market knowledge, who are strategically positioned to support fledgling and experienced Irish exporters to enter and develop their operations/presence in overseas markets.

Action 30: Provide International Selling Programme to 55 participants in 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

In 2014, 55 representatives from 51 companies participated on the International Selling Programme, which is Enterprise Ireland's leading export development programme for Irish companies. This customised, practical programme is delivered by Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) in partnership with a panel of world-class experts and practitioners. The programme enhances our client's ability to access new markets and accelerate export sales growth. Since the programme was established in 2006, over 300 CEOs, managing directors, sales directors and business development executives have successfully completed the International Selling Programme.

Action 31: Roll-out Enterprise Ireland’s Market Access Grant throughout 2014 to 35 companies.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) has approved support for 32 companies under EI’s Market Access grant with a number of other projects in the pipeline. The Market Access Grant is a cornerstone of the financial supports from EI and aims to assist companies to build their business in international markets. This grant is designed to assist clients to develop viable marketing strategies in target markets. The Market Access Grant supports companies to undertake all the activities from initial market research to developing collateral prior to a market launch. The grant is designed to assist clients to acquire the information and expertise to launch a product or service in an overseas market. The grant is available only to companies entering a new geographic market or entering an existing market with a new product/service.

Action 32: Enterprise Ireland will work with 55 first time exporters in 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Exporting can secure a company’s future, safeguard Irish jobs, expose a business to a whole new world of ideas and see it competing and winning against the best in the world. In 2014, amongst Enterprise Ireland (EI) supported clients there were 93 First Time Exporters to new markets overseas of which 52 exported for the first time into high growth markets (China, Russia, Brazil, Gulf States etc.). EI supports companies in increasing their presence and sales in the global market through its overseas network of over 30 offices which give exporters access to more than 60 countries worldwide. In-market supports provided by EI include:

- Assessing opportunities for companies;
- Identifying routes to market;
- Finding distribution partners;
- Identifying potential customers, assessing competition;
- Introducing Irish companies to buyers;
- Assisting companies to set-up in overseas markets.

In addition to the work carried out by the international office network, EI’s “Get Export Ready” team helps companies to navigate the opportunities and challenges they will face in overseas markets. Export Awareness events and the more intensive Export Awareness

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

During 2014, Enterprise Ireland ran 8 Export Awareness Events and 8 Exploring Exporting Workshops nationally. There were 227 participants at the Export Awareness Events and 161 participated in Enterprise Ireland's Exploring Exporting Workshops.

Action 33: Deliver the Access to Silicon Valley Programme to 40 participants in 2014 to fast track early stage Irish tech companies targeting Silicon Valley.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland's Access Silicon Valley programme is designed to fast-track Irish technology companies that are targeting Silicon Valley and San Francisco – the leading start-up ecosystem for high-tech innovation and development in the world. The most recent programme commenced in September 2014 with 16 companies (18 individuals) participating in an intensive and interactive three day boot camp. As part of this programme, 12 companies travelled to the U.S. in November 2014. A further program completed in June 2014 with 16 companies (26 participants). 19 participants, representing 10 companies travelled to the US in June 2014. This programme provides insights into the practice of launching a company or product, including the funding required to do so. It assists participants in delivering tangible strategies and market entry plans relevant to the Silicon Valley and San Francisco marketplace and to identify key sales and partnership targets. Access Silicon Valley also covers business/cultural differences and has a strong focus on pitching and presenting.

Participants benefited by:

- Participating in an intensive three-day Bootcamp in Dublin;
- Access to one-to-one US industry-relevant mentoring;
- Working with an assigned mentor to develop a tailored 10 day itinerary to Silicon Valley to include introductions to relevant industry contacts, insiders and experts who provide participants with valuable feedback on the potential of their product or service to the valley marketplace; and
- Having the opportunity to leverage Enterprise Ireland's significant industry network in San Francisco.

The programme was delivered by US Market Access Centre (USMAC) who are part of the San Jose State University Research Foundation. Over 100 Irish companies have successfully completed the Access Silicon Valley programme to date.

Action 34: Hold 8 potential exporters awareness events and 8 potential exporters workshops across the regions (two of each per quarter) and target over 650 companies to have significant engagement with the EI Potential Exporters Division.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Initiatives undertaken by Enterprise Ireland (EI) in this regard during 2014 included 8 Export Awareness events and 8 Exploring Exporting workshops. These took place on a regional basis (2 of each per quarter) with 161 companies attending the Exploring Exporting Workshops and 227 companies attending the Export Awareness events. In addition, 47 companies engaged in the Potential Exporters specific UK Market workshops during 2014. Some 674 companies have had significant engagement with EI's Potential Exporters Division.

Exporting can be a valuable new source of business for companies with ambition, there are many Irish companies operating successfully in the Irish market that can grow new business through finding new customers overseas. To tap into the real export capability that exists throughout the country, EI's Potential Exporters Division offers support to pre-export, early stage exporting companies, and existing businesses seeking to explore new opportunities in export markets. The Division delivers a wide range of initiatives focussed on helping companies internationalise.

Action 36: Build awareness of existing in-market resources which are available to Irish companies such as the EU SME Centre and the European External Action Economic Service.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Continuous efforts are being made by Enterprise Ireland to build awareness of existing in-market resources available to Irish companies such as the EU SME Centre* and the European External Action Economic Service** and in particular those supports available to SMEs in Ireland, through committed actions of the EEN (Enterprise Europe Network)*** in Ireland, which is an EU Programme managed by Enterprise Ireland and dedicated to support all SMEs in Ireland / EU wide.

*The EU SME Centre provides free, hands-on business support to Small and Medium Enterprises

(SMEs) from the European Union, facilitating their access to the Chinese market.

**The European External Action Service (EEAS) is the European Union's diplomatic corps; it supports the EU foreign affairs chief in conducting EU foreign and security policy, while the European External Action Economic Service (EEAS) manages the EU's diplomatic relations with other countries outside the bloc. It aims to make the EU's foreign policy more consistent and efficient, thereby increasing Europe's influence in the world. The service works closely with national diplomatic services in EU member countries, with many personnel from those services seconded to its staff. One major role is to support the EU's strategic partnerships with key international players and its engagement with emerging powers around the world. The EEAS works closely with the UN and other leading powers such as the United States and Russia.

***The Enterprise Europe Network is the only business development network of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry, which by means of its unique geographical and operational coverage, brings together close to 600 European business support organizations from 50 countries from the EU, the candidate countries and EFTA countries.

Action 37: Develop and publish a languages education strategy, including foreign language education.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DES)

Update: Delayed

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) published a framework for consultation on a Foreign Languages in Education Strategy in Ireland in August 2014, to determine the views of stakeholders. In all, some 72 submissions have been received to date. The closing date for submissions was end October but submissions were received after that date. The Department is currently evaluating the submissions and intends to publish its findings in 2015. This action will be taken forward in the 2015 Action Plan for Jobs.

Action 42: Develop and implement a work programme to deliver the Year of Irish Design 2015.

Q4 Measure: Launch Year of Irish Design. (DJEI, DFAT, DCCoI, EI)

Update: Complete

The Official Programme of Irish Design 2015 (ID2015) was launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation on 18 December in Dublin Castle. It marks the beginning of the wide ranging programme of events planned throughout 2015 to promote the Design & Craft sector. Details of the national and international programme for ID2015 are available at www.irishdesign2015.ie.

Action 45: Commission a survey of overseas Government scholarship opportunities, to identify potential for highly targeted actions in emerging markets for international education services.

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

Update: Delayed

This action is dependent on the Review of the International Education Strategy (see Ongoing Action 44), and so is delayed as a result of recent litigation.

Disruptive Reform 2.3 Manufacturing: National Step Change

Background

The overall ambition of the disruptive reform is to improve the competitiveness, productivity and innovation of Ireland's manufacturing sector; to enhance connections to the customer and expansions into new markets; and for the sector to engage in new ways of working. The National Step Change envisages delivering a suite of supports that are tailored to the specific needs of a firm, depending on its stage of development and strategic intent, and regardless of its ownership and/or scale. The aim is to implement lean business principles and other best practice approaches to drive company awareness, adoption, and integration of lean tools and techniques. This will be achieved by the development agencies working closely with cohorts of their client companies, to implement this initiative.

Summary of Actions in 2014

All of the actions set out in APJ 2014 in respect of this disruptive reform have been completed. Among the key initiatives progressed were:

1. Enterprise Ireland rolled out a suite of 'Lean Programmes', with 124 projects supported in 2014. A total of 66 of EI's client companies undertook 'Lean Start' projects and 37 other companies undertook 'Lean Plus' projects, which are particularly suited to medium sized companies. In addition, a total of 21 'Lean Transform' projects, tailored to targeted companies, were initiated.

Since 2010, Enterprise Ireland has supported 670 projects to assist companies to adopt a Lean Business approach and an independent review of 334 of these projects has shown productivity gains of €662m with positive impacts on sales and employment having been recorded.

2. Enterprise Ireland have undertaken an initiative involving 12 engineering manufacturing companies, aimed at achieving significant growth over the next 5 years, based on agreed Action Plans which have been developed for these businesses.

3. Enterprise Ireland has initiated a process to raise awareness among the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) network of the strategic importance of applying Lean principles to the micro enterprises which are supported by the LEOs. This initiative will highlight the importance of applying lean principles in early stage companies.
4. Enterprise Ireland, together with IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland, coordinated the first national Innovation Showcase in December, 2014 to give Irish companies an introduction to State supports designed to increase the level of collaboration between Industry and the State-funded Technology Centres and other research and related Higher Education Institution expertise.
5. IDA Ireland supported a total of 109 companies in Manufacturing and Services during 2014 through its 'Client Transformation Programme', through a range of instruments, including Employment, Capital, Training, and Research and Development assistance.
6. With financial support from IDA Ireland, the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training (NIBERT), which offers training and pilot-scale bioprocessing research, has embarked upon a process to expand its Research and Development activity. The work of this body is a key selling point for Ireland and supported the winning of recent, significant FDI projects.
7. That National Standards Authority of Ireland engaged in a range of promotional work to increase company awareness of the LEAN guide and also progressed work on determining the feasibility of developing a Standard for LEAN.

Next Steps

The Development Agencies will continue their work in driving the LEAN Agenda in their client companies to further develop company competitiveness and productivity. The importance of the Manufacturing Sector for Ireland's economic development and for increasing employment and exports, will be strongly to the forefront of ongoing Government policy.

Further initiatives to support the Manufacturing Sector will be set out in the Action Plan for Jobs 2015.

Action 47: Enterprise Ireland will support an overall total of 130 firms across all levels and activities, and aim to increase the up-take by medium-sized firms through its LeanStart, LeanPlus and LeanTransform Programmes. Within this overarching target, Enterprise Ireland will support an additional 15 companies through its LeanTransform Programme in 2014. This will include engaging with the strategic client cohort to stimulate continuous improvement toward international award recognition.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) supported in excess of 130 firms across all levels and activities with the aim of increasing the uptake of Lean principles amongst Enterprise Ireland clients. EI's Lean Business Offer is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisation to increase performance and competitiveness. The Lean Business Offer is made up of three levels of support: LeanStart, LeanPlus and LeanTransform. LeanStart provides an introduction to Lean concepts and allows companies to gain an understanding of what the tools and techniques can do for your company in a short, focused engagement. A total of 66 Enterprise Ireland client companies undertook the LeanStart programme in 2014.

The emphasis on engaging with medium-sized firms is evidenced in the increase in LeanPlus assignments. In 2014, a total of 37 companies undertook Lean Plus projects. LeanPlus is particularly suited to medium sized companies. There was also strong demand for Lean Transform projects of which 21 were approved. These projects are typically focused on strategic clients and EI continues to see high levels of interest and engagement. Clients are now engaging to understand the possibilities offered by engaging with international recognition awards such as Shingo and EFQM. In addition EI's Lean team undertook 2 management development projects.

The suite of Lean Programmes which continue to be rolled out by the EI were well received by clients in 2014 and there is strong pipeline for 2015. Significant time and effort was also invested in the implementation of Lean projects approved in 2014 and previously. Further activities to support the manufacturing sector included:

- 15 events were organised during the year in Ireland to help develop peer-to-peer learning and sharing (as per action 56);
- 6 visits for over 70 Irish managers were organised to the Toyota Lean Management Centre in Wales;
- Visits to European best practice examples (Austria, Germany, France and Poland);
- Visits in Ireland to a horticultural company, a medical devices company and a food company in conjunction with the EU Japan Centre for Industrial Co-Operation.

Action 48: IDA will support 70 companies in manufacturing and services in 2014 through its Client Transformation Programme. The Programme involves a range of instruments such as: employment, training, capital, R&D, environment and process improvement incentives to achieve technology uplifts, skills enhancement, energy improvements, productivity uplift and investments in new facilities and equipment.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

In 2014, IDA supported 109 companies in its Client Transformation Programme through a range of instruments including Employment, Capital, Training and R&D assistance.

Action 49: Building on existing work with client companies Enterprise Ireland will identify and work with a group of mid-sized manufacturing firms (initially 12) to secure their commitment to achieve significant growth over the next five years based on agreed action plans. Management development, benchmarking and strategic reviews and lean business programmes will form the basis of this suite of supports.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has progressed this action with an initial cohort of 12 engineering manufacturing firms selected and have secured their commitment to achieve significant growth over the next five years. Specific actions have included: peer to peer exchange of views on challenges to achieving growth; best practice visits to leading German Mittelstand companies, and 1-to-1 engagement including investment by Enterprise Ireland in certain firms based on updated business plans.

Action 51: Build on the release of the “SWiFT 11-2013 - Driving Competitiveness using Lean” guide by working with EI/IDA/LEOs to increase company awareness and use of the national Lean guide.

Q4 Measure: Report on delivery of awareness actions over the year. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) held 6 road Shows in June 2014 in Dublin, Limerick, Galway, Sligo, Cork and Waterford promoting the LEAN Guide. A total of 433 people were in attendance at these shows. In the first 6 months of 2014 Enterprise Ireland (EI) held 12 Conferences/Forums promoting the Lean concept and 1,211 people were in attendance at these shows. In Q3 and Q4 both NSAI and EI promoted the Lean concept at NSAI’s Quality Conference in Galway with over 110 people in attendance. EI promoted this work through the Consultants Forum in East Point, 80 consultants were in attendance at this forum supported by NSAI.

NSAI are continuing to work with EI and as a first initiative produced a simple brochure on Standards for all the 31 LEO Offices throughout the country. This brochure will give an

explanation as to how Standards can help in developing a product and service and how the LEAN Guide can assist companies become more productive and competitive. The brochure also highlights the Innovation Guide (Swift 1).

Action 52: Engage with EI/IDA/LEOs, industry representative organisations, academia, consultants and industry to determine the feasibility of developing a standard for Lean.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

A survey was drafted by NSAI and circulated to over 500 EI Clients and 105 NSAI clients. Analysis of the survey will be completed by the end of January 2015. The Forfás evaluation of the impact of the EI LEAN Business Offer Programme as part of an evaluation of Development Agency programmes provides evidence of a positive impact resulting from this intervention, in terms of sale and cost reduction. Results of this reported an improvement in productivity and/or capacity increases which was not at the expense of jobs. This evaluation will also be used as part of our analysis.

Action 53: Promote take up of business management systems through establishment of a national award scheme for best-in-class businesses.

Q4 Measure: Organise and hold award presentation event. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

The inaugural Excellence in People Development Awards event was hosted in Dublin on 4 December 2014. The national awards were presented by the Minister of State for Business and Employment in 4 categories and an overall award. Over 130 delegates attended the awards. For 2015, NSAI will review the success and impact of the national awards in the context of developing an annual event.

Action 54: Expand and enhance the existing panels of Lean/productivity experts to strengthen the international and sector specific expertise, informed by the needs of foreign owned and larger scale firms.

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

Update: Complete

Building on the strength of its Lean Business offer, Enterprise Ireland has continued its efforts to further develop the Lean/Productivity directory of service providers. The number

of consultancies on the directory now stands at 153, up from 112 in 2013. The Directory provides a wide range of capabilities, including for large scale and foreign owned companies. A number of the consultancy houses on the directory are now selling their services outside of Ireland, demonstrating their international capability.

Action 55: Leveraging the LEO web portal, facilitate access to a self-assessment on-line diagnostic tool(s) appropriate for those LEO clients starting on the Lean journey, together with easily digestible ‘how to’ guides and signposting to the supports available and appropriate contact point(s).

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

Update: Complete

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) web portal currently facilitates access to self-assessment on-line diagnostic tools appropriate for those LEO clients starting on the Lean journey, together with easily digestible “how to” guides and signposting the supports available and appropriate contact points via the Enterprise Ireland (EI) and Envirocentre websites. A self-assessment benchmark tool, case studies highlighting impacts of Lean, and a directory of Lean consultants are available to help LEO clients and “how to” guides have been developed by EI and are being shared with the LEOs. The “how to” guides are available electronically while information highlighting impacts of Lean are available on the Envirocentre website.

The network of 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) deliver local enterprise supports to start-ups and small businesses across the country. The rolling out of Lean principle supports to LEO clients means that all categories of business, including sole traders, micro businesses and small and medium sized companies now, through the LEO gateway site, have access to supports and advice relating to lean principles. Enterprise Ireland has raised awareness, amongst the LEO network, of the strategic importance of applying Lean principles in early stage companies. Lean materials and case studies have been presented to the LEO network and the roll out of the benchmarking tools have been discussed and agreed.

Action 56: Facilitate peer-to-peer and cross-sectoral site visits to share learnings and to build Ireland’s national capabilities in LEAN principles, diagnostics, and international award criteria and processes.

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

Update: Complete

In 2014, Enterprise Ireland facilitated peer-to-peer and cross sectoral site visits to share learnings and to build Ireland’s national capabilities in LEAN principles, diagnostics, and international award criteria and processes. A total of 15 events were organised during the

year, in Ireland and abroad, to help develop peer to peer learning and sharing. Six visits for Irish managers were organised to the Toyota Lean Management Centre in Wales, while visits to European best practice examples took place in Austria, Germany, France and Poland, working with the EU Japan Centre for Industrial Co-Operation and Enterprise Ireland's Paris office. Three visits were organised in Ireland to a horticultural company, a medical devices company and a food company – Klassmann-Deilman, Zimmer and Dawn Farms Foods and in Europe to Danfoss, Bosch and Kostwein in conjunction with the EU Japan Centre for Industrial Co-Operation. The visits all helped the participating client companies understand the levels of best practice that are possible and understand what is required to attain such levels of capability.

Action 57: Develop, and make readily available on relevant agency websites, a number of case study examples that demonstrate the business benefits (and imperative) for adopting Lean principles.

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

Update: Complete

Disseminating relevant information will play an important role in encouraging the adoption of lean principles. To this end, 10 case studies have been published on the Enterprise Ireland-Envirocentre website to date (<http://www.envirocentre.ie/index.html>). The cases span sectoral examples from Food, Plastics, Services, Manufacturing, Packaging and Engineering. The work continues to capture more cases and to publish them. These cases are in addition to those made available as part of the 'Becoming Lean' series of booklets.

Action 58: Deepen engagement at European levels through (for example) the European Benchmarking Forum, and with key Mittelstand companies through the Kostwein Circle, ensuring that Ireland remains to the forefront of international best practice, and raises the profile of Ireland's manufacturing operational excellence.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) aims to raise the profile of Ireland's manufacturing operational excellence and to ensure that Ireland remains to the forefront of international best practice in this area. To deepen Ireland's engagement at European levels, two meetings of the Kostwein World Circle took place in Germany and were facilitated by the manager of the Enterprise Ireland Competitiveness Department in 2014, where best practice was shared and studied. Additionally, the manager of the Enterprise Ireland Competitiveness Department facilitated two events for Lean Innovation and Lean Purchasing for key

Austrian, German and Italian Mittelstand companies as they worked to develop their capabilities in the Lean space. Enterprise Ireland is currently preparing for the 5th Lean conference to take place in Dublin Castle on 22 May 2015, in conjunction with the EU Japan Centre for Industrial Co-Operation, showcasing both Irish and International case examples of companies using Lean to drive their sustainability and competitiveness.

Enterprise Ireland Competitiveness Department has developed an Innovation Benchmarking tool that seeks to benchmark companies against international best practice norms. This tool is being shared with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) of organisations as part of their ongoing efforts to capture real facts in terms of innovation capability across Europe. The tool is also being made available to the members of the European Benchmarking Forum. This activity is potentially forming the basis for a new thrust in European Benchmarking and data sharing.

Action 60: Stimulate increased engagement and reduce barriers to engagement by SMEs in collaborating in State funded Technology Centres and other research and related Higher Education Institution expertise.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, Technology Centres, cTTO)

Update: Complete

To stimulate increased engagement and reduce any barriers to engagement, Enterprise Ireland (EI) undertook a number of awareness-building activities during 2014. EI, in close-cooperation with IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland co-ordinated the first national Innovation Showcase on 2 December 2014 in the National Convention Centre. The aim of the event was to give companies in Ireland an introduction to the majority of State supports to increase the level of collaboration between industry and State-supported entities. Over 2,000 people from industry and the venture capital community registered with a final attendance of 1,790. EI also held sectoral meetings with clusters of SME clients to determine their research needs and facilitated how best to address them i.e. Precision Engineering cluster and the Manufacturing cluster.

To ensure continuing engagement in this area, Enterprise Ireland sectoral staff now sit on the Boards of the Technology Centres which will better inform SME clients on how the market driven research programme can assist them. Enterprise Ireland also established, in June 2014, an integrated team of business and research competent staff which met with 66 client companies to create deeper awareness and discussed how the SMEs can tap innovation expertise from State-funded Technology Centres and Higher Education Institutions.

Action 61: Introduce a targeted call for Innovation Vouchers for the manufacturing sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Innovation Voucher initiative was developed to build links between Ireland's public knowledge providers (i.e. higher education institutes, public research bodies) and small businesses. Innovation Vouchers worth €5,000 are available to assist a company or companies to explore a business opportunity or problem with a registered knowledge provider. A targeted call for Innovation Vouchers for the manufacturing sector was promoted to all the knowledge providers and advertised in December 2014. Voucher applications will be processed following a competitive call in January 2015 with vouchers being issued thereafter.

Action 64: Based on the recent and projected growth in bioprocess manufacturing and the potential to win future FDI from this sector, assess the business case for prioritising public (including EU) and/or private funding to the funding of research centres in this area and identify possible operational /funding models. Further examine the business case for State-funded bioprocessing training, including the net benefit to the skills base in Ireland, and the optimum arrangements for provision of such training. Ensure full leverage of prior infrastructural investment in NIBRT, an existing large scale quasi-industrial facility offering training and pilot-scale bioprocess research capability.

Q4 Measure: Evaluate the current use of the prior NIBRT infrastructure investment with a view to ensuring that optional plans are put in place in the delivery of training and pilot scale bioprocessing research at this large scale quasi-industrial facility. (IDA)

Update: Complete

Excellent progress was made by NIBRT in the last year in further developing its training offering and winning significant R&D support from competitive grants from SFI, EI, EU and industry. This was noted by the IDA Board at its meeting in December 2014. The Board also noted the significant impact that NIBRT has made in enhancing Ireland's value proposition for FDI in biopharma manufacturing, most notably in supporting IDA in winning recent investments from BMS, Regeneron and Alexion.

In December 2014, the IDA Board approved €7.5m in core R&D funding for NIBRT to expand R&D activity through recruitment of additional Principal Investigators over the coming years and to implement the NIBRT Board approved business plan and research strategy.

3. Progressing the Disruptive Reforms from Action Plan for Jobs 2013

Disruptive Reform 3.1: Big Data and Data Analytics

Background

The Irish Government identified Big Data and Data Analytics as one of its Disruptive Reforms in the Action Plan (APJ) for Jobs 2013, with an overall ambition to “build on existing enterprise strengths to make Ireland a leading country in Europe in the area of Big Data and Data Analytics”. The aim of the disruptive reform is to exploit the employment potential of ‘Big Data’ in Ireland by putting in place a partnership between the public and private sectors that will strengthen all aspects of the ecosystem for this opportunity area. During 2013 and 2014 a number of significant initiatives and investments have been progressed, in partnership with the enterprise sector in the area of Big Data and Data Analytics, including:

- The establishment of a Taskforce on ‘Big Data’;
- The completion of a mapping of infrastructure and initiatives supporting ‘Big Data’ in Ireland;
- The identification and subsequent establishment of pilot projects to demonstrate the impact of ‘Big Data’;
- The launch of Insight, the SFI-supported research centre for data analytics;
- The launch by Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland of the CeADAR Technology Centre in data analytics;
- Publication by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and Forfás of a study of skills demand in ‘Big Data’.

Summary of Actions in 2014

1. The Insight Research Centre and the CeADAR Technology Centre have been scaled up including recruiting new staff and increasing the number of industry partners. There was a successful participation in the Horizon 2020 2014 call on Big Data: 3 out of 10 projects funded were coordinated by Irish partners.
2. Launch of an Open Data initiative in the context of Ireland’s membership of the Open Government Partnership (Ireland became a member in July 2014). As part of this initiative, an Open Data portal was launched (www.data.gov.ie) allowing access to over 400 datasets by November 2014. More broadly, the initiative will further strengthen the mechanism for data sharing and the use of data analytics across Government by enacting the required legislation, setting up a platform to facilitate data analytics within Government and taking steps to further strengthen Ireland’s national data infrastructure.

3. With a view to determining Ireland's status within Big Data and Data Analytics in Europe and identifying areas that need to be addressed, Action 73 of the APJ 2014 specifically called for an exercise that "assesses Ireland's progress in developing a leadership position in Europe in this area and sets out further requirements to build/maintain this position". This study has identified the specific policy issues arising from opportunities identified for Ireland with regards to reaping societal and economic benefits through unlocking the potential of 'Big Data' in the public and private sector and has set out detailed next steps to help in addressing those issues.

Next Steps

The specific objectives in 2015 are to:

1. Identify and focus on Ireland's competitive advantages and develop a specific Big Data agenda clarifying its leadership goals; specific KPIs will be set in the context of this agenda;
2. Building on our research strengths, consolidate Ireland's leadership position in Big Data/Data Analytics within Horizon 2020 and continue to promote engagement by enterprise in Ireland;
3. Continue to implement the recommendations of the EGFSN's report "Assessing the demand for Big Data and Analytics Skills";
4. Develop a coherent eco-system to bridge the gap between R&D and innovation and take-up; and
5. Develop an internationally competitive Data infrastructure and establish an inter-departmental committee on data protection issues and related structures.

Action 65: Support the further scaling-up of the INSIGHT Research Centre in 2014. INSIGHT will sign collaborative research agreements with over 30 companies, secure at least €6 million investment from non-Exchequer sources and employ over 300 people by end-2014.

Q4 Measure: INSIGHT to sign collaborative research agreements with over 30 companies, a combination of Multinationals and SMEs in the ICT and Health sectors. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The INSIGHT Research Centre has signed industry contracts with 34 companies representing a total commitment of €2.4 million in-cash and €3 million in-kind. Agreements have been fully executed with companies such as RTE, SportSurgery, TE Labs, IRFU, Fujitsu, Adoreboard, Nitrosell, Adidas, CISCO and Microsoft amongst others.

Q4 Measure: INSIGHT to secure €6m in research funding from non-exchequer sources, primarily, Horizon 2020, before the end of 2014. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The INSIGHT Research Centre has secured €10 million in non-exchequer non-commercial funding. These awards were primarily secured from the European programmes FP7 and Horizon 2020. In addition, INSIGHT has secured over €2 million in-cash commitment from industry partners.

Q4 Measure: INSIGHT to employ over 300 people before the end of 2014. (SFI)

Update: Complete

With its SFI funding, the INSIGHT Research Centre has created 161 posts to date. In addition to these positions, INSIGHT has supported/leveraged a further 216 positions to date through non-SFI funded activities e.g. EU and Enterprise Ireland (EI) funding awards.

Action 71: Further strengthen the mechanisms for data sharing and the use of data analytics across Government by enacting the required legislation, setting up a platform to facilitate data analytics within Government and taking steps to strengthen further Ireland's National Data Infrastructure.

Q4 Measure: Progress the introduction of a National Postcode System in 2014, with a view to rolling out the system in the first half of 2015. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

The implementation plans for encoding 15 Public Service Databases with eircodes is on target; the dissemination of postcodes to households and business premises, and the communication and awareness campaign have all been scoped. It is planned to launch the system in the second half of 2015.

Action 73: Assess Ireland's progress in developing a leadership position in Europe in this area and set out further requirements to build/maintain this position.

Q4 Measure: Consider recommendations arising from the review as input to the preparation of 2015 Action Plan for Jobs. (DJEI/Forfás, Taskforce on Big Data and Data Analytics)

Update: Complete

In June 2014, a study was initiated to assess Ireland's progress in developing a leadership position in Europe in the area of Big Data. The study utilised a range of methodologies, including stakeholder interviews, desk research and stakeholder workshops. The output of this study was a gap analysis of Irish policies with regard to Big Data and a set of recommendations with an associated action plan detailing the short, medium and long term

actions required to maintain and build further Ireland's position in the Big Data area.

The report was approved by the Task Force on Big Data on 8 January 2015, and several of the Big Data actions in APJ 2015 are underpinned by the research and recommendations developed within this study. These APJ 2015 actions focus on renewing the commitment and scope of the Big Data Task Force, development and monitoring of key performance indicators by the Task Force and overseeing and supporting the implementation of the actions arising from the Big Data policy study.

Disruptive Reform 3.2: ICT Skills

Background

Building on Ireland's existing strengths in the area of ICT, this Disruptive Reform aims to build Ireland's ICT skills capability to the point that it is a unique selling point and makes Ireland a location of choice for mobile ICT investment and entrepreneurs to set up and grow ICT businesses.

The joint Government-Industry ICT Skills Action Plan 2014 - 2018 was launched in March 2014 by the Ministers for Education and Skills, and Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The Plan sets out a collaborative, system-wide response, across Departments, agencies and the education and enterprise sectors aimed at:

1. Building the domestic supply of graduates from the education system and
2. Ensuring Ireland maintains a strong ICT talent pool and promoting Ireland internationally as a centre for high-level ICT skills.

In 2012 the original Joint Government-Industry ICT Action Plan: Meeting the High Level ICT Skills Needs of Enterprise in Ireland was published. The Plan set out a range of measures aimed at building the supply of ICT skills in short term through re-skilling programmes, while in tandem building the longer term supply of high quality ICT graduates from the education system. Significant progress has been made including:

- 50% increase in graduate output in ICT graduate numbers between 2008 and 2013;
- 58% increase in the number of students presenting for higher level maths;
- An increase in 1st preference applications to ICT third level courses, from 17.7% in 2011 to 21.8% in 2014;
- Over 2,000 graduates from ICT re-skilling and skills conversion courses at NFQ Level 8 and 9.

Summary of Actions in 2014

A new Joint Government-Industry ICT Action Plan 2014 – 2018 was launched in 2014. The focus of the new Plan is to build the supply of graduates and skilled professionals with core ICT and electronic/electrical engineering qualifications at levels 8, 9 and 10 through the following actions.

1. Increase output of high-level graduates:

- 1,250 additional ICT undergraduate places in HEIs
- ICT up-skilling and conversion programmes

2. Enhance ICT capacity and awareness in the education system

- Increased retention rates in HEIs (from 80% to 83%)
- Curricular reform (Project Maths, JCSA, literacy and numeracy, senior cycle science, primary maths, digital strategy for schools)
- Links with industry – e.g. adopt a school

3. Ensure Ireland maintains a strong ICT talent pool and promote Ireland as a centre for high level ICT skills

- More efficient employment permit system
- Online portal to attract international talent
- Careers fairs overseas

Key actions and activities already completed in 2014 include:

- 670 additional incentivised ICT undergraduate places were provided. A new call will issue early 2015 in order to reach the target of 1,250 additional places for 2015.
- A marketing campaign funded by the Department of Education and Skills and the HEA – ictworks.ie – is highlighting over 200 ICT courses available around the country and career opportunities in the ICT sector.
- 905 full-time ICT skills conversion courses and 1,250 Level 8 and 9 part-time Springboard ICT courses were provided. A new call for Springboard/ICT skills conversion course proposals will issue end-January 2015.
- Skillnets conversion programmes delivered training for around 240 participants and 10,600 training days.

- A range of initiatives are underway in higher education institutions to enhance retention in ICT programmes and the National Forum for Teaching and Learning are currently working on a study on retention rates, the study will be available before end of 2015.
- The higher education system performance framework has been implemented and serves, among other things, as an important mechanism for the HEA to support and drive best practice in industry engagement and collaboration, and to ensure the quality of graduates from the Irish system as a whole.
- A range of actions are underway in the education and training system including: junior cycle reform, revision of the applied maths curriculum and development of the digital strategy for schools.
- The Employment Permits Act 2014 was enacted and commenced and significant reforms and enhancements have been introduced to the employment permit system including ePayments and trusted partner arrangements.

Next Steps

The ICT Action Plan 2014-2018 will continue to be rolled out in 2015 including an initiative to attract ICT talent to Ireland, including through a new information portal. Further detail will be set out in Action Plan for Jobs 2015.

Disruptive Reform 3.3: Integrated Licensing Application Service

Background

The introduction of an Integrated Licensing Application Service was a Disruptive Reform in the Action Plan for Jobs 2013 and is a reformative step in reducing the administrative burden and red tape for business. A Forfás report in 2012 “A Review and Audit of Licences across key sectors of the Economy” found that many businesses had to apply for a multiplicity of licences across a number of licensing authorities imposing a significant time burden on businesses.

The new Integrated Licensing Application Service should provide significant savings for businesses and entrepreneurs across Ireland through the simplification of the process for applying for multiple licences through a one-stop portal offering real potential to ease the process of starting up a business in Ireland. It will also contribute to maintaining Ireland’s position at the forefront of delivering advanced eGovernment services and using Information Technology to reduce costs for business and improve the delivery of services to business. The Integrated Service should also provide productivity and efficiency gains in the public sector by streamlining the administration of licensing processes and the potential for

more integrated inspection and compliance systems in the future and better application of risk-based enforcement.

This work is being led by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) in partnership with the relevant government departments and licensing authorities, the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and the City and County Managers Association (CCMA).

The introduction of this Integrated Licensing Application Service for the retail sector in the first instance had an initial delivery date of Q4 2013 which has been delayed primarily due to the public procurement process embarked upon.

Activities in 2013 included:

- **Establishment of the Steering Group**

A Steering Group with membership from the key licensing authorities with a remit for retail licensing was established in 2013 to oversee the process. The Steering Group considered options for delivering this service either through an extension of an existing platform within the State sector or an outsourced provision of the solution. In the absence of additional exchequer funding, the Steering Group agreed to progress the option of an outsourced provision, through a finance-design-build-operate model.

- **Preparation of the Request for Tender**

Throughout 2013 Forfás and DJEI worked with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), the Chief State Solicitor's Office (CSSO) and the Attorney General's office to prepare the Request for Tender and develop a detailed functional specification, in consultation with representatives from some key licensing authorities, that reflects the requirements including managing licence application forms, registration of licensees, managing licence applications and renewals, remittance of licence fees, transmission and security of data, training, customer support and marketing of an integrated licensing application service. Additional background work in terms of reviewing the licensing processes and the underpinning legislation for the 29 core licences across 371 licensing authorities that are being considered in the first phase of this project was undertaken and forms part of the Request for Tender documentation.

Summary of Actions in 2014

- **Signing of a Statutory Instrument**

A Statutory Instrument (S.I. No. 83 of 2014) was signed in February 2014 to extend the powers of the LGMA so that they could act as the Contracting Authority for this Service on behalf of the Minister of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

¹ This includes the 31 local authorities

▪ **Issuing of the Request for Tender in the EU Official Journal**

A Request for Tender for a Single Supplier Framework Agreement for the provision of an Integrated Licensing Application Service, signed-off by the Chief State Solicitor's Office, was issued through etenders and in the EU Official Journal on 21st February 2014 with a closing date of 17th April 2014. The link on etenders is as follows:

https://irl.eu-supply.com/app/rfq/publicpurchase_frameset.asp?PID=74022&B=&PS=1&PP=ctm/Supplier/PublicTenders

▪ **Framework Clients**

A letter was issued (on 7 March 2014) from the Secretary General of DJEI to Secretaries Generals of other government departments requesting assistance in identifying all the licensing authorities under their auspices so that they can be included and named as Framework Clients in the services contract between the Contracting Authority and the appointed Service Provider. While there is no obligation at this stage for public sector licensing authorities to use this Framework, if however they wish to do so over the seven year duration of this framework agreement public sector licensing authorities need to be specifically named in the services contract for this Framework Agreement from the outset.

▪ **The Evaluation Panel**

The Evaluation Panel, chaired by the LGMA, was established with membership from DJEI, Forfás, DPER, the Revenue Commissioners and Fingal County Council to evaluate the tenders received. The Evaluation Panel agreed to award the tender and award the contract with these recommendations being approved by the Board of the LGMA.

An award notice was published in the EU Official Journal with the contract being awarded to An Post with Escher as technology partners to a value of €3,000,000 over a 7 year framework agreement. It is not mandatory for the Licensing Authorities to use this Service and therefore discussions with licensing authorities will be required to ensure sufficient uptake. The Steering Group, chaired by Minister Nash, was convened in October 2014 to begin this consultation phase.

▪ **Contract Conclusions**

Contract conclusions commenced in October 2014 and it is expected that these conclusions will be complete early in 2015 and a contract signed by the LGMA.

Next Steps

Once the contract is signed, the appointed Service Provider will contact each licensing authority on a bilateral basis to encourage uptake of the service.

Disruptive Reform 3.4: Trading Online

Background

Three actions relating to the new Trading Online Voucher Jobs initiative were undertaken in 2014. These integrated actions will result in Irish business gaining competitiveness and growing jobs by having access to new markets and a wider customer offer. The total net jobs gain envisaged under this initiative will be 3,200².

Irish-based small businesses have for some time been exposed to various opportunities to go on-line and ultimately trade. Certain industry areas such as: travel, accommodation, electronic goods and services have been transformed by digital. To compete in these markets, a small business requires high levels of adoption of the internet. However in other sectors this level of adoption is absent. Notwithstanding the wide availability of supports, only circa 23% of Irish SMEs are trading on-line.

This initiative introduces a new financial incentive to encourage small business owners and managers to invest in transforming their business to incorporate an appropriate on-line trading component. The incentive applies at the point of investment for the business. It takes the form of an Online Trading Voucher/Grant of €2,500 maximum in value which must be matched by the business applicant.

The initiative was developed by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) as part of the National Digital Strategy (NDS), published by Government in July 2013. Funding for a full scale rollout of this initiative became available in April 2014. The establishment of the network of LEOs in June 2014 allowed the initiative to be launched in July 2014. In a short period of time this new initiative has built substantial momentum and the secured funding for 2015 means that the programme can continue uninterrupted into the New Year. In 2013, a series of pilots were developed by DCENR in collaboration with the former City and County Enterprise Boards, and subsequently with the Local Enterprise Offices. These pilots determined:

- A robust and efficient application process which provided a basis for applicant selection while not adding substantial administrative burden to the applicant business;
- Refined eligibility criteria and reporting requirements;
- Developed an evaluation approach based on the outcomes with priority weighting given to businesses who aim to extend their customer base, start exporting and grow employment;
- The extent of the company mentoring supports required pre application.

² Based on analysis done by McKinsey that for every job the internet displaces it creates 2.6 jobs. This is an estimate based on international experience and cannot be construed as the definitive outcome of the proposed integrated actions

Summary of Actions in 2014

In addition to progressing the pilots in 2014, other actions included:

- In preparation for the full scale rollout, a national training event was held for all 31 LEOs. The training took place in Dublin in June 2014. All LEO offices were represented. An extensive range of experts were available to discuss all aspect of trading online. The sessions were evaluated by participants to have been very useful.
- The first national call for proposals was made in Q2 2014.
- Application procedures and forms are available on the LEO websites.
- The initial allocation of vouchers was done based on the distribution of small businesses across Ireland. A minimum number of vouchers for a given area were set at 20.
- Applicants apply directly to their LEO and all applications are evaluated by them in a competitive process.
- All LEOs have issued vouchers under the scheme in 2014.
- Over 550 vouchers have issued under the Trading Online Voucher Scheme by Q4 2014.
- 53 pre application training and information sessions took place across the country.
- Trading Online Vouchers are attracting small businesses from across a wide range of sectors including: retail, manufacturing, food, and professional services.

Next Steps

- Funding to continue the programme into 2015 has been secured. Application programmes in all 31 LEOs will continue to roll-out through 2015 with the aim of reaching the initial target of 2,000 vouchers by the end of 2015 despite the shortfall in 2014.
- A limited voucher reallocation process will commence in 2015, to make sure that vouchers are available where demand is highest.
- An evaluation of the business outcomes for the early adopter companies will be undertaken in January/ February 2015.

Disruptive Reform 3.5: Energy Efficiency

Background

Five of the actions in the 2014 Action Plan for Jobs relate to disruptive reforms in the area of energy efficiency. Improving energy efficiency lowers energy bills, displaces expenditure on imported fossil fuels with increased domestic employment and lowers Ireland's CO₂ emissions.

A new report from the International Energy Agency (IEA) provides empirical evidence for this statement, identifying benefits to macroeconomic development, public budgets, health and well-being, industrial productivity and energy delivery from energy efficiency. The IEA report suggests that when the value of these multiple benefits is calculated alongside the traditional benefits of energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions reductions, investments in energy efficiency measures have delivered returns as high as four US dollars for every one US dollar invested³.

The initiatives highlighted in 2014 Action Plan for Jobs are intended to build on the progress made to date on energy efficiency and to make it easier for businesses, the public sector, community organisations and individuals to pursue energy efficiency opportunities. The National Energy Services Framework and Exemplar projects will provide “best practice” models for organisations to follow, while financial support will be offered through the Better Energy Programmes and the Energy Efficiency Fund. The Public Sector will lead the way by achieving an ambitious 33% energy savings target by 2020.

Summary of Actions in 2014

- €57m of direct funding was provided for energy efficiency programmes in 2014. This funding supported 47 projects under the Better Energy Areas programme and a further 80 projects under the Better Energy Communities programme. As well as supporting efficiency projects in businesses and community and local facilities, these programmes retrofitted approximately 3,000 homes, the majority of them in energy poverty. A further 18,500 homes were upgraded with grant assistance under the Better Energy Homes and Better Energy Warmer Homes programme.
- The Energy Efficiency Fund was launched in March 2014. Already, two major projects have received investment from the fund and more projects are in progress. The first project supported by the fund involved an investment of €2 million to replace existing lighting across 7 Tesco stores with high-efficiency LEDs. The project is expected to result in the creation of 16 new jobs and deliver average annual energy savings of over €540,000.
- The Tesco project referenced above is also the first Exemplar project to reach financial close. Another Exemplar project (Four Seasons Hotel) commenced in 2014 and fifteen more projects are making progress and are being actively supported with technical

³ The International Energy Agency, “Capturing the Multiple Benefits of Energy Efficiency”, 2014

assistance from SEAI. While progress with the Exemplars has been slower than anticipated in 2014, momentum is gathering on further potential projects that will go through the rigour of the National Energy Services Framework in 2015.

- The National Energy Services Framework is kept under ongoing review by the NESF project group and any required updates to the guidance documents are completed as appropriate.
- The report on public sector energy usage is being finalised at the moment. It will be brought to Government for approval in early January alongside a new public sector action plan on energy efficiency and an associated circular on energy efficiency for public bodies. A full press launch of all three documents is anticipated to take place in January 2015.

Next Steps

- €39 million in capital funding has been secured for the continuation of the Better Energy Programmes in 2015. Activity under this programme in 2015 is estimated to lead to a reduction of 115 kT of CO₂ emissions and will support an estimated 2,900 jobs in the economy.
- The Energy Efficiency Fund will build on the progress made in 2014 following its establishment and continue to support and fund commercial energy efficiency projects.
- The remaining fifteen Exemplar projects will be progressed through the National Energy Services Framework and will continue to receive technical assistance from SEAI with a view towards getting them operational in 2015.
- The report on energy usage in the Public Sector will be published in early 2015 and will be accompanied by a new Public Sector Action Plan and a circular on Energy Efficiency in the Public Sector.

Action 80: Publish report on public sector energy usage.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI)

Update: Delayed

The Public Service Energy Efficiency Action Plan is in the process of being finalised with a view to submission to Government and publication in Q1 2015.

Action 83: Review the National Energy Services Framework and update as required.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

The National Energy Services Framework (NESF) and Exemplar projects provide “best practice” models for organisations to follow to achieve energy efficiency savings. The Framework is kept under ongoing review by the NESF project group and any required updates to the guidance documents are completed as appropriate.

Disruptive Reform 3.6: National Health Innovation Hub

Background

The overall ambition of this Disruptive Reform is to establish a world renowned Health Innovation Hub to drive collaboration between the health system and commercial enterprises leading to the development and commercialisation of new healthcare technologies, products, and services, emerging from within the health system and/or enterprise.

In order to drive this initiative, a National Project Team was established which consists of a multidisciplinary team spanning the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) and the Department of Health (D/Health) as well as executives from the Health Services Executive (HSE), Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland. The National Project Team is chaired by Mr Dave Shanahan (formerly Head of Global Life Sciences, IDA Ireland and recently Head of Strategic Health initiatives at Abbvie).

As a precursor to the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub (NHIH), a Demonstrator (pilot) project was established, based in University College Cork, to test on a small scale and at a regional level how a national Hub would work effectively.

Summary of Actions in 2014

1. Assess and select participants for the next round of projects for the Cork Demonstrator based on call for proposals
 - The Cork Demonstrator launched a call for proposals which included an 'Open Call' for applications from companies whose innovative projects and ideas have the potential to significantly address any area of the broad spectrum of healthcare sector needs, and a 'Focussed Call' in Infection Control and Hygiene Management.
 - In February 2014, a panel which comprised some members of the Health Innovation Hub National Project Team and the Cork Steering Committee along with subject matter experts from the HSE carried out an evaluation of the proposals received. 13 projects involving 16 companies (4 companies are collaborating on 1 project) were selected for participation.

2. Manage external evaluation of the Cork Demonstrator Project.
 - Enterprise Ireland managed the external evaluation of the Healthcare Innovation Hub's Cork Demonstrator Project. An evaluation report was presented to Enterprise Ireland by the external evaluators in May and this report was submitted to the Healthcare Innovation Hub's National Project Team and to the Government as part of the wider proposal around the establishment of a National Healthcare Innovation Hub.
3. Report to the Cabinet Committee on Health on progress of the Demonstrator Project and on National Project Team deliberations with regard to the National Health Innovation Hub.
 - For procedural reasons, this Action was taken forward through the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs. The Chair of the National Project Team, Mr. Dave Shanahan, made a presentation to CCERJ in June setting out progress made through the Cork Demonstrator Project and how the learnings from the pilot have informed the development of the proposals for a National Health Innovation Hub.
4. Agree optimum arrangements for the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub based on the learnings from the Cork Demonstrator Project and its evaluation.
 - The National Project Team agreed the optimum arrangements for the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub. These arrangements were arrived at by taking into consideration the experience to date of the Demonstrator Project in Cork, and the outcome of an independent evaluation of the Demonstrator Project carried out by consultants during the first half of 2014. The consultants arrived at the conclusion that the Health Innovation Hub has potential to be a vital component of national innovation infrastructure and its value has been recognised by the relevant stakeholders in the healthcare sector.
 - The National Project Team's recommendations were included in proposals for Government consideration outlining next steps for the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub.
5. Prepare proposals for Government consideration outlining next steps required for the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub.
 - On the basis of the optimum arrangements which were agreed by the National Project Team, proposals were prepared for Government consideration outlining next steps for the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub.
 - In July, Government agreed to the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub that would be tasked with proactively developing, managing, and progressing relationships and connections with industry and the health system.

Next Steps

Next steps involve the development and launch of a competitive call for hosting the National Health Innovation Hub by a Joint Agency Project Team comprising representatives from DJEI, DoH, EI, IDA, SFI, HRB and the HSE. The call will be managed by EI. Actions required to deliver the National Health Innovation Hub will be outlined in Action Plan for Jobs 2015.

4. Competitiveness

4.1 Institutionalising the Drive for Competitiveness

Action 90: Government will, on a quarterly basis, consider a report on competitiveness prepared via the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, Cabinet Committee, Government)

Update: Complete

In November, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs (CCERJ) considered the National Competitiveness Council's (NCC) Competitiveness Challenge 2014 report, in which the priorities for Ireland's competitiveness are outlined; the report made recommendations in relation to six major themes:

- Addressing cost competitiveness;
- Broadening the tax base and investing in economic infrastructure;
- Enhancing our skills base;
- Developing our enterprise base;
- Improving access to finance; and
- Rebuilding the trust of citizens in the ability and willingness of public and private bodies in Ireland to adhere to the highest international standards.

The report was noted by Government prior to its publication on 3 December 2014.

Action 92: Prioritise the competitiveness challenges facing the business sector in Ireland over the medium term, and identify potential policy options as to how these priority policy challenges can be addressed.

Q4 Measure: Submit a Competitiveness Challenge 2014 to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and subsequently publish the final report. (NCC)

Update: Complete

The report was submitted to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and was subsequently noted by the Government prior to its publication on 3 December 2014. The report made recommendations in relation to six major themes:

- Addressing cost competitiveness;
- Broadening the tax base and investing in economic infrastructure;
- Enhancing our skills base;
- Developing our enterprise base;
- Improving access to finance; and
- Rebuilding the trust of citizens in the ability and willingness of public and private bodies in Ireland to adhere to the highest international standards.

4.2 Improving Cost Competitiveness

Action 93: Identify any sheltered areas of the economy where competition is restricted and undertake analyses or studies in such areas where appropriate.

Q4 Measure: Commence analysis or study of top priority area. (Competition Authority)

Update: Complete

Following a market analysis and shortlisting exercise, a number of potential areas were identified for detailed scoping. The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation subsequently approved that a study would be undertaken on the issue of promoting competitive neutrality. Preliminary analysis has commenced on this project.

Action 97: Establish a data collection facility sufficient to facilitate analysis of the effectiveness of the waste management policy and/or competition in the waste sector.

Q4 Measure: Competition Authority to work with DECLG and other relevant agencies to determine full set of data required to facilitate comprehensive analysis of waste collection markets. (Competition Authority, DECLG and/or other relevant agencies)

Update: Complete

Following completion of an assessment of data currently available in relation to waste collection, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission has been engaging with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and has set out the data considered necessary to undertake a meaningful study/analysis of competition in the household waste collection sector. In that context, the Commission met with DECLG and relevant agencies in December 2014. The Commission is currently assessing the outcome of this meeting including the nature and quality of the data currently available.

Q4 Measure: Establish data collection facility or facilities accessible on a cross-agency basis. (Competition Authority, DECLG and/or other relevant agency)

Update: Delayed

As this measure is dependent on the outcome of the assessment referred to in the other Q4 measure for this action, any progress or decision on the establishment of any further data collection facility or facilities will not occur until Q1/Q2 2015.

Action 98: Enact the Legal Services Bill to deliver a more efficient, transparent and competitive legal services in Ireland and reduce costs for the enterprise sector.

Q4 Measure: Establish the Legal Services Regulator. (D/Justice and Equality)

Update: Delayed

The Dáil Report Stage is to resume on 24 February 2015, with the intention to complete the Legal Services Bill so that the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority can come into operation in the first half of 2015; the new target, therefore, is end Q2 2015.

4.3 Infrastructure Investment to Underpin Employment Growth

Action 99: Conclude national mapping exercise which will determine where the State intervention is required. Progress State Aids application in respect of proposed intervention and the requisite procurement.

Q4 Measure: Progress all pre-requisite work in advance of launching an appropriate procurement process. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

A High-Speed Broadband Map was published for public consultation at the end of

November, showing those parts of the country that will require State investment to ensure the provision of Next Generation Access Broadband. Following agreement with Government to a more ambitious intervention than originally envisaged, a revised timetable for implementation has also been agreed. The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) hopes to submit to Government a fully-costed Intervention Strategy by July 2015, and, after a short public consultation, move into the formal procurement phase in autumn 2015.

Action 102: Conclude final phase of 100Mbps schools broadband programme

Q4 Measure: Launch “switch-on workshops” (DCENR)

Update: Complete

Pilot workshops involving principals and teachers from 33 schools in 12 counties with a combined enrolment of 14,500 students were organised by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR). They were delivered by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in partnership with DCENR at education centres in Donegal, Mayo and Monaghan in May 2014.

Action 105: Prioritise the delivery of a single national IT-based road management and utility licencing system

Q4 Measure: Map Road Roadworks and Licencing system phased development and rollout to all Local Authorities. (DTTAS, LGMA, Local Authorities)

Update: Complete

Completed for all Local Authorities with the exception of five large urban local authorities (Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Dunlaoghaire-Rathdown County Council, Cork City Council and Cork County Council) which require additional functionality. The recently established Road Management Office is progressing matters with these local authorities regarding integration into the national system. The five local authorities in question already have IT-based utility licensing systems in place and additional functionality is required to facilitate their integration with the national system. Work is proceeding apace in that regard and by end-2014 all five local authorities have had access to the national system.

Q4 Measure: Road Management (Pavement Management) current phase 3 and 4 development and rollout. (DTTAS, LGMA, Local Authorities)

Update: Complete

The following items were delivered:

- MapRoad PMS delivered as a centralised system to local authorities;
- A Speed Limits APP for recording speed limit signs released;
- A new APP for recording surface material of road network;
- A new APP for updating completed Works available;
- Enhanced reporting features included; and
- Improvements to reporting and editing tools based on local authority feedback and requests.

Action 106: Develop a National Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy

Q4 Measure: First draft with a view to a final draft Q1 2015. (DTTAS)

Update: Delayed

The stakeholder consultation, completed in Q4 2014, took longer than anticipated, and the first draft of the strategy is now rescheduled for Q1 2015.

4.4 Reduced Costs through Smart Regulation

Action 107: Implement Actions as outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation - published July 2013

Q4 Measure: Following outcome of EU discussions on the proposed Single Telecommunications Market, initiate Communications Policy/Regulatory Mandate Review. (DCENR)

Update: Delayed

The Irish review is delayed as the EU Commission's STM proposals have not advanced in any meaningful way at EU Council level. The Hellenic Presidency commenced a formal first reading of the draft Regulation in March of 2014. Progress was very slow and the Italian Presidency submitted a revised text which focuses on only a small number of the issues covered in the original Commission text viz. Roaming, Net Neutrality and spectrum. A Progress Report was submitted at November's Telcoms Council.

Action 108: Implement Sectoral Regulation across modes of transport – Rail, Bus and Small Public Service Vehicles

Q4 Measure: Introduce a requirement for mandate and objectives review by the bodies concerned with regulation of rail, bus and SPSV services – Draft Heads of a Bill approved by Government. (DTTAS, RSC (as Rail Market Regulator), NTA)

Update: Delayed

Draft Heads of a Bill have yet to be approved by Government. The legislative arrangements will be pursued in 2015.

Action 109: Review the regulatory framework for airport charges

Q4 Measure: Engage consultants to undertake the review. (DTTAS)

Update: Delayed

Procurement process delayed due to issues arising from latest regulatory determination and request for an appeal of the determination. Engagement of consultants is now envisaged for Q1 2015.

Action 110: Rationalise existing services by establishing a single organisation (Workplace Relations Commission) to deal with first instance complaints and disputes and a single appeals body (the Labour Court)

Q4 Measure: Enactment of Workplace Relations Bill. (DJEI)

Update: Delayed

The Workplace Relations Bill was published on 30 July, 2014. The Bill has completed Second Stage and Committee Stage in the Dáil in 2014. Report and Final Stages in the Dáil are scheduled to resume on 21 January, 2015. The Minister aims to have the Bill enacted during Q1 2015 with a view to having the new workplace relations structures in place shortly thereafter.

Action 112: Enhance user experience and reduce compliance costs by technology enhancements and maximising e-business opportunities in the delivery of workplace relations services.

Q4 Measure: Deploy Customer Relationship Management Solution. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The contract for Phase I of Customer Relationship Management Solution (CRMS), which involves the design and delivery of a business application to meet Complaints and Adjudication Management requirements, was awarded in June 2014. The system design has been completed and testing is underway. The Complaints and Adjudication Solution will be ready for go-live for the Establishment Day for the Workplace Relations Commission.

Q4 Measure: Provide e-business and online facilities on establishment of the Workplace Relations Commission and enhanced Labour Court. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

A single online Workplace Relations Complaint Form was launched on 1 January 2012 while an associated e-complaint facility was made available in September 2013. Some 75% of all complaints are now made using the e-complaint facility. The design of a further release of the e-form has been completed and will be ready for go-live for the Establishment Day for the Workplace Relations Commission. A single Appeals Form and single Enforcement Form are under design at present and online releases of these will be ready for Establishment Day.

Action 113: Investigate the potential for introducing a unified employment permit and visa applications system

Q4 Measure: Final Report and recommendations. (DJEI, D/Justice and Equality)

Update: Complete

The Final Report recommends that, whilst there may be merit in considering the potential for a unified system in the future, the priority for Employment Permits Section should be the introduction, by mid-2016, of an end-to-end online application system for employment permits, rather than devoting scarce IT and Human resources to the potential for a unified system. The rationale for this recommendation is that the introduction of an online system will dramatically improve service to all permit customers and improve efficiencies across the system, not just those who are visa-required.

Given the limited resources available to both Departments, and given that existing projects will deliver enhanced customer service in the employment permits area, the Working Group recommends the introduction of a simple mechanism that envisages the visa officer starting to process the visa application at the same time as the applicant submits an application for an employment permit. The new Online Query Status (OQS) facility, being introduced by the Employment Permits Section in Q1 2015, and which enables anyone with access to the relevant data relating to an application to check its status online 24/7 without the need to contact the Section directly, can then be used by the Visa Officer to check the status of an application and issue the permit as soon as the OQS indicates that the permit has been

issued.

This simple but effective solution has the advantage of being capable of speedy implementation and of having an immediate positive impact on the applicant experience, as it could lead to a shortening of the total waiting time for permit and visa by approximately two weeks.

4.5 Supporting Competitive Regions

Action 119: Develop LEADER elements of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme to address Priority 6 of the Union priorities for rural development i.e. promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Q4 Measure: Hold information sessions for interested parties re qualifying criteria, mandatory elements, purpose, structure, content, selection process of LDS's. (DECLG)

Update: Delayed

Following discussions with the European Commission who have expressed some concerns regarding our proposed LDS selection process, this process will be delayed. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) are currently working together with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the European Commission to address these concerns with a view to finalising an agreed approach shortly. As a consequence the information sessions for interested parties will have to be delayed pending the outcome of further discussions with the European Commission and the finalisation of the LDS selection system. It is envisaged that these sessions will now take place in February 2015.

Q4 Measure: Develop detailed operating procedures to cover all aspects of programme delivery including - eligibility criteria, operating rules, sanctions for non-compliance, responsibilities etc. (DECLG)

Update: Delayed

Some initial work has begun on the development of the relevant documentation, however the finalisation of such documentation is significantly dependent on the finalisation of the LDS selection system and, as such, will not be complete in Q4. It is envisaged that the LDS selection process will be finalised in the early part of 2015 and more comprehensive work on the programme documentation will begin in Q1 2015.

4.6 Research and Innovation to Drive Job Creation

Action 126: Introduce a broader range of knowledge transfer key performance indicators for Ireland's HEI sector.

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

Update: Complete

In the period 2007 to 2012 the State provided funding through the Enterprise Ireland Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative (TTSI1) to build capacity and capability within the Irish technology transfer system. In its review of the impacts of this first round of State funding, published in May 2014, Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) found that investments made through this programme have been advantageous to business, resulting in a significant increase in the licensing of technologies and the creation of spin-out companies from State-funded research. By the end of the programme licensing and spinout formation had increased significantly. Complementing this study, data returned to KTI by Ireland's 26 Research Performing Organisations (universities, institutes of technology and State research organisations) and published in KTI's Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey (AKTS) 2013 showed that national performance in knowledge transfer is healthy.

KTI introduced a broader range of knowledge transfer key performance indicators for Ireland's HEI sector through the Annual Knowledge Transfer Survey (AKTS) which was published in October. Data covers a broader range of indicators than previously and also begins to look at outcomes not just activity measures e.g. sustainable spin-outs. KTI data is being used by the HEA as part of its annual performance monitoring.

Action 127: Issue first annual report on knowledge transfer in Ireland as a vehicle to promote research collaboration to industry.

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

Update: Complete

Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) is a partnership between Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the Irish Universities Association, accountable to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) and the Heads of the Irish universities. The first Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI) Annual Report, launched in October 2014, sets out the progress made in the nine months between formation in September 2013 and launch in May 2014. It promotes research collaboration to industry and highlights examples of Ireland's successes in knowledge transfer during this period. The Report, which was distributed to a broad range of stakeholders and is available on the KTI web portal, was well received. To further promote research collaboration to industry the annual report made reference to the new

KTI web portal which was developed and launched in 2014. The KTI web portal is a unique resource for business and others interested in what Ireland has to offer within its research base. This is the first time that industry has been provided with a comprehensive overview of the research capabilities and technologies available for licence from Irish Research Performing Organisations (RPOs). The website also contains the first in a series of KTI Practical Guides and Model Agreements. This is a suite of resources, with supporting guidance notes, providing a starting point for businesses that wish to collaborate with Irish RPOs.

Action 128: Approve support for 90 in-company R&D projects.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The application of research and innovation to business challenges is critical to the success of the Irish economy. Enterprise Ireland provides supports for both companies and researchers in Higher Education Institutes to develop new technologies and processes that will lead to job creation and increased exports. A full range of supports and programmes is available to assist companies with research and innovation activities including, supports for in-house R&D, sourcing new technologies and partnering with other companies. During 2014 Enterprise Ireland supported 97 R&D projects with approval amounts greater than €100,000.

Action 129: Support 825 collaborative research projects between industry and academia.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

During 2014, Enterprise Ireland (EI) supported 878 collaborative research projects between industry and academia. EI recognises that an important source of knowledge, expertise and competitive advantage available to companies can be found in the research departments of Institutes of Technology and Irish Universities. The EI research collaboration supports gives companies of all sizes and capabilities access to this vast source of innovative acumen. This acts as an important facet of knowledge transfer from the third level to industry and as a driver of innovation in companies that undertake collaborative research with higher education institutes. These supports cover the entire spectrum of companies' research collaboration needs and range from small initial supports via €5,000 Innovation Vouchers to larger Innovation Partnerships and supports to help companies engage in international research.

Action 131: Drive the establishment of 15 spin-out companies that are of Enterprise Ireland High Potential Start-up (HPSU) quality.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

A key part of the Government's plan for jobs and growth is ensuring that we create more products, services and ultimately jobs from Ireland's high quality scientific research system. The quality of our R&D plays a major part in the success of our multinational and indigenous companies. To this end Enterprise Ireland (EI) works in partnership with Technology Transfer Offices in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to translate research from the lab to the marketplace. Amongst the most relevant indicators of commercialisation performance in the system is the rate of spin-out company formation.

Significant progress had been made around the successful commercialisation of research from higher education institutions and as a result Ireland currently ranks 1st in Europe on certain metrics. Continuous time and effort have been invested by EI in the drive to establish spin-out companies that are of High Potential Start-up quality and consequently 11 HPSU from research were approved in 2014. The groundwork has been laid for additional HPSU spin outs ensuring that, as at the end of 2014, there is a very strong pipeline of new HPSU's from State-funded research for early 2015, with a number of projects in the later stages of closing investment rounds.

Action 132: Develop a new applied disruptive scheme in line with the Danish INNO+ programme to address issues that are important to Irish society.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFI)

Update: Delayed

SFI representatives travelled to Denmark to meet with INNO+ representatives. INNO+ is a platform for inspiration and prioritisation for strategic investments in innovation and forms part of the Danish Government's innovation strategy. As part of the development of a new disruptive, societal impact scheme, SFI will commence a public consultation process to identify research areas of priority to the Irish public.

Action 133: Bring together researchers, innovative companies, technology transfer professionals and investors as part of the "Big Ideas" Showcase, the primary technology commercialisation event in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Driving innovation and research within enterprise is a national priority and is a key part of the Government's Action Plan for Jobs. We are determined to open up our research system to industry so that companies can develop new products and services and ultimately create jobs. As part of the Government's drive to open up the innovation, research and development infrastructure to business, more than 1,500 industry representatives, entrepreneurs, innovative companies, researchers and technology transfer professionals from around the country were brought together to attend the first national Innovation Showcase. The event took place in the Convention Centre Dublin on 2 December 2014. The Big Ideas showcase originally planned for Q3 2014 was incorporated into the Innovation Showcase making it the primary technology commercialisation event in Ireland.

Organised by Enterprise Ireland on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation in close co-operation with IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland, the event was the first showcase at national level of Ireland's research and technology centres of scale and excellence. This showcase provided companies of all sizes the opportunity to meet representatives from each of the 38 centres across the country to discuss potential collaborations. The main feature of the event were exhibits from the 38 research centres, technology centres and national research institutes and facilities which are delivering solutions for industry in 6 key areas; energy, food, health & medical technologies, ICT, manufacturing & materials and services and business processes. The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation launched the official Directory of Research Centres & Technology Centre at the event.

Action 135: Fund at least 2 world-leading, large-scale Research Centres in collaboration with industry (minimum 30% co-fund) that will support the creation of employment in areas of economic importance to Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Review process complete and funding decisions made. (SFI)

Update: Complete

SFI funded five world-class Research Centres through the SFI Research Centres Programme in 2014. The programme was extremely competitive with each Research Centre exceeding the bar in terms of scientific excellence and potential for economic and societal impact to Ireland. SFI has committed €155 million to support the Centres over the next six years (2014-2020). This investment has been coupled with €90 million in-cash and in-kind contributions from industry partners. The funding will support cutting-edge research in critical and emerging sectors of the economy which are key for job creation in Ireland. The following Research Centres were funded:

CURAM – Centre for Research in Medical Devices

LERO – The Irish Software Research Centre

ICRAG – Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences

CONNECT – The Centre for Future Networks and Communications

ADAPT – Centre for Digital Content Platform Research

Action 136: Launch SFI’s Spokes Call and make funding decisions to enable the addition of new industrial and academic partners and projects to SFI Research Centres, so allowing the Centres to expand and develop in line with new priorities and opportunities.

Q4 Measure: Launch of the 2014 SFI Spokes programmes. (SFI)

Update: Complete

As follow-on to the landmark investment in seven world-class Research Centres in 2013, the Spokes Call was launched in 2013. This programme is a vehicle to enable the addition of new industrial and academic partners and projects to an SFI Research Centre, so allowing the Centre to expand and develop in line with new priorities and opportunities. This will ensure that the Research Centre retains its ability to do cutting-edge research and its relevance, and so enhance its sustainability. The new Spokes call was launched on 13 October 2014 and the call closed on 16 December. Funding decisions are expected to be made in Q2 2015.

Q4 Measure: Review process complete and funding decisions made through the SFI Spokes Rolling call. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The Spokes Rolling Call allows applications to be submitted and assessed throughout the year without a deadline. Following the review of the applications made under the Spokes Call, two Spokes projects were funded. However these collaborations are currently confidential and will be announced in due course.

Action 137: Agree and implement framework for branding and marketing of SFI, EI and IDA research centres to enhance coherence of centres' offering.

Q4 Measure: Implement framework for branding and marketing of SFI, EI and IDA research centres to enhance coherence of centres' offering. (DJEI, SFI, EI, IDA through Technology Ireland)

Update: Complete

On 30 April 2014, at a meeting of Technology Ireland, which includes representatives of all the enterprise agencies (SFI, EI & IDA), an approach was agreed to the marketing and branding of research centres of scale funded across the 14 priority areas by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI). A Production Team including DJEI and key enterprise agencies was established to organise a national innovation showcase to enhance accessibility of research centres to industry; and develop a directory of large scale research centres, based on the information gathered during the research centre mapping exercise – to make our offering clear to enterprise. EI played a key role in organisation of the showcase, rolling Big Ideas showcase, knowledge transfer and industry collaboration events (APJ actions 133, 137 & 139) into the innovation showcase event. Content for the directory was developed by DJEI with inputs from the enterprise agencies with EI leading on design and production.

National Innovation Showcase

More than 2,000 entrepreneurs, industry representatives and researchers from around the country attended the first national Innovation Showcase, which was held in the Convention Centre Dublin, on 2 December. This highly successful event, opened by Minister English, was the first gathering of State supported research centres and facilities of scale in one location, on one day. It was also the first opportunity for companies to see all State supports for collaborative research and innovation in one location. Key aims of the showcase achieved included:

- It provided clear information to companies about the wealth of knowledge and expertise that exists within Ireland's State supported research centres of scale, with a view to increasing the number of companies collaborating with those centres;
- It made it easier for companies to access information about research supports and to encourage more companies to engage in research, to drive economic growth and employment;
- It enhanced collaboration between centres; and
- It built more partnerships to help maximise Ireland's engagement in the €80bn Horizon 2020 EU fund for research and innovation.

National Directory of Research Centres of Scale

The event also provided a platform for the launch, by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation of the first national directory of research centres of scale. This directory brings together, for the first time, details of all State supported centres of scale and their key areas of research, in a way that makes Ireland's offering clear to enterprise. 38 centres and facilities of scale are included in the directory and were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Centres carrying out research;

- Competitive funding awarded of minimum €5m over 5 years; and
- National focus.

This directory will act as a guide for all businesses to access the valuable knowledge and technology resources in State-supported research centres to increase sales, turnover, exports and by extension, employment numbers.

Action 139: Host a research collaboration event with industry and academic researchers in order to increase the levels of research cooperation undertaken to industry's benefit.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI), in close-cooperation with IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland co-ordinated the first national Innovation Showcase on 2 December 2014 in the National Convention Centre. The aim of the event was to give companies in Ireland an introduction to the majority of State supports to increase the level of collaboration between industry and State-supported entities. In addition, the Enterprise Ireland "Big Ideas" event was incorporated into the Innovation Showcase. On behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation, EI produced the first directory of centres of scale in Ireland. This publication provides up to date profiles and contact details of the 38 Research Centres, Technology Centres, National Institutes & Facilities of scale supported by the State. Over 2,000 people from industry and the venture capital community registered to attend with a final attendance of 1,790. The key attraction of the event was that it made it as easy as possible for the intended target audiences to find all the information they need, in one location, on one day, to engage in some form of collaborative research. It was the first gathering of all State-supported research centres and technology centres in one location, on one day – 38 Centres in total.

Every support from a €5,000 innovation voucher right up to engaging in a pan-European, multi-million euro collaboration in Horizon 2020 was on show with the relevant programme managers of each support available to provide expert advice to attendees. Members of the venture capital and investment community had the opportunity to see the work going on in the wider research and technology system, something which is vital to ensure that early-stage start-ups with their roots in State-funded research continue to attract investment.

The feedback from the Innovation Showcase has been overwhelmingly positive.

Action 141: Support enterprises and researchers to engage with the €79 billion EU Horizon 2020 research programme to ensure that the opportunities presented by the programme

are maximised.

Q4 Measure: Identify opportunities for significant co-fund applications through the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions. (SFI)

Update: Complete

SFI, in partnership with the Irish Universities Association (IUA), have appointed a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Programme Officer. The primary role of this MSCA Officer is the coordination of the SFI Research Centres to apply for significant funding opportunities in the MSCA work programmes. This officer provides a 'conception to completion' service for SFI-funded Research Centres for the entire MSCA process. An internal report on applications made as part of the opportunities that have been identified is currently being prepared by the Officer.

Q4 Measure: Secure €100m in funding in 2014 in the context of Ireland's overall national funding target of €1.25bn (2014-2020). (EI and all research funders through National Support Structure for Horizon 2020)

Update: Complete

Following the Horizon 2020 call for funding (Jan – March) €45m in funding was secured by Irish projects between March and June 2014. Figures for period June to December are not yet available from the European Commission. However, preliminary (unpublished) views of the remaining calls indicate that funding secured by Ireland is in line with our annual target. Full reporting by the European Commission will follow in Q1-Q2 2015.

Action 143: Strengthen current international strategic partnerships (China, Brazil, India and Japan) and enhance Ireland's reputation as a location for world class research.

Q4 Measure: 2014 ISCA call review process complete and funding decisions made. (SFI)

Update: As indicated in Q2, this action will not be delivered

The International Strategic Cooperation Award (ISCA) 2014 was not launched as originally planned with new partner countries. Current consortia (Brazil, China, India and Japan) hold active awards until 2015 and 2016 and these will continue to be funded. The decision was taken to focus on ensuring success in these partnerships and on international engagement in Europe through Horizon 2020.

Action 144: Develop additional collaborations with international funding agencies and societies of repute to allow Irish scientists to advance their careers through internationally renowned programmes which will further demonstrate the high standard of science being

funded in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The Royal Society and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) announced the signing of a historic new collaboration agreement. The agreement will see both institutions partner on a University Research Fellowship Scheme which will provide Ireland's best and brightest young scientists with a unique opportunity to be awarded a prestigious research fellowship by the Royal Society alongside the best early career researchers from the UK. The Royal Society is the Academy of Science of the UK and Commonwealth, and a fellowship of many of the world's most distinguished scientists drawn from all areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The Royal Society – Science Foundation Ireland University Research Fellowship was launched in July 2014.

Action 145: Expand the Irish Research Council's Employment Based Programme to provide increased opportunities for MSc and PhD students to undertake a 'co-educational' experience in research and skills development while employed and embedded in a company or public organisation.

Q4 Measure: Review process complete and funding decisions made. (IRC)

Update: Complete

These awards were announced by the Irish Research Council on 2 December. A total of 48 awards were made by the Council, which represented a 60% increase from the 30 awards made in 2013.

Action 147: Broaden career opportunities for young graduates and trainees in Ireland by:

A) Expanding the SFI Industry Fellowship to ensure the broadening of the pool of researchers strongly positioned to take up employment in industry in Ireland.

B) Supporting and developing early-career researchers with the greatest potential to become excellent, fully independent research leaders (Starting Investigator Research Grant, Career Development Award, President of Ireland Young Researcher Award) who can attract, retain and develop industry in Ireland.

C) Launching the SFI Advance Fellowship Programme to address the representation and career progression of women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) thus stimulating economic growth by enabling a highly trained cohort of researchers to return to the workforce and providing them with opportunities to connect with future industry

employers.

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

Update: Complete

SFI launched the Industry Fellowship Programme this year as an open call with two assessment rounds. The purpose of the Programme is to facilitate exchanges between academia and industry to stimulate excellence through knowledge transfer and training, thereby building critical mass in areas of strategic importance for Ireland and enabling economic and societal challenges to be tackled. The outcome of the review of the assessment rounds was a commitment of €2.2 million to this call by SFI to fund 27 industry–academia partnerships with the potential to be developed into commercial ideas and create future high value jobs.

Q4 Measure: Review process complete for the 2013 PIYRA calls and funding decisions made. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The President of Ireland Young Researcher Award (PIYRA) is SFI's most prestigious award to recruit and retain early career researchers to carry out their research in Ireland. This programme emphasizes the importance that SFI places on the early development of academic careers. The award recognises outstanding engineers and scientists who, early in their careers, have already demonstrated or shown exceptional potential for leadership at the frontiers of knowledge. For the PIYRA programme, scientific excellence is both necessary and paramount but is not sufficient; applications must also demonstrate potential impact. Following the review of the applications made under this programme, it was decided that no awards would be given in 2014.

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

Update: Complete

The 2014 SFI Advance Award Programme was launched in February 2014. This award seeks to fund female researchers returning to, or wishing to remain in, high quality research, to undertake industry-facing research projects in Irish third-level institutions. Advance awards are intended to allow a flexible time commitment by the researcher, and thus can be carried out on a full-time or part-time basis. The award is suitable for women wishing to return to research after a break owing to family commitments, although this is not a mandatory criterion. The expectation is that the Advance researcher will collaborate closely with at least one of the academic mentor's industry facing partners and following completion of the award will be in a position to secure STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) employment in industry or the public sector. The outcome of the Award Programme was

that approximately €1.75 million was allocated to the Advance Award to fund 10 awards.

Action 148: Recruit key researchers in strategic areas through the SFI Research Professor, President of Ireland Young Researcher Award, and European Research Council Support and Development programmes to attract, retain and develop industry in key sectors in Ireland

Q4 Measure: Strategic promotion of SFI Research Professor, PIYRA, and ERC Support and Development programmes. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) has been working with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to launch a themed Research Professorship Call which will include the following themes; Manufacturing, Bio-manufacturing, Smart Cities, Energy, Marine, ICT, Digital Platforms, Content and Applications, Connected Health, Medical Devices and Medical Technologies, Ageing, Sensory Food Science, Sustainable Food Production and Food Security and Climate Change. This call was launched at the end of June 2014. The Research Professorship Programme is Science Foundation Ireland's programme for the recruitment of iconic scientists and engineers to build the national research and enterprise base, and enhance Ireland's reputation as a centre of excellence for research. The SFI Research Professorship Programme is intended to support national strategic priorities by assisting research bodies in their recruitment of world-leading researchers for Professorial Chairs, or similar research leadership positions in targeted scientific areas. SFI has commenced an international advertising and marketing campaign to promote the Targeted Research Professorship Programme. The campaign commenced on 1 September and ran until November 2014. The campaign included online banner advertising on Elsevier, online and print advertising on Science and Nature and a targeted e-mail to over 2,000 leading researchers.

Two appointments have already been made under the non-themed version of this scheme; Professor Michael Zawarotko, one of the world's leading chemists, has been appointed as the Bernal Chair of Crystal Engineering in the University of Limerick while Professor Robert Bogdan Staszewski, a world renowned engineering researcher, was recruited to lead a cutting-edge research programme to increase Ireland's capability as a global centre for the 'Internet-of-Things'.

The promotion of funding opportunities for early career researchers including PIYRA was included in SFIs international campaign. In addition, on 14 November, SFI for the first time hosted an early careers researchers seminar in Dublin. This was attended by over 200 early career researchers and provided information on funding opportunities and career options.

Action 149: Deliver Smart Futures as a national collaborative government, industry and education framework to raise the awareness of STEM career opportunities for post-primary students in line with the agreed strategy with support and input from the newly established advisory group comprising industrial, professional and academic partners

Q4 Measure: Development and provision of a Smart Futures STEM careers roadshow for post-primary students at regional locations at events such as SciFest and Science Week, etc. (SFI)

Update: Complete

3 STEM careers roadshows took place during Science Week, in Cork (UCC), Athlone (AIT) and Limerick (UL) which involved 9 STEM volunteers and engaged approximately 540 students.

Q4 Measure: To engage with post-primary schools and provide a coordinated booking system to request a visit from a STEM volunteer. (SFI)

Update: Complete

An online booking system was developed, and provided to post-primary schools; this will be operational from February 2015.

Q4 Measure: Carry out evaluation of programme activities in line with agreed strategy. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Evaluation is ongoing throughout the year by means of a media monitoring service, as well as website and social media metrics tracked through Google Analytics to measure reach.

Action 150: Take steps to progress towards the introduction of a Research Technology Organisation model to support research, development and innovation and to complement the existing eco-system of research centres in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: Undertake a study of RTOs internationally in order to identify best practise and make recommendations on an RTO model that would best fit within the landscape of research centres in Ireland. (DJEI/Forfás)

Update: Complete

A review of RTOs internationally was completed in the second half of 2014. This review identified suitable comparator models to inform and strengthen market-focused research capacity in Ireland. This is one element of a wider study entitled 'Medium Term Development of the Market-Focused Element of the Irish Research Centre Landscape' which is due for completion in Q1 2015.

Action 151: Establish a European Space Agency incubator to house and support new (start-up) companies to further expand the space sector in Ireland

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Delayed

Ireland has been a member of the European Space Agency (ESA) since its foundation in 1975. Irish industry is benefitting from Ireland's ESA membership through supporting in-company product development for the space market and commercial spin-out of space technologies into non-space markets. There is now an opportunity to develop an ESA Business Incubation Centre (BIC) in Ireland to provide an important opportunity to develop new companies in this economical advantageous area. The additional benefits to be offered to Irish industry by an ESA BIC will include:

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

A call for initial proposals from bodies wishing to host the new incubator was issued by Enterprise Ireland in late November with a call close date of 7 January 2015. Following the evaluation and selection process, a procurement process will be initiated by the European Space Agency (ESA) in 2015. It is anticipated that the ESA Business Incubator will be established by Q4 of 2015, subject to the outcome of the ESA procurement process and agreement with ESA on budgetary aspects. The revised schedule takes account of the need to align well established EI incubation and start-up company supports with those of the European Space Agency and for ESA to accommodate the specific natures of the Irish space industry strategy and the Irish research landscape.

Action 153: Advance legislation to, inter alia, streamline the ethics approval process for health research not governed by statutory regulation and EU Law.

Q4 Measure: Publish the Health Information Bill. (D/Health)

Update: Delayed

Because of changes to the general scheme of the Health Information Bill originally approved by Government, a revised scheme is being prepared for Government approval. Work on this revised scheme is well advanced.

Action 154: Take steps to establish Clinical Research Facilities (CRFs) in Dublin, Cork and Galway and provide a collaborative framework to link all CRFs by 2016.

Q4 Measure: Complete the construction of the HRB Galway CRF in conjunction with NUI Galway and UCHG. (HRB)

Update: Delayed

Construction is expected to be complete in Q1 2015.

Q4 Measure: Review a business plan for collaborative delivery of multi-site clinical trials between the HRB CRFs and other Clinical Research Centres nationally. (HRB)

Update: Complete

In October a business plan was submitted to the HRB and Enterprise Ireland (EI) by the five Clinical Research Facilities (CRF) Directors. The business plan was subject to a two-step review; firstly, an external international panel met in late November to review the plan and provide a recommendation to the funders (Health Research Board (HRB) and EI) to fund the award subject to refined and clarified deliverables for the award. Secondly, the funders met and assessed the proposal, taking the panel recommendation into considerations and agreed to recommend the proposal for funding to the HRB Board, and the Enterprise Ireland IRCC. Both the HRB Board and EI's IRCC approved funding. The HRB and EI are now finalising the contract, including key deliverables, with a view establishing the co-ordinating structure in 2015.

Action 155: Take steps to establish a national biobanking system and support infrastructure by 2016

Q4 Measure: Agreement from all relevant funders and issue call. (HRB)

Update: Delayed

It was not possible to reach agreement during 2014 with the relevant funding agencies on this issue.

Action 156: Develop Irish participation in key global standardisation activities supporting innovation and research.

Q4 Measure: Identify which new and existing standardisation activities support innovation & research of national interest and engage with relevant support agencies to explore potential for creation of expert networks in identified areas. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

During 2014 NSAI have progressed activity in respect of Bio-Banking. Bio-banking under Biotechnology is a new standardisation activity supporting innovation and research. The Irish Centre for Foetal and Neo Natal Translational Research in UCC are performing research in this field and have a need to develop internationally accepted standards. In May 2014 NSAI and UCC participated in the first plenary meeting of the ISO TC 276 on Bio-banking in Berlin. As a follow up to this meeting NSAI have identified the need for a wider Irish participation and engaged with other stakeholders from Industry. In December 2014, 3 Irish experts attended the ISO TC 276 meeting of working groups for Biobanking. The NSAI Board has now approved the establishment of a National Committee IS TC62 and the first meeting will take place in January 2015.

Action 157: Support medical device innovation and research to reduce lead time to market for new and innovative products by assisting with the introduction of a regulatory quality management system in one innovation centre.

Q4 Measure: Assess knowledge gained and ease of introduction of the quality management system standard in the pilot centre to explore the potential for expanding its introduction to similar relevant innovation centres. (NSAI, SFI)

Update: Complete

From the engagement with pilot innovation group in Electrical Engineering, University College Cork it has been assessed that the requirements of I.S. EN ISO 13485 exceed the requirements of innovation activities, and though necessary, are not a 'good fit'. I.S. EN ISO 13485 defines the requirements for a QMS for design, manufacture and installation of Medical Devices., while Innovation Centres are exploring concepts leading to design, development and clinical studies. While compliance with the requirements of I.S. EN ISO 13485 is the ultimate goal, the pilot has identified a need for a detailed guidance document to elaborate on the steps to be taken, from concept, through clinical trials to CE marking. Such guidance should be fully harmonised and compatible with the relevant sections of I.S. EN ISO 13485, yet offer far more detail and focussed direction to the emerging entity from the innovation centre.

During 2015, NSAI will now consider the business case to develop such guidance and publish it as a SWIFT or other possible publication. Relevant stakeholders in such collaboration would include Innovation Centres, Notified Body services, HPRA, MMI, EI etc.

4.7 Aligning Skills with Enterprise Needs

Action 158: Introduce a further iteration of the Momentum programme providing opportunities for approximately 6,000 unemployed persons, with at least 2,000 places ring-fenced for under-25s.

Q4 Measure: Introduce a further iteration of the programme based on evaluations to date. (DES, SOLAS)

Update: Complete

A further round of Momentum was launched in October 2014 providing up to 6,000 education and training places for the unemployed. As part of our commitment to the Youth Guarantee initiative 2,000 of these places will be ring fenced for those who are under 25 years of age.

Action 163: Develop and commence delivery of a new national manufacturing supervisory development programme leading to a major award at Level 6 on the NFQ to meet manufacturers' requirements for upskilling operatives for those supervisory roles in the sector.

Q4 Measure: Commence the delivery of the new programme. (Skillnets)

Update: Delayed

The Award was approved by QQI in April 2014. It has now been agreed that Letterkenny IT will develop an appropriate programme which will, subject to procurement and academic approval procedures, commence delivery in 2015.

Action 166: Undertake preparatory work with a view to implementing the EU Recommendation on Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning in consultation with relevant Government Departments and youth sector so that young people's skills development and learning through youth work is recognised in terms of its applicability and transferability to the labour market

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Complete

Initial discussions have taken place with the youth work sector in the context of developing the new National Youth Strategy for 10 to 24 year olds, its priorities and actions.

Action 178: Finalise specifications for Junior Cycle Business Studies, Irish and Science.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DES, NCCA)

Update: Delayed

Under the original proposal, Irish and business studies were to be rolled out to schools in September 2015. In January 2014, in response to concerns about the pace of change, the implementation date for Irish and Business Studies was revised to September 2016. This in turn allowed more time for the curriculum development process and it is now expected that these subject specifications will be available in 2015. The science specification is likely to be finalised early in 2015. However, a range of implementation arrangements will then have to be considered.

Action 181: Undertake a full-scale national employer survey of Irish Higher Education outcomes and examine the feasibility of including employers' views on further education and training.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HEA, SOLAS)

Update: Complete

The employer survey has been conducted. Data analysis is now underway and it is expected that the results will be published in Q1 2015.

Action 182: Develop and roll out a process of deeper engagement with higher education institutions on key areas of future skills needs of enterprise, as identified by the EGFSN with industry in its reports and recommendations. This will ensure enhanced collaboration in creating awareness of the skills and competencies required by enterprise with a view to further enhancing higher education graduate talent.

Q4 Measure: Engage with HEIs. (EGFSN, HEIs)

Update: Complete

A series of consultations with Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Higher Education representative bodies was undertaken, in the format of in-person and telephone interviews and workshops. Findings from the consultations were presented and discussed at the EGFSN meeting on 3 December 2014. Roll-out of a process of deeper engagement with HEIs arising from the findings of the consultations will be undertaken on an ongoing basis throughout 2015.

Action 183: Develop and publish a strategy for enhanced engagement between HEIs and enterprise to include a framework of indicators for assessing HEI performance in this area. This strategy will include recommendations to ensure that priority skills needs can be responsively addressed within course provision.

Q4 Measure: Publish a national framework for higher education engagement with enterprise, identifying next steps, relevant stakeholders, responsibilities and timescales. (HEA, DES)

Update: Delayed

As indicated in Q3, the next major stage in development of the engagement strategy is to undertake a further consultation exercise on a draft strategy in order to secure maximum buy-in from key stakeholders to the strategy. The Department of Education and Skills expect the enterprise engagement strategy to be finalised and published in Q1 2015.

Action 184: Undertake a study with industry on the workforce skills and competency requirements for the Freight Transport/Distribution/Logistics Sector in Ireland up to 2020.

Q4 Measure: The study will identify the current and planned skills and talent needs of the sector and how any gaps can be addressed including through the domestic education and training supply and continuing professional development. (EGFSN)

Update: Complete

The aim of the study was to assess the skills and competency requirements for Freight Transport, Distribution and Logistics (FTDL) activities in Ireland up to 2020, and to propose recommendations that will ensure Ireland has the right skill base to meet enterprise needs. Overall research has shown that the FTDL sector is of strategic and operational importance for business within Ireland across all sectors of the economy. The approach adopted a holistic skills assessment of Ireland's logistics infrastructure for facilitating international trade and domestic freight distribution - by air, sea, road and rail. It assessed talent needs at all levels of educational attainment, including further education and training (FET) as well as higher education. This included the identification of development and career progression opportunities for persons at lower skill levels for job openings arising from anticipated expansion and replacement demand. The final report was approved at the EGFSN meeting on 3 December 2014 and is currently being prepared to proceed to publication.

Action 185: Commence a detailed assessment of the workforce skills and competency requirements for the Hospitality sector in Ireland up to 2020 to ensure there will be the right skill base – quantity, quality and diversity of skills to help drive domestic hospitality sector business and employment growth.

Q4 Measure: Commence study with particular focus of the study will be on the development opportunities for those at lower skilled levels are addressed within progression pathway(s) to fill anticipated job openings. The study will be completed in early 2015. (EGFSN)

Update: Complete

Terms of Reference for the study have been agreed, consultants have been contracted to undertake elements of the study and research work has commenced. A Steering Group to oversee the project is in the process of being established. The study is expected to be completed at the end of Q2 2015.

Action 186: Identify the future skills needs and labour market supply and demand trends in the marine/maritime area in the context of Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth - An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland.

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

Update: Complete

The overarching aim of the study was to assess the profile and diversity of the occupations and skills requirements for the various subsectors of the Marine/Maritime Economy and to propose recommendations to ensure the right skill base to meet the enterprise needs. Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth (HOOW), published in 2012, highlights the Government's vision, high-level goals and integrated actions across policy, governance and business to enable Ireland's marine potential to be realised. The focus of the EGFSN study was on those sectors of the marine economy which have been identified by HOOW as the main ones which contribute to the Irish Marine Economy. As evidenced by HOOW, the marine economy in Ireland has been identified as a significant area with regards to future growth. It has the potential to grow a substantial amount in the next few years and therefore create employment directly and indirectly. The final report was discussed and approved at the EGFSN meeting on 3 December 2014. The report is being finalised to proceed to publication.

Action 187: Review how the ICT Action Plan model could be applied to addressing skills shortages in international languages and selling, manufacturing, hospitality and other sectors.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DES and DJEI/Forfás, EGFSN)

Update: Complete

DES has undertaken a review of the ICT Action Plan model and is prioritising skills needs identified by the EGFSN in Springboard 2015 include manufacturing, data analytics, international financial services and international trade. In the area of foreign languages, work is ongoing in exploring the immediate needs of enterprise and this will inform further action in this area and the development of the Foreign Languages in Education Strategy.

4.8 Supporting Competitiveness through Corporate Social Responsibility

Action 192: Following on from the publication of Ireland’s National Plan on CSR - Good for Business, Good for the Community - prepare a Progress Report for Government on developments in relation to CSR in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

Ireland’s first National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Good for Business, Good for the Community, was published in April 2014. The Plan sets out a vision that “Ireland will be recognised as a Centre of Excellence for responsible and sustainable business practice through the adoption and implementation of best practice in CSR in enterprises and organisations as widely as possible.” This vision supports the Government’s goal of making Ireland the best small country in which to do business. The objectives of the National Plan on CSR are to:

- Increase awareness of CSR, its value to businesses and to society as a whole;
- Encourage enterprises to develop and implement CSR policies and practices and mainstream them into their core business operations;
- Encourage more small and medium-sized enterprises to build CSR capacity;
- Increase transparency and reporting of CSR activity by enterprises operating in Ireland; and

- Anchor CSR principles in public bodies in the context of their own operations.

A Progress Report on developments in relation to CSR since the National Plan was published was prepared for the Government at the end of the year.

The report covered the increased recognition of the role CSR can play in company-level competitiveness and national competitiveness; the establishment of a CSR Stakeholder Forum to progress the objectives of the National Plan; proposed actions arising from the Forum and its sub-groups; and the role that the public sector can play in showing leadership in CSR practice. The National Plan on CSR covers the period 2014-2016. The 2015 Action Plan for Jobs will reflect the continued focus on delivering on the objectives of the Plan.

5. Pathways to Work and Related Initiatives

Action 195: Develop a new Youth Strategy in 2014 which will, inter alia, review youth funding schemes to ensure that the youth work and non-formal education sector contributes to youth employment and youth employability policy objectives, including skills development and experiential learning opportunities for young people and the provision of valuable volunteer opportunities

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Delayed

Work on the new Youth Strategy is at an advanced stage and is scheduled for completion in Q2 2015.

Action 197: Facilitate the increased participation in volunteering opportunities by unemployed people in supporting the provision of youth services throughout the country. Such volunteering provides young people and adults with opportunities to develop and derive job relevant skills and competencies

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Complete

The youth sector, funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), has a considerable volunteer base of some 40,000 per annum. The Irish Research Council (IRC)/DCYA-funded study examining the impact of volunteer-led youth provision being carried out by NUIM and UCC is due for completion in Q1 2015. The results of this study will provide valuable information on the types of volunteering opportunities and the numbers

and age profiles of volunteers engaged in youth work. It will also provide direction on the supports volunteers, including young people, need so that they can avail of, and continue to engage in, such volunteering opportunities.

Action 199: Undertake a programme of structured engagement with the enterprise sector to maximise recruitment from the live register

Q4 Measure: Develop/Procure a new employer services website and vacancy matching service. (DSP)

Update: Delayed

A Tender for a new job matching system was issued on 8 September 2014. Responses were received and the Department of Social Protection is currently in the process of evaluating tenders.

Action 202: Through the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP), continue to work towards increasing access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources; increasing people's work readiness and employment prospects; and supporting enterprise start-ups.

Q4 Measure: County-based communications on local programme focus/priorities with key stakeholders. (DECLG, Pobal)

Update: Complete

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) is working with Pobal in rolling out a series of information and training sessions in relation to SICAP. This work commenced in April with a stakeholder engagement process on the SICAP framework. Since then a number of sessions have been held with the Chief Officers of the new LCDCs and their teams. The sessions are being extended to the non-Local Authority LCDC members, commencing on 16 December and will be followed by more intensive engagement on SICAP planning and targeting thereafter.

Q4 Measure: Monitor Programme Beneficiary Participation Rates against the targets set for the Programme in 2014. (DECLG, Pobal, Local Development Companies)

Update: Complete

Through the LCDP, work continues towards increasing access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural activities and resources; increasing people's work readiness and employment prospects; and supporting enterprise start-ups. While final output data in respect of 2014 will not be available until Q1 2015, to date over 63,000

support interventions (one-to-one meetings, group meetings, etc) with beneficiaries took place; labour market training was provided to over 14,000 individuals; over 1,400 individuals were supported into full-time or part-time employment; and 230 into a work experience placement. Over 5,700 individuals were supported into self-employment while another 2,500 were supported to access the services of other organisations/agencies such as VEC, third level institutions, SOLAS, Dept Social Protection.

6. Access to Finance for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

6.1 Increase New Lending from Banks to SMEs

Action 205: Detailed data from the pillar banks will be collated and examined, on a monthly basis, ensuring a more informed understanding of the SME bank lending environment, with a particular focus on new lending.

Q4 Measure: Report on data received from the pillar banks. (D/Finance, Credit Review Office)

Update: Complete

AIB and Bank of Ireland provided the Department of Finance and Credit Review Office (CRO) with granular monthly lending data, including data on new lending throughout 2014, and quarterly meetings with AIB and Bank of Ireland were held throughout the year. The CRO is also in advanced discussions with Permanent TSB and Ulster Bank in relation to voluntarily coming under the Credit Review Appeals process, and CRO reports were published during 2014.

Action 206: Survey the demand for SME credit.

Q4 Measure: Undertake survey of demand for SME credit. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Two SME Credit Demand Surveys were completed in 2014 for the periods October 2013 – March 2014 and April – September 2014.

6.2 Increase Participation in Access to Finance Initiatives for SMEs

Action 211: Monitor and review the progress of the NPRF SME Funds in providing finance to SMEs. Furthermore in the context of the ISIF's investment strategy additional commercial opportunities within the SME sector will continue to be developed as appropriate.

Q4 Measure: Publish Bi-annual Strategic Investment Portfolio Reports. (NPRF)

Update: Delayed

(To be completed by end Q2 2015 after ISIF investment strategy has been approved in the manner required by legislation.)

ISIF capital has made a contribution to the SME sector firstly through two specific SME funds and through a number of venture and growth capital funds and, secondly as directed by the Minister for Finance, through providing capital to the SBCI.

The NTMA have supplied the following material on the performance of certain funds:

- ISIF SME Credit Fund (Mid Market Fund): There is expected to be a portfolio of 25-30 investments once this fund's capital of €450m has been deployed. This fund has completed ten loan transactions totalling approximately €173 million.
- ISIF SME Equity Fund (restructuring and growth): This fund achieved its final close at €292m in June 2014 and is active in the market sourcing transactions. The first investment in Lily O'Brien's, closed in January 2014. Its second investment closed recently in GSLS, a cash-in-transit company. There is a strong project pipeline under development.
- NPRF SME Turnaround Fund: Investment period of the Turnaround Fund is not being renewed following the expiry of the original period at the end of December 2014. Improving conditions mean the Turnaround Fund has not completed any transactions to date and potential dealflow has become limited.
- China Ireland Technology Growth Fund: this \$100m fund closed in January 2014 and has to date completed two equity investments in Irish companies (Accuris and Fieldaware). It has also developed a strong transaction pipeline.

The NTMA (Amendment) Act 2014, the majority of which was commenced prior to 31 December 2014, provides for the establishment of the ISIF and the appointment of Members to the NTMA (in effect a Board). It is expected that the ISIF Investment Strategy will be approved by the NTMA in Q1 2015 following required consultation with the Minister for Finance and Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The NPRF has been developing an extensive pipeline of potential investments in the meantime so that the ISIF is in a position to progress investments once its investment strategy is approved.

The NTMA Amendment Act requires that the ISIF will report annually and amongst other

things include an assessment on a regional basis of the impact of the Fund's investments on economic activity and employment. The NTMA Board can determine whether to report more frequently than annually, if desired.

6.5 Enhance the Financial Capacity of SMEs

Action 222: Deliver the Building Financial Capability in SMEs programme by Skillnets and undertake an evaluation of this initiative.

Q4 Measure: Evaluate the programme and make recommendations. (DES, DJEI, D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Skillnets continue to encourage SMEs to take part in the programme, and have presented to the State Bodies Group on a number of occasions to keep them informed of progress. Skillnets have completed an evaluation of the programme and in 2015 will enter into discussions with the Department of Education and Skills regarding its recommendations.

Action 223: Develop a financial capability programme for micro and small businesses through the LEOs network

Q4 Measure: Scope a new financial capability programme to be delivered by the LEOs considering the use of the voucher system. (DJEI, EI, LEOs, IBF, accountancy bodies)

Update: Complete

All Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) provide financial capability training/development as a core offer on their training programmes. The LEO network also offers a comprehensive mentor support programme in this area which can be tailored to suit particular needs. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation recently signed a protocol with Skillnets facilitating LEO network promotion of the Skillnets offer in this specific area of financial capability. As the relationship develops it is envisaged that more complementary support programmes will be brought to the marketplace via the Skillsnet offer.

6.6 Enhance Research on SME Access to Finance

Action 224: Oversee a focused research programme on SME access to finance issues that will inform the on-going deliberations and policy actions of the Group during 2014

Q4 Measure: Ireland to contribute a chapter to the OECD's Scorecard on SME and

Entrepreneurship Report 2014. (D/Finance, DJEI/Forfás, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

The ESRI conducted a research programme which focused firstly on credit demand during the recovery, and secondly on policy solutions for SME financing in the recovery. The outcomes of the research programme were published by the ESRI at a seminar entitled “Financing SMEs in Recovery”, which took place on 26 September, and the final report of the research programme was published on 14 October. The Department of Finance also contributed a chapter to ‘Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs 2014: An OECD Scoreboard’.

7. Growing Irish Enterprise

7.1 Capability Building in Irish Enterprise

Action 225: Target the creation of 13,000 new fulltime permanent jobs.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

In 2014 Irish companies supported by Enterprise Ireland created 14,873 new full time jobs*. All of Enterprise Ireland’s activities have the objective of increasing employment and exports in indigenous Irish industry leading to improved economic conditions throughout Ireland. These activities include the provision of financial support; Management Development Programs to enhance Leadership, Innovation and International Marketing Skills; a network of over 30 international offices around the world and linkages with 3rd level institutes to develop new products and processes.

*Source: DJEI Annual Employment Survey.

Action 226: Support clients to achieve €17.5bn in exports in 2014 . (Target of €17.5bn may be revised subject to Annual Business Review results. 2012 baseline is €16.2bn. 2013 figures will be available in Q2.)

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Final export figures for Enterprise Ireland’s client companies will be available in April when the Annual Business Review Survey is published. However, indications are that exports will exceed the target of €17.5 billion. All of EI’s activities have the objective of increasing

exports and employment in indigenous Irish industry leading to improved economic conditions throughout Ireland. These activities include the provision of financial support for expansion projects, Management Development Programs to enhance Leadership, Innovation and International Marketing Skills, a network of 30 international offices around the world and linkages with 3rd level institutes to develop new products and processes. The EI actions in the Action Plan for Jobs give an indication of the detailed activities within these categories.

Action 228: Implement Mentoring Programmes for the benefit of more than 300 EI clients

Q4 Measure: Implement tailored mentoring programmes for range of client groups (e.g. Public procurement Mentors, Mentors for Research Clients, Mentors for Potential Export Division Clients). (EI)

Update: Complete

In 2014 Enterprise Ireland (EI) facilitated 406 mentor assignments with client companies. This included 9 research commercialisation clients and 16 Potential Exporter Assignments. In 2013 20 mentors with public procurement experience were appointed to clients following their attendance at an EI consortia building workshop. However in 2014, given the high number of non-EI clients attending these workshops, the workshop provider (Bid Management Services Ltd) provided the follow on one to one support to attendees, where required. EI provides client companies with advice, specialist expertise and connections to develop and implement the company's development plans by providing access to:

- A team of internal Enterprise Ireland advisers, and
- External mentors, advisers and specialists drawn from the private sector in Ireland and overseas.

In 2014 EI implemented tailored mentoring programmes for a range of client groups (e.g. Public procurement Mentors, Mentors for Research Clients, Mentors for Potential Export Division Clients). Mentors from the Enterprise Ireland Mentor Network advise companies on issues relating to developing and executing an international sales strategy. Mentors are successful senior executives who volunteer to advise clients based on their own business experience. The Network has over 390 active mentors who make a real contribution in Enterprise Ireland client companies, bringing about change, removing barriers to growth and enabling strategic success.

In addition to one-to-one mentor assignments, EI organises regular Mentor Panels where companies in the early stages of development can present their business plan/investment proposal. The Mentor Panel is tailored specifically to suit the needs, sector and required expertise of the attending companies. Companies can pitch to the panel and gain valuable feedback and advice on their business/investment proposition in a trusted environment. In

2014, 160 companies presented to an EI Mentor Panel.

Action 230: Support 800 participants on short course Management Development Programmes and 230 on long course Management Development Programmes

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

During 2014 Enterprise Ireland (EI) supported the participation of 928 people on short course Management Development Programmes and a further 246 on long course Management Development Programmes. EI offers customised management development programmes, delivered in collaboration with leading international providers, to inspire business leaders, to equip them with the tools and techniques to operate more effectively and to build international scale. EI's leadership and management programmes build the capabilities that companies need and deliver real and lasting impact, and results, for companies. Both long and short courses are available to companies. Courses available include: Innovation 4 Growth; International Selling Program; The "Excel at Exporting" series of short programs; Strategic Leadership 4 Chief Financial Officers; Leadership 4 Growth (L4G), and Platform 4 Growth. Further information on these courses is available on Enterprise Ireland's website: <http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Management/>

Action 231: Build on Phase One of the Pilot Industry-led clustering Initiative involving fifty companies.

Q4 Measure: Evaluate the progress of the clustering initiative to date. (EI)

Update: Delayed

A key measure under the Action Plan for Jobs 2012 was the launch of the Pilot Industry-led clustering initiative. This initiative aimed to encourage groups of businesses to collaborate to achieve specific business objectives, improve competitive advantage, create mutual financial gain – and ultimately create jobs.

The pilot project involved groups of a minimum of five companies; these groups were eligible for funding of up to €100,000. The initiative was aimed at a broad range of businesses serviced by the enterprise development agencies. Clusters were encouraged to seek to find members from other jurisdictions including Northern Ireland, global corporations with presences in Ireland, companies not clients of enterprise development agencies, trade/business associations, academic institutions and suppliers. Continuous informal evaluation of the Pilot Cluster Programme has been undertaken by Enterprise Ireland throughout the process. A separate Cluster Policy review is being undertaken at a

national level by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Action 232: Include the needs of family owned businesses more clearly in the Enterprise Ireland Client Management Development offering

Q4 Measure: Ensure content and coaching capability of Leadership 4 Growth and Management 4 Growth address the needs of family owned businesses. (EI)

Update: Complete

In 2014 the Management 4 Growth Programme was replaced with a new blended delivery programme called Platform 4 Growth. The new programme launched as a pilot in December 2014 with over 150 participants. It focuses on the same type of client as those targeted by the Management 4 Growth Programme. However due to its blended delivery methodology, which includes online learning, a larger number of clients can be accommodated on the programme, with the design giving participants the opportunity to develop their own learning journey by selecting to attend modules most relevant to their needs. An integral part of the new programme is to facilitate family business cohorts in order to share best practice. Enterprise Ireland has a number of family businesses taking part on Platform 4 Growth and there are modules specific to the needs of family business such as succession planning and managing Boards. A Growth Advisor is available to facilitate peer networking. The learning content and coaching modules for Leadership 4 Growth are developed to ensure that the issues specific to family business are addressed in the knowledge that many Irish companies are family businesses. Each Leadership 4 Growth program includes a number of participants from family businesses.

Action 234: Complete the programme of evaluations of agency programmes to determine their appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness, and draw out lessons for tailoring interventions.

Q4 Measure: The focus for 2014 will be on identifying the overarching policy implications from evaluations across start-up, RDI and business development programmes. (DJEI/ Forfás, EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

The programme of evaluations is complete. The first two evaluation strands (Evaluation of Entrepreneurship and Start-Up programmes and Evaluation of RDI Programmes) were published in April 2014. The final strand (Business Development Programmes) has been completed and is due for publication shortly. The evaluations provide recommendations at the programme level in addition to higher level policy recommendations for the agencies and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Action 235: Progress implementation of the agreed Global Sourcing Strategy across Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to increase global sourcing sales by EI client companies by €100m over 3 years and €30m in 2014.

Q4 Measure: EI and IDA to work together to identify and progress 5 new MNC sourcing partnerships involving an initial 25 Enterprise Ireland clients. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland worked together to identify MNCs across engineering, medical devices, ICT, consumer products and financial services sectors. During 2014, sourcing partnerships have been completed with 5 MNCs and a total of 39 Enterprise Ireland clients.

Q4 Measure: Overseas procurement introductions for Irish companies (14 in 2014). (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

In addition to the above, during 2014, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland overseas teams met with 16 MNCs in-market to progress the global sourcing agenda. 3 of these MNCs already have an Irish presence.

Q4 Measure: MNC introductions (additional 50 companies). (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

During 2014, a total of 56 new MNC introductions were made. In addition, Enterprise Ireland had meetings with 74 EI clients and a further 33 follow-on or repeat meetings with MNCs.

Q4 Measure: Enterprise Ireland client introductions on IDA itineraries. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

IDA itineraries in 2014 saw its site visit participants meet a total of 59 Enterprise Ireland client companies of which 39 focused on specific Global Sourcing agendas. First time site visits by IDA Ireland companies/potential clients generally have wide ranging agendas and follow up site visits are more focussed on local supply of services and products.

Action 236: Develop a joint EI/IDA initiative to support the leadership needs of multinational and Irish companies.

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

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland offers a suite of Management Development programs to enhance the leadership skills of client companies including Leadership 4 Growth, Strategic Leadership for Chief Finance Officers (SLCFO), International Selling Program and Innovation 4 Growth. EI and IDA jointly agreed that the existing EI suite of Management Development programmes be extended to include IDA clients rather than develop separate programmes. Several IDA clients have expressed an interest in participating on these programs with one client already participating on the current SLCFO program.

Action 237: Progress the implementation of the IDA/EI strategy for growth in the Irish Business Process Outsourcing including promoting consortia building and assisting capability building.

Q4 Measure: Assist Irish owned companies to improve their capabilities in key technical areas such as analytics. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the IDA are collaborating on a joint Business Process Outsourcing strategy to drive employment growth in the sector. EI has assisted companies to improve capability buildings by providing one to one development supports, by setting up the BPO cluster, engagement with the key technology centres, the setting up of a working group on skills and increased engagement from the agencies' international network.

Action 238: Progress the implementation of the Medical Technology Strategy agreed between IDA and EI in 2013.

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

Update: Complete

Work in implementing the Medical Technology Strategy progressed through 2014. A specific focus was placed on the development of a collaborative research centre with particular focus on med-tech manufacturing. Extensive consultation has taken place with indigenous and FDI companies and with other stakeholders. A proposal is expected to be ready for consideration by end Q1 2015. Initiatives are also underway to develop the sub-supply relationship between Irish SMEs and global med-tech companies with a presence in Ireland. Most recently the 'Trade Mission to Ireland' involved multiple meetings between local sub-suppliers and FDI firms e.g. Vistakon, GE Healthcare. The implementation of Lean Business Principles as a critical element in achieving and maintaining competitiveness in our SME and large med-tech firms has resulted in visits to sites of 'best practice' such as Toyota (UK) and Zimmer (Shannon) by both indigenous and FDI firms. The representative body for the sector was also facilitated on visits to the Toyota plant in Wales.

Action 239: Develop further joint agency strategies during 2014 in key sectors of opportunity, including a joint agency strategy for the Renewable Energy/Wind Energy sector.

Q4 Measure: Finalise joint agency strategies for implementation. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

The joint EI-IDA senior management team undertook a joint sector study in respect of the renewable/cleantech sector during 2014 and a strategy was agreed. The joint project team met regularly and undertook a study visit to Germany to understand the supply chain and opportunities that may arise. The Senior Management team also agreed to keep other areas of joint sectoral collaboration under consideration. There is strong cooperation on opportunities in the payments/financial services area, while the corporate entrepreneurship agenda is another area of joint focus involving sectoral teams. The deferment of an inter-government agreement on the export of renewable energy has necessitated the need to develop a revised approach with longer time horizons and renewed attention on the potential for off-shore wind and marine energy. Work has continued on this throughout 2014 and will continue with a view to developing a new strategy in 2015.

7.2 Maximising Procurement Opportunities

Action 242: Commence work on the transposition of the new EU Procurement Directives to take advantage of the revised procedures designed to encourage SME access (transposition will be completed in 2015).

Q4 Measure: Incorporate revised policy on SME access into draft Statutory Instrument, as appropriate. (OGP)

Update: Complete

The transposition of these EU Directives is scheduled for 2015/2016. However measures to encourage SME access to public procurement in these directives have been brought forward in Circular 10/14 including the setting of relevant and proportionate financial capacity, turnover and insurance levels for tendering firms and the sub-dividing of larger contracts into lots to enable SMEs to bid for these opportunities. The Circular also encourages SMEs to form consortia where they are not of sufficient scale to tender in their own right.

Action 248: Provide information to SMEs on approaches to multiparty tendering from a competition and procurement law perspective.

Q4 Measure: Produce guidance on consortium bidding in compliance with competition and procurement law. (Competition Authority, OGP)

Update: Complete

On 15 December 2014, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (formed by the amalgamation of the Competition Authority and the National Consumer Agency on 31 October 2014) published a guide targeted at small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to help them comply with competition law when tendering as part of a consortium. The guide was developed to assist businesses who want to join together to form a consortium to submit a joint tender for a public contract and will make it easier for SMEs to access procurement opportunities from the public sector.

8. Developing and Deepening the Impact of Foreign Direct Investment

Action 253: Target 13,000 new gross jobs yielding approximately 6,000 net new jobs in 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

In 2014, IDA Ireland's client companies created 15,012 new jobs. When job losses are taken into account, the net increase in employment was 7,131, one of the highest net levels of job creation in a decade. Total employment at IDA client companies now stands at 174,488 people, the highest level in the history of IDA Ireland. The job performance took place against a particularly challenging European economic environment and changing corporate taxation landscape. IDA has now exceeded the jobs and investment targets set under its Horizon 2020 strategy and is currently finalising a new five year strategy to take the organisation into a new phase of development

Action 254: Work to win another 155 new FDI investment projects in 2014 with 20 per cent from growth markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

There were 197 new investments won by IDA Ireland in 2014, equating to a 20% increase on 2013. These investments came from (i) new name companies, locating in Ireland for the first time, (2) existing companies expanding their operations in Ireland and (3) companies undertaking R&D activities in Ireland. There was a notable rise in new name investment, with 88 new name investors in 2014, equating to a 13% increase on 2013. Among the leading investments secured during the year were Amazon, Bristol Myers Squibb, Fidelity, LinkedIn, Survey Monkey, Airbnb, PayPal, Ericsson, SAP, Johnson & Johnson, West Pharmaceuticals, Zendesk, Adroll and New Relic. As part of IDA's Horizon 2020 strategy, a target was set to attract 20% of the overall target for new name investments from Growth Markets. IDA achieved this target in 2014.

Action 255: Achieve €500 million in R&D investment to have a total annual R&D spend by multinationals in Ireland of €1.7 billion by end-2014

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

R&D capital investment remains very strong with €470 million of investment in R&D projects fully approved in 2014 and a number of other projects in the pipeline. This is a very strong performance given the general market caution for large capital projects which includes significant R&D activities. RD&I remains significantly important to Ireland's FDI landscape embedding existing employment and putting in place the framework for future employment creation. At the end of 2013 (latest data available), as per the ABSEI (Annual Business Survey of Economic Impact) survey, in-house R&D spend increased from €1.3bn in 2012 to €1.4bn in 2013 (+7.2%).

Action 256: Attract 30 FDI projects from emerging overseas businesses to Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

IDA Ireland set a goal in its Horizon 2020 strategy to attract fast growth companies to Ireland. In 2014, IDA won 34 investments from fast growth companies from emerging overseas business, exceeding the target by 4 projects.

Action 259: Explore the potential of the “Internet of Things” by establishing a representative group which will agree priorities for action and present proposals to Government.

Q4 Measure: Present proposals to Government on the agreed priorities. (IDA)

Update: Complete

IDA, with the leaders of the two working groups, presented a paper to the Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation on 19 December 2014. The paper included a comprehensive discussion of the potential of the Internet of Things and made 10 recommendations to Government for further action.

9. Sectoral Opportunities

9.1 Agriculture, Food and Marine

Action 260: Select and support a new cohort of HPSU food entrepreneurs under Food Works 2

Q4 Measure: Recruit participants for Food Works 3 targeting 50 applications. (Bord Bia, EI, Teagasc)

Update: Complete

The closing date for applications was 21 November and 125 applications were received. These were screened by the Food Works team and interviews were conducted in December. 18 places have now been filled for Stage 4 (Feasibility Phase).

Action 261: Create over 100 new jobs in the seafood processing sector by end 2014

Q4 Measure: Projects completed and jobs delivered. (BIM)

Update: Complete

All grant payments for the 20 companies were issued by year end, and all investment programmes, which will generate 100 jobs, are in place. Through the Category management scheme BIM worked with the shellfish and whitefish companies to advance activity in China, resulting in expansion in sales from €5 million to an estimated €24 million. Further consolidation will be a feature of 2015 activity, developing more robust structures and additional sales which will generate more jobs.

Action 263: The Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster (IMERC), a partnership of the Naval Service, University College Cork, Cork Institute of Technology and National Maritime College Ireland, will facilitate development or host upwards of 180 new jobs in 2014.

Q4 Measure: Provide up to 165 construction jobs on site of Beaufort Laboratory and IMERC Campus services. (IMERC Partners)

Update: Complete

On target to meet the overall estimate of 165 jobs during construction. During the current reporting period, 54 construction staff are already on site, and additional staff will be brought on board as the project progresses to next phase in 2015.

Q4 Measure: Provide 10 start-up or enterprise expansion jobs at IMERC Innovation hub. (IMERC Partners)

Update: Complete

This target has been met for 2014. The latest announcements in Q4 relate to Resolute Marine Energy, Resolve Marine (both foreign direct investment) and Exceedence Ltd (a spin-out from University College Cork) who will all establish a presence in Cork with significant job creation potential. Progress has also been made on the physical infrastructure to support IMERC start-ups, with the coming on-stream of the modular incubator units in Q4. When fully occupied, these will provide 30 desk spaces for start-up companies.

Q4 Measure: Provide 20 research positions at Marine Renewable Energy Ireland (MAREI). (IMERC Partners)

Update: Complete

MAREI supports 56 research positions broken down across 10 Postdoctoral Researchers, 39 PhD Researchers and 7 Research Support Officer/Administrative posts.

Action 265: Maintain the number of farmers participating in DAFM's farm technology adoption programmes and increase by 150 the number of those using collaborative farming initiatives.

Q4 Measure: Develop a new dairy share farming model. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

The draft specimen dairy share farming agreement was completed in December 2014. There are minor changes needed following a legal review of the document. Dairy share farming cannot take place under the existing milk quota regulations. Therefore, these arrangements cannot commence until after the 1 April 2015 due to the milk quota

regulations. The second part to this is the financial modelling. There is a need to establish a minimum scale at which dairy share farming is an option for both the landowner and the share farmer to make a sufficient income. Case studies will be developed during 2015 to demonstrate this to farmers. The third element to this is the establishment of 3-4 demonstration farms located around the country, on which financial data will be collected and public events held to demonstrate how the model works over time and the benefits to both the Landowner and the Share Farmer. These farms will be set up during 2015.

Action 267: Achieve by end 2014 a cumulative total (since commencement of FH 2020) of 175 food companies supported by the Lean Manufacturing programme and 100 food clients in the Leadership 4 Growth programme, including International Selling programmes.

Q4 Measure: Promote and drive takeup of lean and leadership offers to achieve objective. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland's Lean Business Offer is designed to encourage clients to adopt Lean business principles in their organisation to increase performance and competitiveness. The Lean Business Offer is characterised by increasing levels of capability in implementing lean business principles and other best practice approaches to drive company awareness, adoption and integration of lean tools and techniques.

At the end of 2014, a cumulative total (since commencement of Food Harvest 2020) of 175 food companies have been supported by the Lean Manufacturing programme and 106 food clients participated on Enterprise Ireland management development programmes such as the Leadership 4 Growth programme and International Selling programmes.

Action 268: Support over 100 food SMEs through Teagasc Food SME Technology Support Programme and BIM Seafood Centre.

Q4 Measure: BIM to undertake pilot marketing of new Boarfish product, undertake a commercial test of fish product in conjunction with Bord Bia and a fish processor and examine other potential product options from boarfish including marine proteins. (BIM)

Update: Complete

BIM activity has been focussing on the boarfish, and the Seafood Development Centre has developed a range of new formats with this species, including minced products and value added formats which are being tested in China and Taiwan. Other work with boarfish includes exploring options for surimi and protein bases with international companies and the Irish pelagic group.

Q4 Measure: Develop filleted products from blue whiting for the Asian and African markets. (BIM)

Update: Complete

There has been some sales development in China for the blue whiting and one pelagic exporter is working on that market.

Action 270: Roll out a schedule of food related Ministerial Trade and Investment Missions and continue with technical and diplomatic efforts to improve trade and access for agri-food products.

Q4 Measure: Organise trade mission in second half of 2014. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

China Trade Mission

Minister Coveney was accompanied on his 5 day trade mission to China by 37 Companies and key executives from state agencies and officials from his Department. In addition to the Minister's Programme there were 5 separate parallel sectoral programmes for the dairy, pigmeat, beef, seafood and agri services sectors. The key focus of the trade mission was to:

- Progress market access for Irish beef;
- Showcase Ireland as a source of high quality sustainably produced dairy products;
- Expand opportunities for our seafood sector;
- Promote Ireland as strategic partners for agri-food and agri-services;
- Facilitate and foster increased business opportunities for Irish companies.

Minister Coveney had four meetings at ministerial level:

- Minister Han Changfu (Ministry of Agriculture);
- Minister Shi Suping (AQSIQ);
- Vice Minister Dr Li Yin China Food and Drugs Administration;
- Vice Minister Niu Dun (MOA) in Qingdao Seafood Expo.

As a result:

- a) Minister Han Changfu (Ministry of Agriculture) will visit Ireland in April 2015;
- b) Vice Minister Dr Li Yin China Food and Drugs Administration advised that there will be a ministerial visit to Ireland next year also. MOU to be developed between CFDA

and DAFM /SFSI.

B.Beef/Bovine Semen /Sheepmeat:

- a) During the meeting in Beijing between Minister Coveney and Minister Zhi Shuping on 3 November, 2014, Minister Zhi announced that a beef inspection visit would be undertaken in early December. This is a significant development and if the report of the inspection visit is positive, it will hopefully be the start of the process to lifting the ban on export of 30 month beef to China. Officials are already preparing for this visit.
- b) Securing access to China will be a major boost to the Irish beef industry and complements the other market access successes we have had in the last 12 months including Japan, the Philippines and the Lebanon. Significant progress with the US and Canada to secure access there and it is hoped that Irish beef will be available on supermarket shelves and in restaurants very soon.
- c) Agreement was also reached on a certificate for the export of bovine semen to China which will allow the first Irish company (Dovea) to export to the Chinese market. The company has already signed an agreement with a Chinese company to supply product to China.
- d) Minister Coveney also formally submitted to AQSIQ the completed sheepmeat questionnaire marking the first step in securing access for Irish sheepmeat to China.

C) Dairy :

- a) **Dairy Seminar:** A major Dairy seminar was held in Beijing, raising awareness of Ireland as a premium dairy producer for Chinese buyers and consumers and highlighting Irish dairy products as safe, secure and sustainable, built on the successful audit of Ireland's Dairy systems and establishments earlier this year by the Chinese authorities. It included speakers from all of the main Infant formula companies who have located in Ireland in addition to Irish indigenous dairy companies who all export to China. The seminar was aimed at further increasing Ireland's presence in the fast growing Chinese market, which has already seen growth of 100% in the last two years and last year was worth €270m. It is understood that important follow up business may emerge from this seminar.

b)Launch /Promotion of a number of premium dairy Irish products on sale in China.

- Launch of Avonmore UHT liquid milk in China by Glanbia's distribution partner Milkmore, produced in Lough Egish, County Monaghan,
- Launch of Kerrygold UHT milk in retail stores
- Infant formula: Promotion of Kerry/ Beingmate Infant formula 'Green Love'

emphasising the Irish origin of the product., Minister Coveney provided a letter of endorsement on behalf of the Irish Government highlighting Kerry's reputation as a supplier of premium dairy product and ingredients produced to the most rigorous food safety and reliability standards.

- Infant formula: Wyeth super premium and premium infant formula with Irish flag, sourced from Askeaton; Launch of a video promotion using Chinese film star.
- Infant formula Instore promotion: Launch of Abbott 'Eleva Blue' product sourced in Cootehill. Minister Coveney provided a letter of endorsement on behalf of the Irish Government highlighting Abbott's reputation as a supplier of premium dairy product and ingredients produced to the most rigorous food safety and reliability standards.

C) MOU Agreement on pilot E certification scheme on dairy designed to ensure that any barriers to trade in dairy in relation to certification can be addressed before arrival of product in China.

D) Seafood

- Opening by Minister Coveney of the largest ever Irish pavilion at the China Seafood and Fisheries Expo which took place in Qingdao and included representatives from eleven Irish seafood companies, with in excess of 25,000 visitors from over 100 countries, facilitating business to business contacts.
- MOU Agreement between DAFM and AQSIQ on on the safety of fisheries products and market access procedures for seafood exports which will lay the foundations for a smoother process for the importation of Irish aquatic products to lucrative Chinese markets.

E) Agri services :

- Substantive progress in advancing commercial relationships and contracts in China including Samco, Keenan's, UCD and Dovea.

F) Irish Food promotion secured with World biggest online retailer TMall

A major Irish themed sales promotion is planned on Tmall to coincide with the global St Patrick's Day celebrations in March 2015. With over 400 million registered users and more than 100 million unique daily visitors Tmall.com will enable Irish food and beverage producers to access millions of consumers throughout China.

Action 272: Support the launch of 3 new cheese products through Teagasc and the Irish Dairy Board by end 2014.

Q4 Measure: Provide scientific support for commercialisation of new technology for production of fresh white cheese for Middle East markets. (Teagasc, Irish Dairy Board)

Update: Complete

On-going scientific support is being provided to facilitate the commercialisation of new technology for production of fresh white cheese for Middle East markets.

Q4 Measure: Commercial optimisation of a continental-type cheese for launch. (Teagasc, Irish Dairy Board)

Update: Complete

A continental-type cheese (Kildery) was launched on the market in Germany during Q3-Q4 2014. It is branded under the Kerrygold label and also won a gold medal at the global cheese awards during this period.

Action 273: Implement Phase 2 of Food for Health Ireland which will focus on commercialisation of compounds developed in Phase 1.

Q4 Measure: Arrange 8 industry specific visits and achieve 3 global food projects. (EI)

Update: Complete

In order to market the novel ingredients developed by Food for Health Ireland (FHI), the Industry Partners lead visits to potential customers' sites to present the research outputs. Following a significant effort by the Industry Partners, supported by the FHI team, 43 visits have taken place as of 12 December 2014; this is against a target of 8. Food for Health Ireland also manage a number of industry sponsored research projects with Global Food companies which are not currently part of the FHI consortium. This serves to market the research capabilities available to industry in Ireland, and highlight the involvement of the Industry Partners in the programme. 3 global food projects have been identified with 2 active projects currently underway with a Global Food company and the third at an advanced stage of development.

Q4 Measure: Offer 3 FHI results to industry to achieve 2 evaluation licences and 1 commercial licence. (EI)

Update: Complete

As Food for Health Ireland research develops commercially valuable results (intellectual property), these results are formally made available to the company participants through a defined process outlined in an Intellectual Property management agreement. Three such

results have been made available to Industry following the December 2014 meeting of the Food for Health Ireland Board and an option period will commence on 5th January 2015, it is anticipated that a number of commercial licenses will be negotiated during this option period.

Action 274: Collaborate to identify priority strategic research opportunities in support of the Dairy processing centre.

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

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland is working closely with Teagasc and, via the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM), with other research funders to coordinate research priorities for the wider Food Sector, including the Dairy Processing Centre. As part of this initiative, EI and Teagasc intend to coordinate the joint announcement of two significant investments to support the strategic research needs of the Dairy Processing Sector. The first is the investment in the establishment of the Dairy Processing Technology centre, and the second is an investment by Teagasc and the DAFM in a significant upgrading of the Dairy Processing pilot plant at Teagasc's Food Research Centre in Moorepark Co. Cork. Both of these investments include significant co-funding from the Dairy Industry.

Action 275: With industrial clients, progress commercialisation of new dairy ingredient/processes.

Q4 Measure: Complete trials on development of a new thermal process with client. Complete trial work with dairy processor on a novel milk powder. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

Trials with industrial clients have been completed and have contributed to the development of an industrial process. Milk powder trials have been successfully completed and the product is currently being optimised through additional trials.

Action 277: Engage with Industry to evaluate the need for a Meat Technology Centre to support the needs of the Meat Sector.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Following a significant period of consultation with the Irish Meat Processing sector, a call for

proposals for the establishment of a Meat Technology Centre was launched in December 2014. This call, which invites Expressions of Interest from all Research Performing Organisations in the State, will close on 23 February 2015. The proposals will be reviewed by a panel of international experts in Q1 2015 and successful applicants will be invited to submit full proposals early in Q2. Subject to a successful outcome of the review process, it is anticipated that the Technology Centre will be established in Q3 2015.

Action 278: Launch and implement an industry developed whiskey strategy.

Q4 Measure: Engage with industry partners and commence strategy implementation. (IBEC, DAFM, EI)

Update: Complete

On 30 October 2014 the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) submitted the 'technical file' for Irish Whiskey to the EU Commission to secure ongoing protection of the Irish Whiskey/Uisce Beatha Eireannach/Irish Whisky Geographical Indication within the EU and in bilateral trade agreements concluded by the EU with third countries. The development of the file over several years by industry and DAFM, which consulted DardNi and Defra (UK), underpins the implementation of the whiskey strategy. Investment momentum by existing distilleries and new entrants continued and in certain cases benefited from EI supports. Progress on initial implementation measures was reviewed on 27 November by the Food Harvest 2020 Implementation Committee. The Irish Whiskey Association (IBEC) highlighted priorities to support expansion, given the capital required for investment and storage for perhaps 5 years and the importance of marketing.

Action 279: Launch and implement a strategy for the Prepared Consumer Foods Sector.

Q4 Measure: Engage with industry partners and commence strategy implementation. (IBEC, DAFM)

Update: Complete

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) has signalled the various agency supports available, IBEC has engaged with public agencies on possible sources of investment funds, DAFM made a presentation to the board of the Irish Strategic Investment Fund on 16 December 2014. DAFM, industry and agencies met on 6 January 2015 to assess progress.

Action 280: Progress the development/licensing of large scale Deep Sea finfish aquaculture sites in line with the road map set out in Food Harvest 2020 Milestones report.

Q4 Measure: Expedite the completion of the application process. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) continues to take the necessary steps to expedite the completion of the application process. The Department is carefully considering the applications.

Action 281: Increase the number of aquaculture licence determinations to 200-250.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAFM)

Update: Delayed

There has been a slowdown in licence determinations due to the non-availability of finalised Appropriate Assessments in respect of which there needs to be broad consensus between the Marine Institute and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, on the scientific inputs. Outstanding Appropriate Assessments were received from the Marine Institute in Q4 which will enable the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) to resume momentum in respect of licence determinations in Q1 2015.

Action 282: Launch the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme (RDP) with measures supporting farm sustainability.

Q4 Measure: Launch agreed RDP and commence implementation. (DAFM)

Update: Delayed

Ireland's draft RDP was submitted in July 2014. Having received the EU Commission's formal observations on 20 October an intensive bilateral process is now underway with a view to the formal agreement and adoption of the RDP in early 2015.

Action 283: By end-2014, achieve target of 75% of food and drinks exports being supplied by companies participating in the Origin Green Sustainability Programme.

Q4 Measure: 75% of exports covered by companies that are verified members of the Origin Green programme. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete

75% target met - 77 companies are verified members of the Origin Green programme.

Action 286: Track outcomes and new business development from the Bord Bia 2013 Global Sustainability Conference.

Q4 Measure: Reported increased sales by market and sector. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete

The following figures are the values of the incremental business companies attribute to contacts made around the Sustainability Conference:

€27m in total (Middle East €15.4m.; Western Europe €5.7m; Asia €3.5m.; Africa €1m.; USA €0.9m.; Russia and Eastern Europe €0.5m; €18.4m for dairy; €3.5m for seafood; €4.1m for Meat, €0.8m for Prepared Foods and €0.1m for Alcoholic Beverages).

Q4 Measure: Number of companies reporting increased business. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete

22 companies have achieved new business to date with a further 20 engaged in negotiations.

Action 288: Undertake an independent cost benefit analysis in the area of Agri-Taxation with a view to ensuring maximum benefit to the sector and to the wider economy and bringing forward recommendations for Budget 2015.

Q4 Measure: Submit recommendations for consideration for Budget 2015. (D/Finance, DAFM)

Update: Complete

The Agri-Tax Review was published as part of Budget 2015. Arising from the recommendations in the Review, a number of tax measures have been introduced in the Finance Act 2015 to support farming.

9.2 Green Economy

Action 293: Publish a National Bioenergy Strategy, setting out the Government's medium term plans in relation to this area.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

A Draft Bioenergy Plan was published in October 2014 which is subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment. The Plan is available at: <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/NR/rdonlyres/4B809564-5709-41C1-AB37-3CF772ECD693/0/BioenergyPlan.pdf>

Action 295: Invest in energy efficiency retrofitting of Local Authority houses, with a target of completing some 12,500 homes and supporting 1,000 jobs in 2014.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

The energy efficiency retrofitting of Local Authority houses has continued successfully in 2014, with an approximate spend of €30m. The energy efficiency retrofitting programme will result in improvements in the thermal efficiency of these homes and improved comfort levels. The programme will also see lower energy bills to thousands of local authority tenants. It is supporting hundreds of jobs in the green energy sector, in work which is labour intensive by its nature.

Action 296: Provide €13.5 million for the Better Energy Communities scheme, €20 million for the Better Energy Homes scheme and €20 million for the Better Energy Warmer Homes scheme in 2014, which collectively will sustain 3,500 jobs in energy efficiency installations.

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

Update: Complete

€57m of direct funding was provided for energy efficiency programmes in 2014. This funding supported 47 projects under the Better Energy Areas programme and a further 80 projects under the Better Energy Communities programme. As well as supporting efficiency projects in businesses and community and local facilities, these programmes retrofitted approximately 3,000 homes, the majority of them in energy poverty. A further 18,500 homes were upgraded with grant assistance under the Better Energy Homes and Better

Energy Warmer Homes programme.

Action 299: Promote Ireland as a test bed in the areas of renewable energy and grid development and work with industry and researchers to develop opportunities for test-bedding Smart Grid technologies.

Q4 Measure: Review process complete and funding decision made through the SFI Partnership programme. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The SFI Partnership Programme aims to provide a flexible mechanism by which SFI can build strategic collaborations with key partners such as industry, funding agencies, charities, philanthropic organisations or higher education institutes (HEIs) with the goal of co-funding outstanding opportunities. The Partnership Programme is a Rolling call. Through this programme SFI has funded 2 highly innovative projects of relevance to the area.

Through the SFI Research Centres programme the Connect Research Centre was funded. This Research Centre includes more than €1 million in funding for major test-bed integration and management.

Q4 Measure: The National Smart Grid Implementation Advisory Group will develop a structured access and contracting framework for a distributed national smart grid test bed and assist a number of companies in developing Smart Grid test bedding projects. (SEAI, EI, IDA, SFI)

Update: Complete

In 2014, Irish state agencies have assisted and provided support to a number of Irish companies in the development and testing of significant smart grid projects. A report has been compiled by the National Smart Grid Implementation Advisory Group on the progress of these projects.

Action 302: Develop an internet resource, signposting the range of supports available to Irish enterprises to help them reduce energy, materials usage, water and waste, and develop new and innovative green products and services.

Q4 Measure: Compile the necessary data, information and links. (DJEI)

Q4 Measure: Launch page on Department's website and publicise, including through social media. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

For Ireland, the Green Economy presents a major opportunity for employment creation and the development of indigenous enterprise and the export of innovative products and services. Many Irish companies have already established their credentials as world leaders in providing green goods and services internationally. In Ireland, the term Green Economy covers activities such as sustainable food production, tourism, green financial services, green products and services, waste management, water and waste water management, renewable energy, smart grids and energy efficiency. A new page on the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation's website has been completed and is now live providing up to date information on:

- The supports available to cut costs by greening your business and the support available for green business;
- Clusters and research centres operating in the Green Economy in Ireland;
- Web resources for news and updates on Green Economy activity in Ireland; and
- The main Government policy documents related the Green Economy in Ireland.

Action 303: Review the potential for job creation through the greater use of waste as a resource in Ireland including through the preparing for reuse, recycling/reprocessing and recovery of waste and explore what additional actions are required to stimulate the further development of indigenous recycling and recovery infrastructure

Q4 Measure: Introduction of legislation to revise the regulation of household waste collection as set out in national waste policy, informed by the waste consultation undertaken. (DECLG)

Update: Delayed

Providing enabling powers to reform the regulatory framework applying to household waste collection will first necessitate primary legislation by way of amendments to the Waste Management Act 1996. It is proposed to introduce such amendments at the 3rd (Committee) Stage of the Environment (Miscellaneous) Provisions Bill 2014. The passage of that Bill has been delayed, however it is due to go to Second Stage shortly. It is still the intention that the provisions of the new legislation will apply from 1 July 2015, notwithstanding this delay.

Q4 Measure: Changes to the regulation of household waste collection to be communicated to stakeholders through the National Waste Forum. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

The members of the National Waste Forum have been updated on legislative developments and the fact that the regulatory framework will be introduced in early 2015. A meeting of

the Waste Forum will be held once the new legislation has been introduced to discuss it in more detail.

Q4 Measure: Oversight of the roll-out by industry of a communications strategy on the new provisions of the revised legislation governing household waste collection to householders. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) has engaged with the household waste collection industry in relation to the development of a communication strategy for the reform of household waste collection. The Department is now taking a broader approach on this issue and with the support of industry, Repak, the EPA and local authorities will roll out a comprehensive public awareness and education campaign, beginning at the end of 2014 and ramping up in 2015.

9.3 Construction and Property

Action 312: Implement the Government Action Programme on Unfinished Housing Developments and specifically the Budget 2014 Special Resolution Fund.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

€9.8m was allocated under the 2014 Special Resolution Fund; this funding, approved by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, for allocation to SRF projects leveraged some €15m in private sector funding from bonds, etc.

Action 322: Facilitate the development of a robust voluntary register of Builders, Contractors and Construction Trades to be available to registrants from 1 March 2014 and further developed in consultation with relevant statutory agencies.

Q4 Measure: Publish heads of a bill to ensure a statutory register is in place by 2015. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) is up and running since 1 March 2014 on a voluntary basis in tandem with the coming into effect of the Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014. Over 460 construction businesses have registered to date with the voluntary register (i.e. Construction Industry Register Ireland) and over 700 further

applications are at various stages of completion. Arrangements to place the register on a statutory footing in 2015 are well advanced.

Action 326: In collaboration with key stakeholders (public and private sector) we will consider and report on the potential for latent defects insurance as an ultimate form of redress for consumers and homeowners.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG)

Update: Delayed

A draft position paper has been prepared for approval by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government, and the Minister for Finance. Following feedback from the Department of Finance, consultations will be arranged with industry stakeholders to obtain their views and a report will be prepared with recommendations on the matter. It is anticipated that the proposed report will be complete by end Q1 2015.

Action 331: Oversee implementation by Local Authorities of a programme of works to improve the quality and enhance the energy efficiency of the existing Local Authorities housing stock.

Q4 Measure: Issue Circular on Phase 3 of the DECLG Energy Efficiency Fabric Upgrade Programme. (DECLG, SEAI)

Update: Delayed

The Energy Efficiency Fabric Upgrade Programme, which commenced in June 2013, is being implemented very successfully by the Local Authorities with an approximate spend in 2014 of €30m. The aim of Phases 1 and 2 of the scheme is to ensure that the entire social housing stock will have, as a minimum, wall insulation and attic insulation. Phase 1 is focused on cavity wall insulation and attic insulation. Phase 2 will focus on dwellings with solid wall construction i.e. external insulation, and windows and doors. Phase 3 will focus on ensuring all houses are fully insulated. Initially the structure of the programme was for each local authority to move immediately to Phase 2 on completion of Phase 1 and then to Phase 3. However it has been decided that Phase 2 will only commence when all local authorities have completed Phase 1. Therefore Phase 2 has not yet commenced on a nationwide basis and Phase 1 will continue into 2015. The energy efficiency retrofitting programme will result in improvements in the thermal efficiency of these homes and improved comfort levels all around. The programme will also see lower energy bills to thousands of local authority tenants. It is supporting hundreds of jobs in the green energy sector, in work which is labour intensive by its nature.

9.4 Tourism

Action 332: Deliver a programme of supports to businesses in the tourism sector, including developing visitor experiences, growing digital presence and international sales, to help them grow earnings and jobs.

Q4 Measure: Work with tourism businesses to develop compelling new visitor experiences that attract more overseas holidaymakers and grow export earnings. (Fáilte Ireland, DTTAS)

Update: Complete

Based on the feedback from the tourism businesses that worked with Fáilte Ireland (FI), those in receipt of developmental supports appear to have out-performed the markets across several metrics.

Q4 Measure: Work with tourism businesses to improve their digital presence in terms of online marketing/sales to enable them to perform more effectively in a growing distribution channel and improve their capacity to sell internationally (and growing overseas sales revenue). (Fáilte Ireland, DTTAS)

Update: Complete

Based on the feedback from the tourism businesses that worked with Fáilte Ireland (FI), those in receipt of developmental supports appear to have out-performed the markets across several metrics, including growing overall business and the share of business coming from international sales.

Q4 Measure: Provide a suite of specific up-skilling interventions designed to meet the needs of the tourism industry workforce (particularly in the area of Food & Beverage operations). (Fáilte Ireland, DTTAS)

Update: Complete

Fáilte Ireland (FI) are working with Solas around the hospitality apprenticeship programme and will also engage with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation/Expert Group on Future Skills Needs on their review of hospitality skills.

Action 338: Review the accommodation registration and classification framework to lower the regulatory burden on business and encourage innovation.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (Fáilte Ireland, DTTAS)

Update: Complete

As the review is now complete, a new regulatory model will be introduced over the course of 2015.

Action 339: Improve the Tourism Offering through capital investment of €24.2 million in 2014, in particular through the development of international scale attractions such as the Wild Atlantic Way.

Q4 Measure: Complete the funding process for ten projects approved under the Tourism Capital Investment Programme. (DTTAS, Fáilte Ireland)

Q4 Measure: Implement funding of Wild Atlantic Way Project supported by €8m allocation in Budget 2014. (DTTAS, Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Complete

The capital funds allocated in 2014 will deliver several significant international scale attractions that will help (a) to showcase what Ireland has to offer potential tourists; and (b) to provide memorable experiences to actual visitors, with a particular emphasis on bringing the Wild Atlantic Way ‘to life’ for international tourists.

Action 340: Complete a review of tourism policy leading to a detailed tourism strategy and action plan to assist the industry to realise its growth potential.

Q4 Measure: Finalise a new detailed tourism strategy and action plan. (DTTAS, Key Tourism Industry stakeholders)

Update: Complete

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport finalised a new Tourism Policy Statement, “People, Place and Policy – Growing Tourism to 2025” in Q4 2014. It provides a policy framework to support continued growth in tourism over the next ten years.

9.5 Retail Sector

Action 342: Through the Retail Consultation Forum, assess the impact on the Retail sector and consumer confidence of measures being taken under the Action Plan, including:

- retention of the 9% VAT rate on certain services and products;
- the introduction of the Home Renovation tax incentive scheme;
- the JobsPlus scheme.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, Forum members, Relevant Departments/agencies)

Update: Complete

The impact on the Retail sector of the 9% VAT rate, the Home Renovation Incentive scheme and the JobsPlus scheme has been examined by the Retail Consultation Forum. Though primarily aimed at the Hospitality sector, the reduced VAT rate has had a beneficial knock-on effect on retail and applied directly to newspapers, other printed matter and certain other retail products and services. There was strong support from the retail members of the Consultation Forum for the continuation of the 9% VAT rate. A pre-Budget submission on proposals arising from discussions in the Retail Forum was prepared and forwarded to the Department of Finance in September 2014. This submission called, inter alia, for the retention of the 9% VAT rate. The VAT rate was retained in Budget 2015. While there was a general welcome for the Home Renovation Initiative (HRI) by representatives of the retail sector, an awareness campaign to outline the positive impacts of the scheme for homeowners might increase the uptake of the scheme. In their pre-Budget submission, the retail members of the Consultation Forum called on the Minister for Finance to consider broadening the scope of the scheme and extending it beyond the end of 2015. The broadening of the scheme in Budget 2015 to include rental accommodation will further support areas of the retail sector. There are mixed views about the effectiveness within the retail sector of the JobsPlus scheme which is administered by the Department of Social Protection. While it is deemed broadly useful, some employers still have issues around administration, awareness and guidelines. Some difficulties had been experienced in attempting to hire people under the scheme, with many candidates not proving eligible for the scheme the end of the selection process. Additional funding has been provided for the JobsPlus scheme in 2015.

Action 349: Extend the ‘Living Cities’ initiative to Cork, Galway, Kilkenny and Dublin to assist the regeneration of retail and commercial districts. Retailers will be entitled to relief on certain works undertaken to upgrade or refit their shops over a period of seven years at a

rate of 15% for the first 6 years and 10% for the final year. The scheme will also attract more families to live in previously run-down areas which will in turn provide benefits to local traders. This Initiative is subject to EU State Aid approval and a commencement order.

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

Update: Complete

In Finance (No. 2) Act 2013 the Living City Initiative was extended to all 6 cities (Limerick, Waterford, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny and Dublin). In Finance Act 2014, amendments were made to cap the tax relief at €200,000 for commercial undertakings, to introduce a reporting system for the relief, and to simplify the scheme. These amendments brought the scheme in line with the de minimis Regulation, and thus agreement has been reached with the EU Commission. Discussions are taking place with the local authorities in each city to finalise eligible areas in time for the full roll-out of the initiative in 2015.

9.6 Creative Services

Action 357: Roll-out further cultural digitisation initiatives by adding new digitised genealogy and family records to the www.irishgenealogy.ie portal, in order to enhance Ireland's roots tourism offering.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (DAHG)

Update: Complete

The roll-out is an ongoing multi-annual project; in 2014, with the agreement of the General Register office, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) commenced the process of making the indices available with the proposed launch of the indices due to take place in 2015. This Action will continue to feature in the Action Plan for Jobs for 2015.

Action 358: Advance the 1916 Commemoration and Decade of Centenaries programmes, including capital projects at the GPO, which will directly and indirectly support job creation, as well as cultural tourism. The national programme marking Brian Ború and the Battle of Clontarf will also be supported.

Q4 Measure: Planning permission, tendering and commencement of projects. (DAHG, An Post, other relevant bodies)

Update: Complete

The capital project at the GPO is progressing according to schedule. Full planning permission

has been received and the appointed contractor is now on site. Consultants have already been appointed for the design and fit-out of the museum and will be in a position to install the exhibition as per the overall programme in November 2015. The capital project at Teach an Phiarsaigh in Ros Muc in the Conamara Gaeltacht is also on schedule. Site Acquisition preparatory works completed and ready to initiate. Procurement of full design team and related services commenced, Planning permission has been sought and an interpretation specialist has been sought via eTenders. Ireland 2016, a major Government initiative to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising, to celebrate our achievements as a nation and to look towards the next 100 years, was launched and a wide scale consultation process is underway to deliver an ambitious programme of initiatives and events.

Action 360: Roll out a new €5 million Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme to encourage investment of private capital through matching public funds in a large number of small-scale, labour-intensive projects to repair and conserve historic structures, while supporting the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craft workers and trades people. This initiative will be linked to a targeted training scheme in traditional building skills.

Q4 Measure: Allocate funding to specific private projects. (DAHG, Local Authorities)

Update: Complete

The allocation of €5 million in funding through the Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme in 2014 has re-ignited private sector investment in heritage buildings nationwide. The scheme operated throughout 2014 and was administered by the 31 local authorities, supporting 540 projects nationwide. The scheme has generated over 42,000 days of direct employment, or the equivalent of approximately 175 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, in the construction sector in 2014.

Action 362: Promote an initiative to drive heritage tourism initiatives across DAHG, including a programme of trailway development in National Parks and Nature Reserves, in partnership with key stakeholders.

Q4 Measure: Dialogue with key stakeholders to identify potential initiatives. (DAHG, NPWS, National Trails Office, Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Complete

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) has developed a Cultural Tourism Action Plan. It is collaborating with Fáilte Ireland and the National Trails Office of the Irish Sports Council to see how the trails network in our parks and reserves – particularly

along the west coast – can be enhanced to develop the tourism experience along the Wild Atlantic Way. The first phase of the partnership project will involve a comprehensive trails audit and market research to determine the value and strengths of the existing trails network at the National Parks and selected nature reserves along the Wild Atlantic Way. It will also identify the challenges faced and the actions and resources required to enhance the tourism offering at these properties, focussing particularly on how the visitor experience can be enhanced and promoted, and the trail networks can be further developed into a world class signature visitor experience along the 'Wild Atlantic Way'. This initial phase of the project will provide a methodology and valuable baseline information that can then be applied to the assessment and future development and marketing of the trails offering at other National Parks and nature reserves elsewhere in the country.

Action 363: Support a range of projects through the Heritage Management Grant Scheme 2014 that apply good heritage practice to the management of places, collections or objects (including buildings).

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

Update: Complete

The Heritage Council Management Grants Scheme created the equivalent of 13 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs from a spend of just under €470,000 in 2014. 7 of these FTE jobs were skilled and 6 were unskilled. The jobs were spread over individual projects predominantly in rural Ireland.

Action 364: Create 520 new jobs and retain 7,000 existing jobs in the Gaeltacht through Údarás na Gaeltachta support in post-research/pre-commercialisation units in the Life Sciences, Food and Business Support Services and Creative Enterprises sectors and ongoing support for community development initiatives.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (Údarás na Gaeltachta)

Update: Complete

Job creation target was exceeded with 737 new jobs being created and 7,053 jobs retained in Údarás client companies in 2014. Údarás na Gaeltachta continues to focus on the provision and promotion of supports for indigenous start-ups. It continues to fund a range of enterprise and development initiatives with a focus on employment creation and enterprise development. An tÚdarás continues to fund a range of community and local development programmes which have as their objective the creation of greater skills and capacity at community level in a range of enterprise and language planning initiatives.

9.8 International Financial Services

Action 370: Examine Ireland’s current approach to the branding, marketing and communications of its International Financial Services proposition, make proposals for change as appropriate and develop a suitable implementation strategy.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA, CHG, D/Finance, EI)

Update: Complete

The findings and recommendations have been inputted to the process of developing a new Government Strategy for the International Financial Services sector under the Minister of State at the Departments of Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of the Taoiseach with Special Responsibility for the OPW, Public procurement, and International Banking (including IFSC), Mr. Simon Harris, T.D. This strategy will include proposals on Branding and Marketing that reflect the research, analysis and consultation undertaken through this APJ action. The action involved discussions with Branding specialists Simon Anholt and Genesis to understand how best to develop and position a new brand representation for Ireland’s international financial services industry. An industry workshop was held with a cross section of companies and other stakeholders to consider the approach to branding, marketing and communications. The main conclusion of the research and consultation exercise was that any proposal to modify or develop the branding of the sector in Ireland should be Strategy-led and flow from an analysis of the development potential of the industry and the focus of future growth and public policy initiatives. In this context, it was decided to input these findings into the process of developing a new Government Strategy for the industry which commenced in Q4 2014.

Action 371: Assess opportunities for Ireland as an international hub for global insurance operations, including those opportunities arising from the Solvency II Directive.

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

Update: Complete

Consultation and analysis around opportunities in this area was conducted including through a high level roundtable attended by CEOs of insurance companies and the enterprise agencies. A number of job creation opportunities in the international Insurance sector were identified and this analysis is feeding into the new Strategy for the International Financial Services Sector which is currently being finalised.

Action 372: Assess Technology and Innovation opportunities in the sector including skills availability and educational requirements.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (CHG, D/Finance, DJEI, IDA, EI)

Update: Complete

A Working Group of public and private sector stakeholders was established to assess technology and innovation opportunities in the sector which met on a number of occasions and identified specific domains of opportunity, as well as enablers to allow Ireland to compete to increase “fintech” employment in Ireland. The new International Financial Services Strategy will include a number of actions reflecting the work conducted in 2014.

Action 374: Undertake a benchmarking exercise on the legislative and regulatory environment in Ireland.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance, Public Sector CHG Members)

Update: Complete

Four workshops were held, in June 2014, to collate information from representative bodies and institutions; this formed the basis of a report on the legislative and regulatory environment in Ireland, which was then presented to the IFS Strategy Group in July.

Action 375: Connect international financial services companies with the expanding network of industry relevant technology and research centres e.g. Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC), INSIGHT and CeADAR in data & analytics, IC4 in cloud computing and FMC2 in financial mathematics.

Q4 Measure: Organise a comprehensive briefing for clients on the work and service offering of the Centres and input this briefing to the work of the Clearing House Group (CHG) on financial technology and innovation and compliance and risk management. (IDA)

Update: Complete

IDA highlighted the work of the research and technology centres to relevant clients through 2014. The Head of International Financial Services at IDA sits on the Industry Steering Board (ISB) of the Governance, Risk and Compliance Technology Centre (GRCTC), which was formally launched by the Taoiseach in Q4 2014. Key clients have and will continue to be introduced to the work of this and the other Centres. The industry relevant capabilities within the Centres especially with respect to data and analytics, risk management, compliance, financial technology including cloud computing and quantitative finance were inputted to the work of the Clearing House on a new Government Strategy for the

International Financial Services sector.

Action 376: Refine and execute a promotion and marketing plan for Ireland’s international financial services offering in emerging markets.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

Financial Services Division and Growth Markets Division in IDA are partnering effectively and this has resulted in increased focus on financial services in Brazil, Russia, India, China and the Gulf States (Islamic Finance). Several aircraft leasing projects were won in 2014 including from both China and Russia. IDA Financial Services Division has assigned an executive to support our marketing efforts in China where we also have a dedicated financial services marketing executive.

The year concluded with an overseas marketing mission targeting leading financial services companies in China as part of the President’s State visit in December 2014. A dedicated financial services event was hosted by the Minister for Finance in Beijing and attended by the President. Companies met included ICBC, China Construction Bank and Agricultural Bank of China.

9.9 eHealth

Action 379: Establish eHealth Ireland and appoint a Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Irish healthcare system to drive implementation of eHealth Strategy

Q4 Measure: Establish an eHealth stakeholder forum including key representatives of the enterprise sector and relevant Government Departments and agencies to work with the board and management of eHealth Ireland. (D/Health, HSE (eHealth Ireland))

Update: Delayed

A CIO/Chief Officer has been appointed and took up the post in December 2014. The CIO will be the Chief Officer of eHealth Ireland and responsible for the establishment of eHealth Ireland within the HSE and the establishment of an eHealth Stakeholder Forum. The structure and role for the eHealth Stakeholder Forum will be considered by the Board of eHealth Ireland in the context of the establishment of the eHealth Ecosystem.

Action 381: Publish a plan with timelines for delivery of priority projects in the context of the overall ehealth strategy including roll-out of the national patient identifier infrastructure.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (HSE (eHealth Ireland))

Update: Delayed

A Health Identifiers Project Steering Group has been established in the HSE chaired by the National Director Primary Care. A Business Lead has been appointed and a project plan is expected to be available early in 2015. The Identifiers Project is included in HSE Service Plan 2015 as well as the HSE Corporate Plan 2015-2017. Other eHealth projects will be time-lined when the CIO has signed off on the HSE ICT strategy.

9.10 Smart Ageing

Action 384: Assess the opportunities that may arise from this mapping exercise and agree next steps as appropriate.

Q4 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Taoiseach, relevant Government Departments and Agencies)

Update: Complete

Following on from the mapping of Ireland's ecosystem for smart ageing from a broad economic and social perspective, an assessment of the potential smart ageing opportunities areas was carried out and the Steering Group on Smart Ageing agreed on the next steps; to prepare a report for Government by end Q1 2015 with recommendations on measures that could be taken to maximise this potential.

9.11 Social Enterprise

Action 385: Develop the Social Enterprise sector by undertaking a programme of actions on foot of the Forfás Report on Social Enterprise in Ireland

Q4 Measure: Establish a set of short, medium and long-term goals for developing the Sector. (DECLG, DSP, DAFM, D/Health, DAHG, DJEI, other relevant Departments and Agencies)

Update: Complete

The Social Enterprise spectrum ranges from enterprises that are fully supported by the State through to a small number of commercially trading companies. Therefore, mapping the sector and identifying the supports required is a challenge for policy makers. In this context immediate actions required were identified by the Group and a small joint working-group was also established to prepare a work-plan based on short, medium and long-term goals. Progress to date includes:

- Social Enterprise has been specifically included in the goals and objectives of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) to be commenced in 2015.
- The groundwork has been laid for the participation of the Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Task Force (SEETF) in the training provided to the new Local Enterprise Offices. This will enable the sector to influence LEO's understanding of Social Enterprise requirements and to ensure its message is uniformly and clearly presented countrywide.
- The Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2014, administered by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG), is to make available an allocation of up to €1m Capital funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund to support the development of social enterprises that have the capacity to deliver local sustainable jobs in disadvantaged areas for economically and socially disadvantaged persons. In addition, DECLG has placed a contract with Social Innovation Fund Ireland to provide up to €5 million Dormant Accounts funding over the next three years (which will be matched with an equivalent amount of funding from private philanthropic sources) for a fund that will provide growth capital to Ireland's best social innovations, investing in solutions to social problems in this country, which will assist economic recovery and job creation.
- Discussions with the Central Statistics Office have taken place on the inclusion of Social Enterprise in CSO data collection. The Group have also engaged with representatives from Credit Unions to discuss supports for Social Enterprises.
- Meetings with Dr. Denise Crossan, Assistant Professor in Social Entrepreneurship, Trinity College Dublin regarding the academic definitions and classifications of social enterprise and her work on developing a digital map of social enterprises in Ireland.

Medium and Long-term Goals include:

- The group is exploring mechanisms to develop capacity in the sector and examine how best to access EU funds e.g. the new EU Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme has a Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axis dedicated to support for access to micro-finance and social entrepreneurship.
- The inclusion of social impact clauses in public procurement. SEETF have recently agreed to engage with an external expert, on behalf of the Inter Departmental Group and the Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Task Force to advance the matter. Following

these discussions, it is intended that the IDG will engage with the Office of Government Procurement in relation to the scope for inclusion of social impact clauses in public procurement.

Ongoing Measures

2. Disruptive Reforms in 2014

2.1 Entrepreneurship

Action 10: Using additional funding secured, develop a range of new initiatives in 2014 to support Youth Entrepreneurship and young people with a business idea to start their own business, to be delivered through the LEOs.

Ongoing Measure: Rollout of initiatives, to include national and local advertising; local and national competitive selection processes; delivery of focused workshops and bootcamps, etc. (EI, LEOs, Microfinance Ireland, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Taoiseach and the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation launched Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur competition on 15 May. This initiative was delivered through the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). In all, over 1,000 applications were received by the 31 LEOs from entrepreneurs aged under 30. Some 400 of those applicants participated in boot-camps and mentoring programmes around the country since then.

Supported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the nationwide competition represents an overall investment fund of €2 million awarded to county winners and national winners. The aim of the initiative is to encourage and support a culture of entrepreneurship among young people in Ireland, to promote entrepreneurship as a career choice, and to encourage the establishment and development of new innovative businesses by Ireland's young entrepreneurs. This is hugely important for job-creation as two thirds of all new jobs are generated by businesses in the first five years of existence – more start-ups and a thriving entrepreneurial culture will lead to more jobs being created.

Three Category Winners from each LEO were selected to share an investment fund of €50,000, while progressing to the Regional Finals of the competition. These 93 Regional Nominees participated in eight Regional Finals across the country from which 24 National Finalists from 17 counties emerged to compete for the title of Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur and a share of the additional €100,000 investment fund. The National Finals were held in The Foundry, Google's Digital Innovation Centre, Google EMEA HQ, Dublin on Sunday, 7 December. Following live pitches by 9 selected Finalists, Minister Bruton announced the winners of the 'Best New Idea', 'Best Start Up Business' and 'Best Established Business with Add On' categories. Eamon Keane of Xpreso software (a parcel tracking software company) in South Dublin was named as Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur, winning a total €50,000 investment fund for his business he also took the 'Best Start Up' award. Two other winners were also announced at the ceremony: the 'Best New Idea' award went to Philip Martin from Blanco Nino in Tipperary; and the 'Best Established Business with Add On' award went to Dean Gammell from The Group System in

Westmeath. Each of the three finalists also won a place at the Google 'Adopt a Start Up' 2015 programme. Meanwhile, the Google award for 'Best Online Promotion of a Business' went to Padraig O'Scanaill, from Fund Recs in Waterford.

Action 21: Promote female entrepreneurship through adoption of female role models, targeted events and awards, support for female entrepreneur networks and a dedicated area on the LEO and EI corporate websites.

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

Update: Complete

In 2014, Enterprise Ireland (EI) approved investment for 18 Female-led High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) Companies*. This represented a significant increase in the number of female-led businesses supported by EI, up from 7 in 2012. EI also made 27 early stage investments in female-led businesses through its Competitive Start Fund, which is aimed at creating a strong pipeline of HPSUs and accelerating their development; this represents an increase from 5 in 2012. EI also supported 94 female-led businesses through EI co-funded female specific development programmes (Going 4 Growth; DCU Ryan Academy Programme; NDRC Female Founders Programme; Cork Institute of Technology-Female Excel Programme) and an additional 32 females completed EI's New Frontiers programmes. The success of these programmes has strengthened the pipeline for EI's Female Competitive Start Fund which opened on 12 November and received over 100 applications.

A lack of role models, low self-confidence, lack of technical expertise, lower levels of risk taking and limited access to appropriate networking opportunities continue to be the main challenges facing female entrepreneurs in 2014. To specifically target female entrepreneurship, EI's strategy focuses on a number of key initiatives:

- Continue to build membership of a web-based networking platform for EI female clients; the platform currently has 80 members.
- EI supported several awards, conferences and initiatives to create opportunities for female entrepreneurs, while also identifying and promoting female role models. This involved the sponsorship of the following female events:
 - Network Ireland Conference and Awards September 2014
 - Image Women in Business Awards October 2014
 - Tatler Women in Business Awards and Conference November 2014, Supporting role to existing and new female networks
 - Women's Executive Network, Irelands Top 25 Women Awards

- International Business Women’s Conference Belfast
- Women Invent Tomorrow Conference, Silicon Republic
- VFX Animation Summit
- Co-Funding of 4 Development Programmes focused on optimising the business capabilities for women-led businesses. These include:
 - Going for Growth, (received 200 applications for a cycle of 60 participants)
 - DCU Ryan Academy (received 130 applications for a 12 person programme)
 - NDRC Female Founders Programme (85 applications for a 12 person programme)
 - Cork Institute of Technology, Female Excel Programme – launched September 2014

Information on supports for Female entrepreneurs is available on both the Enterprise Ireland and LEO (www.localenterprise.ie) websites. Enterprise Ireland’s online networking platform for female entrepreneurs is continuing to add value to building relationships and networking within this community.

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

Action 25: Enhance the marketing and promotion of the Immigrant Investor Programme and Start Up Entrepreneur Programme.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (D/Justice, DFAT, DJEI, DES, Other relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

A series of meetings have taken place with interested parties on the creation of investment funds that could attract additional investors to the Immigrant Investor Programme. Plans are currently underway for a 2015 re-launch in key markets. It is intended also to carry out road shows on university campuses to promote the Start-up Entrepreneur Programme.

2.2 Winning Abroad

Action 29: Target the creation of an additional 10,000 new jobs (6000 direct and 4000 indirect) over 5 years through an investment programme which will see the provision of additional resources to IDA Ireland to be deployed overseas including in emerging markets, intensifying FDI employment growth.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

35 'Winning Abroad' positions were advertised in the National Press on Friday 23 May 2014, in the drive to have sufficient resources in order to achieve the target of creating an additional 10,000 new jobs over 5 years. Over 650 applications were received and a screening process was undertaken. 21 of the 35 positions were filled by the end of 2014, with active recruitment well underway on the remaining 14. It is anticipated that a further tranche of new entrants under the programme will commence work with IDA Ireland in February/March 2015.

Action 38: Continue to develop the coordinated approach to international reputation-building efforts across Government, including through the regular updating of key messages on Ireland's economic recovery and their communication by Ireland's Embassy Network.

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

Update: Complete

Work to protect and enhance Ireland's reputation overseas continued through 2014. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) continues to work with other Departments and State Agencies to ensure that key messages on Ireland's economic recovery are kept up-to-date and relevant. The Embassy network continues to be active in communicating these messages to international audiences, through engagement with the international media and influential decision-makers overseas. Over the St Patrick's Day period alone, there were 30 trade-focussed high-level visits to 60 cities worldwide, involving 124 engagements to promote Ireland's positions to high-level office holders internationally. There were over 300 media engagements. An 'Ireland Inspires' video was launched to coincide with St Patrick's Day visits, with input from across Government and the State agencies, reaching an online audience of over 1.2 million people. The Government also took advantage of opportunities for reputation-building around visits abroad by the President, in particular his State visits to the UK and China during the year.

Action 40: Roll out a schedule of Trade Missions and other trade, tourism, investment and education events focussed on key target markets. At least 18 of these Missions and related events will be led at Ministerial level.

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

Update: Complete

During Q4, there were 8 Ministerial-led Trade/Investment Missions and Events organised to the UK, Turkey, China, India, Australia and North America. Q4 also saw the first ever Trade Mission within Ireland led by Minister Bruton. This has brought the total overseas Ministerial-led Trade Missions/Events to 25 for the year (excluding Saint Patricks Day events). The Trade Missions have focussed on a broad range of sectors including, Aviation, ICT, Education, Financial Services, Life Sciences, Clean Technologies, Construction and Engineering, Food and Software & Services.

Action 41: Further develop and implement country-specific annual Local Market Plans (LMPs) by Local Market Teams (LMTs) in priority markets, chaired by the Ambassador and bringing together representatives from the Embassy and state agencies in a fully coordinated approach.

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

Update: Complete

Under the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy, 27 priority markets have been identified for the integrated promotion of trade, tourism and investment. In each market, Ireland's Ambassador chairs the local market team, which consists of Embassy staff and representatives of the relevant State agencies present in the market. These integrated market teams submit detailed annual local market plans outlining how they will grow trade, tourism and investment between Ireland and the market in question to the Export Trade Council (ETC). Local Market Plans for 2015 and implementation reports for 2014 are presently being received and will be presented at the next ETC meeting, scheduled for 24 February 2015.

Additionally, the Review of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy, published in February 2014, included a 'new market approach' which identified seven 'Exploratory and High-Potential Markets' to complement the existing 27 priority markets identified in the original Strategy: Chile, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. On 4 November 2014, the ETC reviewed, for the first time, Embassy-prepared

reports on the 'Prospects and Potential' of each of these markets, with input from State agency HQs. It is intended that the ETC will consider such reports on an annual basis.

Action 43: Support other recommendations arising from the 2013 Global Irish Economic Forum to establish metrics to measure the full impact of investment in the arts in Ireland and to develop a global Irish cultural broker network.

Ongoing Measure: Put in place a system to measure impact and outcomes which can be used to promote and enhance engagement with the Irish creative sector and increase the focus on Ireland as a destination for job creation. (DAHG, Culture Ireland)

Update: Complete

A system which measures outcomes has been developed and a system for analysis of impacts has been advanced.

Ongoing Measure: Work with the Global Irish Economic Forum and other partners to develop a network of volunteers to become advocates in promoting business and exchange opportunities for the creative community. (DAHG, Culture Ireland)

Update: Complete

The full implementation of this initiative is being progressed with the Global Irish Economic Forum itself.

Ongoing Measure: Continue, through the Culture Ireland Programme, to build new opportunities for emerging and established Irish companies and artists internationally by presenting their work at strategically important global arts markets. (DAHG, Culture Ireland)

Update: Complete

The Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) Culture Ireland Unit supported Irish artists in over 300 events over 2014, winning high profile awards and critical recognition, while generating 3 million audience members and a further 6 million television viewers. In 2015 Culture Ireland will focus on creating new opportunities for Irish artists globally through strategic showcasing, which will include national programme of events to which international delegates will be invited. Key events are TradFest in Dublin in January for traditional music, Dublin Dance Festival (Re-Presenting Ireland) in May, Dublin Fringe Festival in September, Dublin Theatre Festival and Hard Working Class Heroes for rock and indie music in October. International showcases to be presented include music showcases at Folk Alliance Kansas in February for traditional music, SXSW in Texas in March, the Venice Art Biennale May- Nov, Edinburgh theatre festivals in August and Frankfurt Bookfair in October. Culture Ireland has already offered Irish artists support for high profile events in key international venues from the US to Australia during 2015 with a special focus on events

around the St Patrick's Day period.

Action 44: Implement the policies and actions outlined in the Review of the International Education Strategy.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES, EI, HEA, Fáilte Ireland and education institutions)

Update: Delayed

The reform measures recently announced relating to the International Education Sector have been the subject of litigation. A preliminary judgment with adverse findings for the State was issued on 13 January 2015. The judgment will now be considered. Pending the outcome of these considerations the review cannot be published as amendments may be required.

Action 46: Support the Irish private sector to secure contracts for infrastructure, engineering and services projects, funded by international financial institutions, including in the context of fourth annual Africa-Ireland Economic Forum.

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

Update: Complete

The fourth Africa-Ireland Economic Forum was held on 30 October 2014. It included a session on Construction and Infrastructure chaired by the Director of the Geological Survey of Ireland, Mr. Koen Verbruggen, which was very well attended. Panelists included senior representatives from the World Bank, the Private Infrastructure Development Group, the Federal Ministry of Finance of Nigeria and Geoscience Ireland companies with experience of working in Africa. Participants discussed ways of improving access to information on upcoming projects across Africa and shared experiences of project implementation.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is also aware that Enterprise Ireland has been actively engaged in this area during 2014, in particular with the World Bank through its Washington office.

2.3 Manufacturing: National Step Change

Action 62: Launch a scheme to attract key researchers with manufacturing research expertise and continue to develop manufacturing research skills through relevant schemes (SFI Research Professor, President of Ireland Young Researcher Award, and European Research Council Support and Development programmes).

Ongoing Measure: Develop manufacturing research skills through relevant schemes (SFI Research Professor, PIYRA, and ERC Support and Development programmes). (SFI)

Update: Complete

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) has been working with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to launch a themed Research Professorship Call which will include the following themes; Manufacturing, Bio-manufacturing, Smart Cities, Energy, Marine, ICT, Digital Platforms, Content and Applications, Connected Health, Medical Devices and Medical Technologies, Ageing, Sensory Food Science, Sustainable Food Production and Food Security and Climate Change. This call was launched at the end of June 2014. The Research Professorship Programme is SFI's programme for the recruitment of iconic scientists and engineers to build the national research and enterprise base, and enhance Ireland's reputation as a centre of excellence for research. The SFI Research Professorship Programme is intended to support national strategic priorities by assisting research bodies in their recruitment of world-leading researchers for Professorial Chairs, or similar research leadership positions in targeted scientific areas. The programme may also act as a mechanism to support the recruitment of individuals that possess a strong industry background, as well as directorship roles in established research centres within Ireland. Two appointments have already been made under the non-themed version of this scheme; Professor Michael Zawarotko, one of the world's leading chemists, has been appointed as the Bernal Chair of Crystal Engineering in the University of Limerick while Professor Robert Bogdan Staszewski, a world renowned engineering researcher, was recruited to lead a cutting-edge research programme to increase Ireland's capability as a global centre for the 'Internet-of-Things'.

3. Progressing the Disruptive Reforms from Action Plan for Jobs 2013

3.1 Big Data and Data Analytics

Action 68: In the context of Research Prioritisation, all relevant research funders will continue to fund R&D, in partnership with the enterprise sector, in “Data Analytics, Management, Security and Privacy” and will report on progress in implementing the action plan for this priority area.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (EI, SFI, IDA and other relevant research funders)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) has continued to support the Cloud Computing Technology Centre (IC4) and the Data Analytics Technology Centre (CeADAR) who conduct research in collaboration with Industry members. These technology centres have a suite of on-going research activities covering the areas of Data Analytics, Management, Security and Privacy. Over the last year EI has also supported several projects in collaboration with the enterprise sector through the Innovation Partnership and Innovation Voucher programmes.

Action 69: Consider and progress the recommendations of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Study on skills requirements in Big Data and Data Analytics which will be published in early 2014.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES, DJEI, EGFSN with relevant Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

The Preliminary Guidance for Higher Education providers on Current and Future Skills Needs of Enterprise, which informs the call for programmes as part of Springboard 2015 includes data analytics skills, including supporting technology roles and big data savvy roles.

Action 72: Monitor implementation of pilot initiatives identified by the Taskforce on Big Data and Data Analytics whereby data analytics can be applied to address specific actions delivering economic impact and/or improved public services.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI/ Forfás, EI, IDA, SFI, other relevant

Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

Partners from both pilot projects, Pathways to Work Evaluation and SmartAPPI, presented an update on their projects to the Taskforce at their meeting on 19 September. The members noted the progress that had been made. The projects will run for another 12-18 months but the partners committed to capture and share the learnings from the projects with the Taskforce as they arise.

3.5 Energy Efficiency

Action 79: Provide €57 million in Exchequer supports to further stimulate energy saving activity in the residential sector and implement a publicity campaign so that those who can avail of this are aware of the supports.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (SEAI)

Update: Complete

This is being delivered through the Better Energy programme including Homes, Warmer Homes, Areas and Communities. Earlier in the year, it was announced that this year Better Energy Communities will be supporting 83 community energy projects which will receive €28m in financial support, resulting in substantial improvements in homes, community buildings, Local Authority premises, and sports facilities throughout Ireland. For 2015, ministerial approval has been given for a re-invigoration of the Better Energy Homes Programme which will be re-launched in Spring 2015.

Action 82: Continue to support the Exemplar Projects.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

Some 19 Exemplars are continuing to receive supports in the form of training, networking and access to legal and technical expertise.

4. Competitiveness

4.1 Institutionalising the Drive for Competitiveness

Action 89: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, and other Cabinet Committees as appropriate, will monitor progress on competitiveness issues identified by the National Competitiveness Council and others and consider further actions to improve Ireland’s international competitiveness and consider initiatives to make it easier to do business in Ireland. The Cabinet Committee(s) will be supported by the relevant Senior Officials Group and the APJ Monitoring Committee in this work.

Ongoing Measure: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, and other Cabinet Committees as appropriate, will monitor progress on competitiveness issues. (D/Taoiseach, DJEI/Forfás, All Departments)

Update: Complete

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs (CCERJ) afforded special priority in 2014 to progressing a range of issues impacting on Ireland’s competitiveness and the ease of doing business in Ireland. This included close monitoring of Ireland’s performance on a number of internationally recognised rankings of competitiveness performance. The CCERJ focus on competitiveness was informed in particular by two key reports from the National Competitiveness Council: “Ireland’s Competitiveness Scoreboard 2014”, which was considered by CCERJ in June 2014 and “Ireland’s Competitiveness Challenge 2014” which was considered by CCERJ in November 2014.

Through its role in providing oversight for the development of the Action Plan for Jobs and Pathways to Work, the CCERJ has worked to ensure that specific actions are taken through these action plans to address the important competitiveness issues identified by NCC and others including in the areas of education and skills provision, access to finance for SMEs, entrepreneurship, indigenous enterprise development and further embedding of FDI, regulatory and administrative burden, research and innovation as well as other productivity enhancing measures. Other specific issues impacting on Ireland’s competitiveness have been progressed through other Cabinet Committees throughout the year.

Ongoing Measure: Government Departments will review the key competitiveness issues for business and will report to the Cabinet Committee on actions to address key challenges identified. (All Departments)

Update: Complete

Government Departments reported on an ongoing basis through the structures established by CCERJ on specific actions they are taking to address issues of competitiveness that fall within their remit. In Quarter 2, Departments provided a mid-year assessment of actions

being taken across a wide range of issues and this work aligns strongly with the structures operating at European level through Ireland's National Reform Programme and the European Semester. The Action Plan for Jobs and the Government's Pathways to Work are two key instruments for setting out the specific actions that will be taken in the year ahead to address the issues identified.

Ongoing Measure: Government Departments will review key challenges in terms of the 'ease of doing business' and will report to the Cabinet Committee on actions to address key challenges identified. (All Departments)

Update: Complete

Linked to the structures set out above, Government Departments also identified and reported on actions they are taking to address the regulatory burden on business and the general ease of doing business in Ireland. Government Departments reported in Quarter 3 on a range of measures to make it easier for businesses to access public services and, in a number of cases, measures to reduce the cost to business of certain public services. The Action Plan for Jobs 2015 will set out further measures in this regard.

In October 2014, the World Bank produced its "Doing Business 2015" report which showed that Ireland had improved its ranking by four places from 17th to 13th in the world on this particular measure of the ease of doing business. Ireland is the only EU member state and the only OECD member in the World Bank's top-10 improvers' group based on this index.

Ongoing Measure: Key reports from the National Competitiveness Council and others will be considered by the Cabinet Committee. In this regard, the Chairman of the NCC will present key findings and recommendations to the Cabinet Committee on an annual basis. (NCC)

Update: Complete

In November, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs considered the National Competitiveness Council's Competitiveness Challenge 2014 report, in which the priorities for Ireland's competitiveness are outlined. The report made recommendations in relation to six major themes:

- Addressing cost competitiveness;
- Broadening the tax base and investing in economic infrastructure;
- Enhancing our skills base;
- Developing our enterprise base;
- Improving access to finance; and
- Rebuilding the trust of citizens in the ability and willingness of public and private bodies in Ireland to adhere to the highest international standards.

The report was noted by Government prior to its publication on 3 December.

4.2 Improving Cost Competitiveness

Action 96: Provide a range of supports to businesses to help them reduce costs through energy and resource efficiency.

Ongoing Measure: Provide a range of supports to businesses to help them reduce costs through energy and resource efficiency. (SEAI, EPA)

Update: Complete

SEAI Business Support programmes covering the large and SME sectors are continuing to receive a steady stream of enquiries and good interest for supports on a regular and ongoing basis. Some new initiatives are being implemented to improve programme delivery and thus enhance participation rates.

4.3 Infrastructure Investment to Underpin Employment Growth

Action 101: Continue to work with industry and public sector stakeholders to remove barriers and incentivise commercial investment in broadband.

Ongoing Measure: Work with relevant public sector stakeholders and industry to accelerate investment. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

A range of policy and regulatory measures have been introduced to assist in the commercial roll out of high speed broadband. The commercial sector is now investing approximately €2.5bn in the telecommunications sector, with the provision of high speed services to homes and businesses significantly exceeding the targets industry set when the National Broadband Plan was published. This includes both the fixed and mobile segments of the market.

Action 103: Ensure delivery of the PPP Infrastructure Stimulus Package

Ongoing Measure: Work with stakeholders to issue remaining OJEU Notices in the

timeframes indicated above. (DPER, NDFA)

Update: Complete

All projects have issued to market and OJEU requirements completed accordingly.

Ongoing Measure: Work with stakeholders to help ensure the delivery of projects in line with the timeframes indicated above. (DPER, NDFA, D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Having issued to market, all projects are progressing towards financial close.

4.4 Reduced Costs through Smart Regulation

Action 107: Implement Actions as outlined in the Government Policy Statement on Economic Regulation - published July 2013

Ongoing Measure: On foot of regulatory reviews, introduce legislative changes to:

1. Provide for the setting of a hierarchy of policy objectives by the relevant Sectoral Minister with national level objectives prioritised in addition to any sectoral level policy objectives, as appropriate and in the context of the wider EU framework.
2. Provide for regulatory mandate reviews by the relevant sectoral Minister on a statutory basis at least every seven years.
3. Provide for a performance and accountability framework for regulators as set out in the Government Statement.

(DCENR, DTTAS, DECLG)

Update from DTTAS:

Aviation

The draft National Aviation Policy includes a proposal for an independent review of aviation economic regulation and associated appeal system. The outcome of this review, likely to commence shortly after finalisation of the new aviation policy in early 2015, will also inform the restructuring of the provision of safety and economic regulatory oversight of the aviation sector by the Irish Aviation Authority and the Commission for Aviation Regulation. It is only following the independent review and any consequent restructuring that any Memoranda of Understanding could be discussed and finalised.

Public Transport

It is anticipated that legislative reforms will be implemented in 2016.

Update from D/ECLG:

The Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 provides that the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) shall prepare and submit strategy statements to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government every three years. This strategy statement will set out the key objectives, outputs and related strategies, including use of resources of the Commission, in relation to the performance of its functions under the Act. This provision is set out in section 41 of Act which was commenced on 25 September 2014. The CER have 6 months from the commencement date to submit a 3 year Strategy Statement relating to water to the Minister. The current CER Strategic Plan 2014-2018 which contains information on all its functions is available on the CER website:

<https://www.cer.ie/docs/000049/CER14104%20CER%20Strategic%20Plan%202014-2018.pdf>

Update from D/CENR:

In the Energy sector, the development of a hierarchy is being reviewed as part of the White Paper consultation process currently underway.

In the Broadcasting sector, it is intended that the hierarchy will be considered as part of forthcoming changes proposed to the Broadcasting Act.

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

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

In the Communications sector, negotiations on the proposed EU Single Telecoms Market are continuing and will inform the review of ComReg’s mandate. A review of national spectrum policy is currently underway and DCENR has recently held a public consultation on various aspects of spectrum policy. Further developments are expected in early 2015.

In relation to mandate reviews, in the Energy sector, the Green Paper discusses the question on mandate review and seeks views as part of the overall consultation (c.f. p32 Review of

regulatory framework for energy). Further development on this will proceed in alignment with the energy policy preparation and development during 2015.

In the Communications sector, as noted, negotiations on the proposed EU Single Telecoms Market are continuing and will inform the review of ComReg's mandate.

In the Broadcasting sector, it is intended that mandate reviews will be included in forthcoming changes proposed to the Broadcasting Act. The Minister is currently reviewing options in relation to the composition of this Bill. In this context, it should be noted, however, that the Broadcasting Act 2009 already makes the following provision:

- The 'Objectives' (s. 25 of the 2009 Act) and 'Functions' (s. 26) of the Authority are specifically listed, as agreed with the European Commission.
- The capacity to issue policy communications in respect of the Strategy Statement (see s.30 of the 2009 Act above) could potentially satisfy this requirement.

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

In the Energy Sector, the CER Strategic Plan 2014-2018 was published on the 1st October 2014. It sets out the CER's proposed new vision, mission and strategic goals for the period. A statutory footing in the Electricity Regulation Act for this requirement will be provided for at the next suitable legislative opportunity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

frequency spectrum and postal services.

(3) A strategy statement shall—

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

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

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

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

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

(a) prepare an action plan setting out the principal activities that it proposes to undertake during the ensuing financial year, and

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

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

(a) regulating electronic communications, and

(b) managing the radio frequency spectrum, and

(c) regulating postal services.

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

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

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

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

(b) present the forecast to the Minister.

(2) In preparing its annual financial forecast, the Commission shall estimate the amounts of revenue expected to be derived, and the amount of expenditure expected to be made, in

respect of each of its functions relating to electronic communications, managing the radio frequency spectrum and postal services.

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

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

(a) the regularity and propriety of the transactions recorded or required to be recorded in any book or other record of account subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General which the Commission is required by or under statute to prepare,

(b) the economy and efficiency of the Commission in the use of its resources,

(c) the systems, procedures and practices employed by the Commission for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of its operations, and

(d) any matter affecting the Commission referred to in a special report of the Comptroller and Auditor General under [section 11](#) (2) of the [Comptroller and Auditor General \(Amendment\) Act, 1993](#) , or in any other report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (in so far as it relates to a matter specified in *paragraph (a), (b) or (c)*) that is laid before Dáil Éireann.

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

In the Broadcasting Sector, Section 38 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 requires an annual report to be drawn up, which must be laid before the Houses. Subsection (7) states that the Annual Report shall include information in such form and regarding such matters as the Minister may direct. Section 30 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 allows for policy communications to be made and laid before the Houses.

Ongoing Measure: Progress project outlined in Fourth Programme of Law Reform – 1) Corporate offences and regulatory enforcement. (LRC)

Update: Complete

During Q4 2014, in advance of the Law Reform Commission (LRC) publishing public consultation documents (called Issues Papers) on Project 1 (corporate offences and regulatory enforcement) in the LRC's Fourth Programme of Law Reform, the LRC chaired a meeting of the Sectoral Economic Regulators Group, which focused exclusively on the regulatory and other legal matters involved in the Project. Further ongoing communication is

to continue between the LRC and the Sectoral Economic Regulators Group as the Project progresses. The LRC also attended a meeting of the Company Law Review Group (CLRG) in Q4 2014 to ensure that the LRC's Project complemented the ongoing work of the CLRG, including in the context of the enactment of the Companies Bill 2012. Taking account of these discussions, the LRC prepared draft papers on the corporate offences and regulatory enforcement modules involved in the Project with a view to staged public consultation on those papers during 2015.

4.5 Supporting Competitive Regions

Action 114: Embark on a programme of building in specific locations where the private sector is not currently providing property solutions. In 2014, IDA Ireland will commence building new advanced manufacturing facilities in Waterford and Athlone, and office space in Letterkenny.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (IDA)

Update: Complete

All of the three buildings above commenced construction in 2014. The advanced manufacturing facilities in Waterford and Athlone will be completed in January 2015. The office space in Letterkenny will be completed in April 2015.

Action 116: Develop integrated local economic and community plans, to promote economic and community development in each local authority area.

Ongoing Measure: Each LCDC to develop the community elements of a LECP which will be completed and adopted in 2015. (DECLG, LCDCs)

Update: Complete

The Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) have commenced development of the community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs).

Ongoing Measure: Each SPC for Economic Development and Enterprise Support to develop the economic elements of a LECP which will be completed and adopted as an integrated LECP in 2015. (DECLG, Local Authorities)

Update: Complete

The Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support have commenced development of the economic elements of Local Economic and

Community Plans (LECPs).

Action 120: Ministers will examine priorities at their sectoral meetings, especially as they affect economic development, job creation and the best use of public funds. This also includes developing synergies on increasing joint draw-down of innovation funding under Horizon 2020 and jointly examining the potential to develop cross border clusters of activity.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (D/Taoiseach, DFAT, other relevant departments, agencies)

Update: Complete

In their North South meetings in 2014, Ministers have discussed with their Northern counterparts opportunities to prioritise economic development, job creation and the best use of public funds. They have also focussed on cooperation to maximise the drawdown of EU funding to the island.

In the second half of the year, a jointly agreed Strategic Action Plan was launched which will focus on increased North South collaboration for research and innovation managed by the Horizon 2020 All-Island Steering Group. Also in the second half of the year, the British-Irish Visa Scheme was officially announced by the UK and Irish Governments. Under the first phase of the scheme, Indian and Chinese nationals will be able to visit the UK and Ireland using just one visa, removing the need for those visiting Northern Ireland to apply for a separate visa to travel across the border, and vice versa. It is anticipated that the scheme will significantly boost business and holidaymaker visitor to the island. Another example of mutually beneficial cooperation from 2014 is the holding of joint trade missions in support of the economy of the island as a whole.

4.6 Research and Innovation to Drive Job Creation

Action 121: Continue to drive implementation of research prioritisation through the Government's Prioritisation Action Group.

Ongoing Measure: Progress implementation of the systemic recommendations in the Report of the Steering Group to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the STI system. (DJEI/Forfás, Prioritisation Action Group)

Ongoing Measure: Monitor implementation of Action Plans for the 14 Priority Areas. (DJEI/Forfás, Prioritisation Action Group)

Update: Complete

An international panel of experts, appointed to undertake a review of progress to date on the implementation of research prioritisation, convened for a two day meeting in December. During this time the panel consulted with all the key stakeholders in research prioritisation, including the Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation; Government departments and State agencies funding research; and external stakeholders (IBEC, American Chamber of Commerce Ireland, Irish Venture Capital Association, Irish Universities Association, Institutes of Technology Ireland). This review assessed, inter alia, progress on implementation of the Action Plans for the 14 Priority Areas and also progress on the systemic implementation of the recommendations of the Steering Group. The panel is now preparing a report with its findings which will be completed by Q1 2015.

Action 140: Continue working with Enterprise Ireland to identify opportunities for Defence Forces participation in, and support for, technological research in support of Irish companies and research Institutes.

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

Update: Complete

Quarterly meetings continue to take place between the Defence Organisation and Enterprise Ireland; the Defence Organisation will continue to provide assistance to Enterprise Ireland and Enterprise Ireland Companies in 2015.

The Defence Forces are currently engaged with many Irish Enterprises, some of which are supported by Enterprise Ireland. In addition, the Defence Forces are involved with academia and research institutes in various projects, who benefit from the expertise offered by the Defence Forces as either test or reference sites for their products. The Irish Naval Service is also involved with and supporting IMERC (Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster) in a number of European Framework 7 projects and research collaborations, (e.g. PERSEUS, ACROPOLUS and Cathx Ocean Ltd, Skysails and DARIUS) which will contribute to Naval Service capabilities.

As part of the Defence Forces engagement with Enterprise Ireland, the Defence Forces are participating in three research consortiums, who have submitted proposals to the Commission Horizon 2020 programme. We are awaiting the outcomes of these and we understand that the European Commission should be releasing the official results around the end of January 2015. The Department will continue to ensure that all interested parties are kept abreast of EDA and Horizon 2020 developments, in order to ensure that the Defence Organisation's involvement in EDA and Horizon 2020 projects are fully supported, thus ensuring their best possible chance of success. The potential economic benefit that will derive from such collaboration is difficult to quantify. While the tangible benefits are easy to quantify, such as the retention of jobs in these sectors and perhaps the creation of new jobs, some of the greatest benefits to be accrued from the collaboration are intangible,

like a company's reputation or goodwill.

Action 149: Deliver Smart Futures as a national collaborative government, industry and education framework to raise the awareness of STEM career opportunities for post-primary students in line with the agreed strategy with support and input from the newly established advisory group comprising industrial, professional and academic partners

Ongoing Measure: Work with industry partners, SFI researchers and HEIs to develop a volunteer training programme using a 'train the trainer' approach, aimed at establishing a database of STEM volunteers to deliver a school visits programme. (SFI)

Update: Complete

In 2014, 524 volunteer scientists, engineers and technologists from industry and academia were trained to share their career stories with post-primary school students across Ireland. A total of 237 school visits took place and the total number of students engaged with, through school career talks and engagement at outreach events such as Higher Options, Science Week and the 2014 BT Young Scientist, was approximately 26,000 students. This brings total student engagement to approximately 54,000 in the period 2013 – 2014. Smart Futures worked with over 50 industry and research partners to carry out this activity, with an estimated 4,900 hours donated by STEM volunteers. Work will continue in 2015 to further grow the volunteer network and these partnerships.

A significant piece of research, carried out by Smart Futures, was also released at the end of Q4 2014 and shared with the Advisory Group and key influencers in the STEM space. This research surveyed over 2,000 undergraduates across the country, examining the key factors influencing student choices in relation to STEM subject uptake in school and at third level. The findings will feed into the activities of the Smart Futures programme in 2015. The launch of this research coincided with a media campaign promoting STEM subjects for the CAO to Leaving Certificate students and their parents.

Ongoing Measure: Media campaign aimed at students, parents and teachers to raise awareness of STEM career opportunities at key dates in the education calendar, e.g. CAO deadlines. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Media campaign activity took place in early June around the CAO Change of Mind dates, as well as the Leaving Certificate results and CAO announcements in late August 2014, where Smart Futures ambassadors and SFI Directors gave interviews. This activity resulted in 6 print articles, 14 online articles and 6 radio interviews promoting SFI Discover's Smart Futures programme. There was also a high level of media activity around Science Week where 3 print articles were published about Smart Futures in November 2014, including presence in a STEM supplement for national Science Week which featured 3 females in

STEM career profiles. 4 online-articles were also published. The total media coverage in 2014 is 1,385 online articles, 90 radio features and 975 print articles.

Ongoing Measure: To develop and provide high quality STEM careers content and online resources in consultation with industry partners for students, parents and careers guidance counsellors on www.SmartFutures.ie. (SFI)

Update: Complete

New STEM career profiles continue to be posted up on the website weekly, including careers relating to areas of pharmaceuticals and also in the Space industry. Over 100 STEM career profiles have been published on the website in 2014, with STEM sector-related content and videos being added regularly. A dedicated Space sector page has also been added to the website which houses European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO)-related career content and videos.

Action 154: Take steps to establish Clinical Research Facilities (CRFs) in Dublin, Cork and Galway and provide a collaborative framework to link all CRFs by 2016.

Ongoing Measure: Monitor the work programme, funding, and governance for all CRFs. (HRB)

Update: Complete

Annual reports including detailed metrics were received from all Clinical Research Facilities (CRF), supplemented by scheduled quarterly meetings plus frequent additional communication as required. The Health Research Board (HRB) worked with the CRFs and their host institutions to develop the financial management and business plans. The HRB was represented on the Steering Group for the building of the HRB-CRF Galway, and all payments were based on reaching specific milestones.

4.7 Aligning Skills with Enterprise Needs

Action 164: Promote the available supports and target low-skilled general operatives in the manufacturing sector through the Skills for Work (SFW) programme and wider ETB-delivered basic education programmes.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES, NALA and the Skills for Work)

Update: Complete

Skills for Work (SFW) has been working very closely with a range of companies and in

particular those involved in the manufacturing sector, at both a local and national level; they have engaged in joint promotional strategies with NALA, Trade Unions, AONTAS, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the wider ETB sector. All SFW courses are delivered through the local ETB Adult Literacy Service and the Adult Education Services (AES), and over the past 12 months the programme has been delivered to more than 2,000 low skilled workers, a number of whom are have achieved or are working for FETAC accreditation.

Action 165: Skillnets will continue to pursue the development of sector specific training in areas identified as high priority by the EGFSN.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (Skillnets)

Update: Complete

Skillnets continue to deliver on this action; the CEO of Skillnets is a member of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and so contributes actively to its deliberations, and has a clear insight into policy documents. Skillnets continue to engage on defined priority areas with their networks, and has been active in supporting activities in relation to the ICT Action Plan and Manufacturing Skills agenda, which formed the core of the sectoral skills work which was recently published by the EGFSN.

Skillnets is heavily involved in the development of the ICT plan and has engaged with the HEA in this regard. Specific actions have included the provision of programmes to retrain unemployed people with relevant skills and in the development of new programmes in conjunction with the Irish Software Association for CEOs and for product development essential skills. In relation to Manufacturing, Skillnets continues to support a wide range of training programmes for firms in the manufacturing sector. 18 networks offer services to firms in manufacturing. Sectoral networks operate in manufacturing sectors including Lifesciences, pharmaceuticals, engineering, food, ICT, print and packaging and polymers and plastics. A number of cross sectoral networks also support manufacturing firms with a wide range of programmes including lean and six sigma approaches. Skillnets also engage with the Manufacturing Development Forum in this regard.

4.8 Supporting Competitiveness through Corporate Social Responsibility

Action 188: Establish a CSR Stakeholder Forum to inform further development of the CSR policy framework in Ireland. The Forum will comprise representatives of the business sector, key Government Departments and agencies, and the community sector.

Ongoing Measure: Hold subsequent meetings of the Forum according to agreed schedule. (DJEI and Forum members)

Update: Complete

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Consultation Forum held its inaugural meeting on 24 June 2014 in Government Buildings. The Stakeholder Forum was attended by over 30 participants, comprising senior representatives from the business sector, relevant Government Departments/agencies and the wider community. The Forum held 2 further meetings in 2014, as scheduled on 30 September and 25 November 2014. These meetings comprised presentations on best practice local and international CSR and related initiatives as well as the formation of subgroups and initial discussions to achieve the objectives of the National Plan on CSR.

Action 190: Collaborate with key stakeholders to raise awareness of CSR and disseminate best practice, particularly with a view to encouraging greater SME participation in CSR activities.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, Business representative bodies, NSAI)

Update:

The first National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) 2014-2016: “Good for Business, Good for the Community”, was launched in April 2014. The National Plan was developed in consultation with key stakeholders in the CSR and enterprise landscape in Ireland, including Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI), Chambers Ireland, IBEC and ISME. A key deliverable under the National Plan was the establishment of a CSR Stakeholder Forum. The Forum established 4 subgroups to develop actions to achieve the objectives of the National Action Plan on CSR. These include specific actions on increasing awareness of CSR and its benefits to business and society. In addition a subgroup has been formed with the specific objective of supporting greater SME participation in CSR and a suite of supports are being developed to achieve this aim. These actions will be progressed in the Action Plan for Jobs 2015.

In addition to the establishment of the CSR Stakeholder Forum, a number of bodies have

held events which support this action. Chambers Ireland held its annual CSR awards in September 2014. These awards recognise the work being carried out by Irish and multinational companies to improve the lives of their employees and to enhance the civic environment in which they operate. BITCI has a calendar of CSR events ongoing throughout the year. In addition to events reported in Q2, BITCI held a major conference on sustainable business, in November 2014. With particular reference to raising awareness for SMEs, ISME, who is a member of the CSR Stakeholder Forum has been proactive in increasing awareness of CSR and its benefits to its members by including information on CSR on its website Advice Centre: <http://isme.ie/advice/corporate-social-responsibility-csr>

5. Pathways to Work and Related Initiatives

Action 193: Continue to implement Pathways to Work with quarterly reporting of progress on its 50 action points

Ongoing Measure: Implement Pathways to Work 2013 with quarterly reporting of progress on its 50 action points. (DSP)

Update: Complete

The implementation of the Pathways to Work 2013 strategy is ongoing with the quarterly reporting of progress on its 50 action points. The Q2 update was published in Q3.

Action 194: Commence implementation of the Youth Guarantee

Ongoing Measure: Commence implementation of national plan for a Youth Guarantee, the Plan will contain timelines for specific actions. (DSP)

Update: Complete

Legislation to provide for differential treatment of young people on labour market programmes, particularly in relation to JobsPlus and JobsBridge has been passed. The Youth Developmental Internship (YDI), the Experience Your Europe (EYE) programme and Intreo Activation of 18-24 year olds with an offer of training, education or work experience within 4 months, were announced on 11 November 2014. The Intreo engagement process for young people is being modified and reserved places for young people on training programmes such as Momentum have been activated.

Action 199: Undertake a programme of structured engagement with the enterprise sector

to maximise recruitment from the live register

Ongoing Measure: Participate, with EI and others, in national and local events to promote employment/recruitment supports available to employers. (DSP)

Update: Complete

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) has organised a series of events, including a National Jobs Week, at both a national and local level to promote engagement directly with employers. This has included working with the enterprise agencies to maximise recruitment from the Live Register among their client companies. The Employment and Youth Activation Charter was announced on 29 September 2014 during National Jobs Week. Employers who sign up to the Charter commit that at least 50% of candidates considered for interview will be taken from the Live Register. They will also implement a selection of measures which seek to prime those who are out of work to take up jobs.

Action 200: Implement the detailed actions contained in the new protocol to maximise the recruitment of appropriately qualified persons from the Live Register by enterprise agency client companies and report regularly through the dedicated Steering Group established under the protocol.

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

Update: Complete

The actions contained in the new protocol to maximise the recruitment of appropriately qualified persons from the Live Register by enterprise agency client companies is on-going. The implementation of the protocol is monitored by the Steering Group chaired by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI).

Action 201: Advance the introduction of a new Housing Assistance Payment which will allow recipients to remain in the scheme in the early stages of returning to employment.

Ongoing Measure: The development and implementation of HAP communication plan. (DECLG, Limerick Local Authorities, DSP)

Update: Complete

A Communications Strategy for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) was developed by the Communications and Change Management Sub-Group of the HAP Project Board during summer 2014, and it is being implemented, as the statutory pilot phase of the scheme is rolled out.

Ongoing Measure: The development and specification of a new IT system for HAP. (DECLG,

Limerick Local Authorities, DSP)

Update: Complete for 2014

Work on the new IT system for the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is ongoing and is being managed by the Business Process Mapping, ICT Architecture, Information Flows and Data Sharing Sub Group of the HAP Project Board.

Action 203: Publish a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities.

Ongoing Measure: Draft and publish comprehensive employment strategy, in collaboration with the Departments of Social Protection, Health, Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and Education and Skills and in consultation with relevant stakeholders. (National Disability Authority)

Update: Delayed

In consultation with relevant Government Departments, disability organisations, employment organisations, and social partners, significant work has been undertaken to date, and the drafting of the Strategy is at an advanced stage. At a meeting of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Group on 24 September, the need to further develop aspects of the strategy was acknowledged. Drafting is ongoing, with the identification and inclusion of realistic and specific targets being addressed.

Action 204: Run a programme of activities to promote the employability of groups that have experienced labour market disadvantage related to discriminatory grounds (e.g. age, race, family status, disability etc.). This will include specific streams for developing the equality capacity of employers, vocational education and training providers and labour market providers.

Ongoing Measure: Provide technical support and a programme of equality supports on equality mainstreaming for providers of further education and training and labour market programme providers. (Equality Authority)

Update: Complete

The thirteen projects providing equality supports to Further Education and Training providers are completed. The supports included equality mainstreaming training, equality action planning, revision of admissions policies and reasonable accommodation policies, disability-specific initiatives and consultation with students and staff in relation to equality issues. Education and Training Boards, Colleges of Further Education and Community Education providers availed of these supports.

Ongoing Measure: Implement a programme of sectoral projects with employers and trade union networks to enhance equality competency. (Equality Authority)

Update: Complete

Five projects, which were approved for funding under the 2013 ‘Call for Proposals for Equality Mainstreaming Projects’ are now completed:

- BeLongTo and ICTU launched the on-line video “Stand-Up. Say No to Homophobia and Transphobia in the Workplace Your Union will stand up with you” on 17 May 2014 at the IBOA house, and a dissemination campaign in workplaces was implemented.
- Cavan County Council launched its DVD on workplace equality on 27 June 2014 and has delivered pilot training sessions which include the use of the video produced.
- The Immigrant Council of Ireland has produced and launched “Towards an Inclusive Public Transport Service in Ireland” which is an Anti-Racism and Diversity Resource Pack for the transport sector. Transdev (Veolia-Luas), Dublin Bus and Irish Rail engaged with this project and published diversity strategies at the launch event.
- See Change published a case law review report on mental health in the workplace and a mental health policy template for employers. A training module based on these reports was delivered to a group of employers.
- The Irish Universities Association Equality Network finalised its Connect-ability project, which focuses on disability and retention in the workplace, and which targets managers and line managers with policy guidance, information and training. The launch of the project was held in September in combination with a dissemination event for the Public Sector Equality Learning Network.

6. Access to Finance for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

6.3 Develop New Sources of Finance for SMEs

Action 213: Increase our engagement with the EIB and EIF in developing and implementing mechanisms designed to maximise the provision of financing to SMEs.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline item. (D/Finance, DJEI, EI)

Update: Complete

In 2014, Ireland secured €932 million in signed loans from the EIB, which represented a 37% increase on last year's signatures (€680 million). 2013 was itself around 35% up on the year before, so 2014 saw the continuation of this positive trend in increased EIB support for Ireland, brought about by the enhanced engagement between Ireland and the Bank.

Action 216: Implement the Government's strategy for the EU's Horizon 2020 programme in a manner that maximises the potential of the Access to Risk Finance element of this EU Programme, as a vehicle for providing finance to SMEs

Ongoing Measure: As per headline item. (EI, DJEI, D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Running from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of just over €70 billion, Horizon 2020 is the EU's new programme for research and innovation and is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe. Access to Risk Finance is an element of this EU Programme identified as one that needs to be maximised as a vehicle for providing finance to SMEs. To support this, a European Commission agreement with the European Investment Bank Group was signed on 12 June 2014, paving the way for a new generation of EU financial instruments and advisory services to help innovative firms access finance more easily. Following on from this, the first Horizon 2020 call for the new generation of EU financial instruments opened in August 2014. The first applicants have been identified and the Irish National Contact Point is continuing to raise awareness of upcoming opportunities.

Action 220: Advance solutions to improve cash-flow to SMEs, using appropriate supply-chain finance initiatives.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance, NPRF, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

Public sector stakeholders have engaged with private sector suppliers of supply-chain finance software to identify and progress areas where use of supply-chain finance could be possible and effective in the payment by local authorities of suppliers. The Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) is also engaging with providers of supply chain finance with a view to offering a finance product in Q1 2015.

6.4 Raising awareness amongst SMEs and entrepreneurs of supports

Action 221: Implement the Communications Strategy developed by the SME State Bodies Group.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver a regional roadshow of presence at key sectoral events and own events. (D/Finance, DJEI, D/Taoiseach)

Update: Complete

The Supporting SMEs Online Tool was launched in May 2014 and has had strong traffic to the site. Updates are undertaken monthly, and new Supports have been added to the Online Tool since its launch. In the latest Red C Credit Demand Survey (October 2014) an average of 1 in 4 SMEs were aware of this campaign and the support it provides. Members of the campaign have attended over 10 events nationwide to publicise SME State Supports online tool, and to answer queries from members of the public. An online advertising campaign to increase awareness of the Online Tool was undertaken and completed on schedule, this led to a solid increase in traffic to the Online Tool. A suite of promotional material was designed, printed and distributed during 2014 to support the communications team with their Supporting SMEs campaign.

The Supporting SMEs Communications Group (a sub-group of SME State Bodies Group) met monthly throughout 2014 to manage and monitor the implementation of the Communications Strategy.

Ongoing Measure: Establish and participate in training opportunities regarding Access to Finance. (D/Finance, DJEI, D/Taoiseach)

Update: Complete

Members of the Supporting SMEs campaign team presented on Access to Finance at key events nationwide during 2014.

6.5 Enhance the Financial Capacity of SMEs

Action 222: Deliver the Building Financial Capability in SMEs programme by Skillnets and undertake an evaluation of this initiative.

Ongoing Measure: Ongoing delivery of the programme. (DES, DJEI, D/Finance)

Update: Complete

Skillnets continue to encourage SMEs to take part in the programme, and have presented to the State Bodies Group on a number of occasions to keep them informed of progress. Skillnets have completed an evaluation of the programme and in 2015 will enter into discussions with the Department of Education and Skills regarding its recommendations.

6.6 Enhance Research on SME Access to Finance

Action 224: Oversee a focused research programme on SME access to finance issues that will inform the on-going deliberations and policy actions of the Group during 2014

Ongoing Measure: Undertake a policy focused research programme on SME access to finance issues. (D/Finance, DJEI/Forfás, EI, NPRF, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

The ESRI conducted a research programme which focused firstly on credit demand during the recovery, and secondly on policy solutions for SME financing in the recovery. The outcomes of the research programme were published by the ESRI at a seminar entitled “Financing SMEs in Recovery”, which took place on 26 September, and the final report of the research programme was published on 14 October. The Department of Finance also contributed a chapter to ‘Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs 2014: An OECD Scoreboard’.

7. Growing Irish Enterprise

7.1 Capability Building in Irish Enterprise

Action 232: Include the needs of family owned businesses more clearly in the Enterprise Ireland Client Management Development offering

Ongoing Measure: Engage with Family Business Networks (DCU, Family Business Network, Family Business Ireland) to engage, share knowledge and coordinate activities. (EI)

Update: Complete

There are three organisations which Enterprise Ireland (EI) is engaged with in relation to Family Businesses:

- Family Business Network - a not-for-profit international network that is run by family businesses, for family businesses. The aim is to strengthen company success over

generations. EI is, in collaboration with the Ireland Chapter, supporting the hosting of a national conference for those large family businesses who are members of the Network. The conference was scheduled to take place in Q2 2014 but this has been postponed. This group is connected to a European wide family business network, and a number of international events took place in the first half of the year.

- Family Business Ireland (under the auspices of PLATO, a business support network for SME's); under the pilot Clustering Programme, EI has supported the Family Business Ireland Collaborative Cluster which has twelve companies participating. The focus of the cluster is to create a collaborative family business owners forum involving peer participation and sharing in order to build a foundation of learning that will benefit the wider community of family run and owned Irish businesses. This project is supported by EI and is progressing well. One-to-one consultations with each of the member companies took place in May 2014, peer learning events have been organised and work is progressing on the development of diagnostics.
- DCU Centre for Family Business – The first Family Business Centre of excellence and learning in Ireland, translating leading Irish and International research into best practice, for this generation and future generations of Irish family businesses. EI is sharing with DCU its knowledge of family owned businesses, their challenges etc. As research continues by the DCU Centre, EI clients will be identified to participate in the broader research agenda. On 28 May 2014, DCU Centre for Family Business hosted the first of its Legacy Series conferences, a series of thought-provoking events to engage current and next-generation family business members in exploring the requirements for trans-generational survival, growth and value creation. Almost 200 delegates from family businesses and service firms attended the conference hosted by broadcaster and publisher Ms. Norah Casey.

Action 237: Progress the implementation of the IDA/EI strategy for growth in the Irish Business Process Outsourcing including promoting consortia building and assisting capability building.

Ongoing Measure: Promote consortia building to win large public and private sector contracts in Ireland and abroad by facilitating networking among Irish owned and multinational companies throughout 2014. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

A review of the banking landscape was undertaken, as this had been identified as a sector with significant Business Process Outsourcing opportunities. A number of recommendations were made to carry out further work on the partnering landscape throughout 2014. A Business Process Outsourcing networking event took place in Enterprise Ireland headquarters on 9 April 2014 which included the participation of EI client companies in

addition to foreign owned companies. The event sought to showcase third level capability which would be relevant to Business Process Outsourcing companies.

7.2 Maximising Procurement Opportunities

Action 241: Establish a working group comprised of SME stakeholders that will examine ways to improve SME access to public procurement opportunities.

Ongoing Measure: Hold regular meetings of the group. (OGP)

Update: Complete

The SME stakeholders group was established and met a number of times during 2013. The Group in particular provided input to (a) Circular 10/14 “Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement” and (b) a new pilot Tender Advisory Service to be run by the Office of Government Procurement which will be operational from 1 February 2015.

Action 243: Following consultation with SME stakeholders, and in the context of the transposition of the new EU Procurement Directives, revise procurement Circular 10/10 in line with the on-going transposition of the Directives, to encourage greater SME access to procurement.

Ongoing Measure: Consult with SME Working Group (see separate Action). (OGP)

Update: Complete

The SME Working Group contributed positively to the work carried out in advance of publishing circular 10/2014. The new guidelines contained in this Circular are aimed at reducing the administrative burden for SMEs that want to tender for public contracts. They accelerate some of the key business-friendly initiatives included under the new EU Public Procurement Directive, currently being transposed including: the setting of relevant and proportionate financial capacity, turnover and insurance levels for tendering firms; the subdividing of larger contracts into lots, where appropriate, to enable SMEs to bid for these opportunities. The new guidelines also encourage SMEs to form consortia where they are not of sufficient scale to tender in their own right and to register on www.etenders.gov.ie to ensure maximum exposure to tendering opportunities.

Action 246: Continue to encourage SMEs to register on, and use, the State's eProcurement web portal www.etenders.gov.ie.

Ongoing Measure: Assess how the registration process can be enhanced to encourage

registration by SMEs. (OGP)

Update: Complete

Circular 10/14 encourages SMEs to register on eTenders. The main thrust of the circular is as follows:

- Buyers are advised to undertake market analysis prior to tendering in order to better understand the range of goods and services on offer, the competitive landscape, including the specific capabilities of SMEs, etc;
- The circular promotes transparency in procurement by requiring supplies and general services contracts with an estimated value of €25,000 be advertised on the Government's electronic tendering portal, e-Tenders;
- It encourages suppliers including SMEs to fully use e-Tenders and avail of its facilities in relation to registration, e-tendering and automatic alerts in relation to future tendering opportunities;
- Buyers are encouraged not to set turnover thresholds at more than twice the estimated contract value and put limits on insurance levels for suppliers, where possible;
- The circular promotes greater use of "open" tendering and less use of "restrictive" tendering;
- It encourages SMEs to consider using consortia where they are not of sufficient scale to tender in their own right or where they may lack certain capabilities necessary to provide a compelling proposition; and
- It encourages Contracting Authorities to break large contracts down into lots where reasonable to do so and where it does not expose the State to undue risk or significant management overheads.

Ongoing Measure: In consultation with stakeholders, assess options to encourage registration on E-Tenders. (OGP)

Update: Complete

As above.

Ongoing Measure: In consultation with stakeholders, assess options to encourage registration on E-Tenders. (OGP)

Update: Complete

As above.

Ongoing Measure: Promote the e-procurement web portal to companies at 6 public sector procurement events in 2014. (EI)

Update: Complete

Throughout 2014, Enterprise Ireland (EI) continued to encourage SMEs to register on, and use, the State's eProcurement web portal www.etenders.gov.ie. The number of companies registered on eTenders has increased considerably in recent years. EI, as part of its presentation pack and communication with SMEs, encourages SMEs that are not registered on eTenders to register. Engagement with SMEs and communication on the benefits of registering on eTenders was part of EI's communication policy to SMEs at all events in 2014, including the meet the buyer events, one to one meetings and EI client meetings at International Markets Week in September 2014.

Action 247: Work to increase SME awareness of public procurement opportunities through the OGP, Enterprise Ireland and InterTradeIreland.

Ongoing Measure: Hold Meet the Buyer events. (OGP, InterTradeIreland)

Update: Complete

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) supports the work of Enterprise Ireland (EI) and InterTrade Ireland in building awareness of public procurement and supporting training for small suppliers in bidding for public contract. In 2014 the OGP, for example, supported two "Meet the Buyer" events in Belfast and Dublin attended by approximately 1,700 suppliers. The target audience for Meet the Buyer events is SMEs. At these events, SMEs meet the OGP, and other public sector buyers learn how procurement is changing, network with other similar businesses and get advice from specialists on refining their pitch, consortia building, funding opportunities and business supports available.

Ongoing Measure: Deliver Go-2-Tender and Advanced Go-2-Tender SME tender training programme on an all-island basis. (InterTradeIreland)

Update: Complete

During 2014 substantial changes took place in the Public Procurement environment in Ireland, which have far-reaching consequences for SMEs. As a result, there was a significant increase in demand for the Go-2-Tender and Advanced Go-2-Tender training programme. Between January and December 2014, 14 standard and 3 advanced workshops took place. These training workshops were attended by 329 participants representing 301 SMEs. 2 Meet the Buyer Events took place in October/November in Belfast and Dublin and were attended by more than 1,132 suppliers and 220 buying organisations. These events give Irish SMEs the unique opportunity to meet Buyers in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Ongoing Measure: Maximum usage of Procurement.ie and E-Tenders websites. (OGP)

Update: Complete

Circular 10/14 encourages maximum usage of the Procurement.ie and E-Tenders websites (see update on Action 246 above), and the promotion of usage of Procurement and eTenders at “Meet the Buyer” events.

Ongoing Measure: Highlight key public procurement opportunities to SMEs, in particular regional NDFA PPP projects. Facilitate 4 networking events between framework contractors and SMEs during the year. (EI, NDFA)

Update: Complete

During 2014, Enterprise Ireland highlighted key public procurement opportunities to SMEs, in particular regional NDFA PPP projects. The Agency, in collaboration with the NDFA, held 4 supplier – buyer events in 2014, 1 specifically focused on the DIT Grangegorman project, 1 focused on the Primary Care Centres, and 2 targeting the Schools Bundles programme. In total, over 700 companies, most of which were SMEs, participated in the events.

Action 249: Develop regional consortia building programmes to encourage collaboration between SMEs.

Ongoing Measure: Provide Consortia Facilitator service to support SMEs in collaborative tendering. (InterTradeIreland)

Update: Complete

3 specific workshops on the Consortia Facilitator Service were delivered in July, September and November, in Dublin and Belfast. These awareness-raising seminars inform SMEs about the changes in the Public Procurement markets and alert them to the new and larger opportunities available in the Irish and Northern Irish markets through collaborative bidding. The Consortia Facilitator Service has been promoted through the Go-2-Tender workshops through parallel sessions at the 2014 Meet the Buyer events and participant database and specific events. To date 20 SMEs have availed of the Consortia Service resulting in the following:

- The submission of 10 bids; including 5 cross border;
- The formation of 2 successful cross border consortia;
- 2 entries onto Framework Agreement – HSE (ROI) and NIPS Contract;
- The facilitation of 28 meetings with public sector buying organisations to promote the Consortia Service;
- 3 SMEs have been supported under the consortia element of the Go-2-Tender Programme; and
- One sector specific briefing held with NI Water.

Ongoing Measure: Organise two regional events on consortia building for SMEs during the year. (EI)

Update: Delayed

Enterprise Ireland's Public Procurement Department held a seminar entitled "Pitch-Network - Build Consortia" in Dublin on 11 June 2014 that was attended by 82 delegates from 66 companies (20 being EI/LEO client companies from various regions). The seminar provided the attendees with insights on tendering as part of a consortia targeting national public sector construction projects.

Subsequently, the Public Procurement stakeholder group met in November to review actions in relation to up-skilling companies in the area of public procurement. A review of the current capability building programmes is underway. The next consortia building event will be held after the review has taken place and also after the Guide for SMEs to consortium bidding has been published by the Competition and Consumer Authority, this is likely to be in the first half of 2015.

Action 250: Support Irish companies seeking to participate in procurement overseas through engagements for SMEs with International Financial Institutions

Ongoing Measure: Organise two engagements for SMEs with the International Financial Institutions, including the UN & World Bank. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) organised two World Bank events during 2014. The 'World Bank Procurement Consultation' involved Mr. Chris Browne, the Chief Procurement Officer of the World Bank, hosting a consultation with EI client companies regarding proposed changes to the World Bank procurement process. The 'World Bank Forum and Knowledge Event' involved representatives from the World Bank in the U.S. and Europe presenting to clients on the opportunities and challenges of winning contracts with the World Bank Group. Both events took place in EI's Dublin Offices, with about 40 attendees in total.

EI also funded the Consulting Ireland cluster training programme that had a number of training sessions in 2015 which gave participants a greater understanding of what is involved and required in the area of procurement to the EU, World Bank, UN and other related organisations.

Action 251: Examine practical ways to highlight the merits of purchasing innovative products and services, where appropriate, as a means of achieving cost savings in public procurement.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (OGP)

Update: Complete

Innovation is one part of Ireland's overall procurement strategy. The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) works closely with other public sector departments/organisations and will support opportunities that encourage innovative procurement in any of public sector procuring organisations. It is the stated aim of the OGP not just to provide value for money but to provide sourcing solutions that are smarter and more efficient. At ground level Category Councils are responsible for developing commercial strategies for sourcing goods and services in each of their categories in line with the needs of customer organisations and in the context of obtaining best value for money. There is a clear focus within the OGP to foster and facilitate innovation in public procurement. The OGP has established an SME Working Group with representatives from industry representative bodies and the Department of Jobs and Enterprise Ireland (DJEI). The focus of this group is to develop and monitor strategies for SME access to public procurement. Support of innovation falls broadly within the terms of reference of this Group. Innovation Procurement policy was addressed in DPER Circular 10/14, "Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement", where it is recognized that innovation and creative solutions can assist procurement strategy.

Ongoing Measure: Organise two seminars for public sector procurement agencies with the focus on the benefits of procuring innovative products and services. (EI, DJEI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland in collaboration with Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and the ESB launched the first Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programme in 2014. In 2014, Enterprise Ireland's Public Procurement Department carried out a series of both sector specific and cross-sectoral engagements including presentations to contracting authorities to highlight the benefits of innovative procurement.

9. Sectoral Opportunities

9.1 Agriculture, Food and Marine

Action 268: Support over 100 food SMEs through Teagasc Food SME Technology Support Programme and BIM Seafood Centre.

Ongoing Measure: Teagasc to provide

- 4 four technical training courses

- 2 product development courses
- 2 regulatory compliance courses
- 2 food innovation and technology transfer events

(Teagasc)

Update: Complete

5 technical training courses were delivered by Teagasc; 3 Technology Transfer events; regulatory technical training was provided for 16 meat SME companies; and Teagasc presented at three FSAI seminars and one UCC course on Innovation & New Product Development/Innovation for SMEs.

Ongoing Measure: Teagasc to provide access to expertise, product development facilities and in-company assistance on R&D to 100 agri-food companies. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

Teagasc provided direct access to expertise, product development facilities and in-company assistance on R&D to an estimated 100 SME agri-food companies; a technical advice service is also provided by telephone/meetings for the food SME sector.

Action 269: Enterprise Ireland to support 25 significant food and drink industry investments, five of which will be FDI projects in 2014.

Ongoing Measure: Convert existing project pipeline and engage with priority clients to develop & implement significant new investments. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland (EI) works with companies in the food and beverage sectors to find ideal locations, to grow and develop their businesses, and to integrate with the world-class food research and development infrastructure that exists in Ireland. During 2014, some 47 significant food/drinks projects were approved by EI for companies operating in the food and drink industry; these investments included six Foreign Direct Investments. Between them, these projects accounted for new jobs commitments of 1,678 over the next 3 years.

Action 270: Roll out a schedule of food related Ministerial Trade and Investment Missions and continue with technical and diplomatic efforts to improve trade and access for agri-food products.

Ongoing Measure: Continue diplomatic efforts and facilitate external market access

delegations to promote exports. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

Agreement was reached in 2014 on access for the following countries and products, and in relation to certificates:

- Lebanon (Beef, Sheepmeat, Cooked Meat Products)
- Hong Kong (Sheepmeat)
- Namibia (Beef, Sheepmeat)
- Philippines (Beef, sheepmeat, Pigeat)
- Vietnam (Pigeat)
- New Caledonia (Beef)
- China Bovien Semen Certificate agreed.

Action 271: Launch and implement a project to market, on a commercial basis, Ireland's expertise in the provision of public agri-food support services.

Ongoing Measure: Identification of projects opportunities and development of project proposals with relevant Agri-food government and near-to-government agencies. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

During Q4, Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI) delivery capability was created, including branding, marketing materials and references, and SFSI participated on the Food and AgriTech Mission to China. The SFSI executive team identified the first tranche of opportunities for commercial delivery of agri-food expertise from the participating government agencies to clients overseas; this includes support directly to peer organisations in countries like China, and through multilateral agency-funded projects in pre-Accession countries and Africa. These opportunities involve a 6-12 month project cycle – expressions of interest, tender and contracting, and these opportunities as well as new opportunities, will be pursued in 2015.

9.2 Green Economy

Action 289: Carry out Cleantech Trade Missions or include the Cleantech sector in multi sectoral trade missions to highlight the products and services available from Irish companies in the sector and to develop export opportunities for them

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

Update: Complete

Supporting an export-led recovery is at the heart of the Government's jobs plan, and in the past three years it has put in place a range of measures to encourage more job-creation in Irish and multinational companies here. Central to this is Ministerial-led trade missions, which help to put our agencies and our businesses in front of decision-makers in overseas companies and Governments who can enable the job-creation in Ireland that we need. To encourage job-creation in Ireland the Government has more than doubled the number of Ministerial-led trade missions since taking office.

This Action specifically involved a cohort of water/wastewater companies participating in Ministerial-led missions to the Gulf region in Q1 and Q2 with follow on visits to Oman, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia in September and November. Contracts have been secured by several of the participants. LED (Low energy lighting) companies also participated at the Build and Light show in Frankfurt in April 2014.

Action 290: Continue to look for international trade liberalisation in green goods, technologies and services in bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

Negotiations for an Environmental Goods Agreement (EGA) were launched on 8 July 2014 at the World Trade Organisation. The agreement could eventually cover goods, technologies and related services that are used to tackle air pollution, to provide clean drinking water, to deal with waste management, and to generate renewable energy based on wind, solar, hydro and biomass. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has been working with Enterprise Ireland to identify Irish-produced technologies and services relevant to the agreement and will seek to have trade in these liberalised under the agreement in order to create new market opportunities for Irish enterprises. In 2014, negotiation rounds on environmental product categories took place on air pollution, solid and hazardous waste management, wastewater management and water treatment, environmental remediation and clean-up of soil and water, noise and vibration abatement. As part of the negotiations, the inclusion of services related to the provision of environmental goods is also under consideration. Further negotiation rounds will take place this year with a view to agreeing a final list in time for the Paris COP at the end of 2015.

Action 291: Continue to work with UK authorities on the potential for an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) which could facilitate the trade of energy from renewable sources between Ireland and the UK.

Ongoing Measure: Continue to progress tasks to facilitate the signing of a potential IGA in 2014. (DCENR)

Update: Delayed/ Will not be delivered

On 13 April 2014, the Minister for Energy, Communications and Natural Resources announced that an Inter-Governmental Agreement to facilitate Green Energy Export to the UK, within the EU's 2020 timeframe, has not been agreed.

Action 294: Examine the potential for job creation through expansion of domestic supply chains linked to the investment required to meet Ireland's 2020 renewable energy and energy efficiency targets.

Ongoing Measure: Engage with industry to promote opportunities in the sustainable energy supply chain. (SEAI)

Update: Complete

Following the publication of 'Ireland's Sustainable Energy Supply Chain Opportunity', on 11 June, SEAI has engaged extensively with industry to promote opportunities in the sustainable energy supply chain.

Action 300: Support the promotion of the Green Economy in Ireland by active participation in key events.

Ongoing Measure: Provide keynote speakers for seminars and conferences and provide insights into Government policy. (DJEI, EI, DCENR, EPA, SEAI)

Update: Complete

The relevant Government Departments and Agencies regularly provide speakers for events related to driving the Green Economy agenda. In Q3 and Q4, events for which speakers were provided included conferences in Ireland on smart grid technologies, waste and environmental policy and management. Examples include the Smart Grid Technologies event and the Environment Ireland conference which both took place in September.

Ongoing Measure: Engage with key stakeholders in the context of relevant policy developments. (DJEI, EI, DCENR, EPA, SEAI)

Update: Complete

The relevant Departments and Agencies regularly engage with stakeholders in the context of policy development and implementation, either through bilateral meetings, seminars or formal consultation processes. Key policy developments involving stakeholder engagement

in 2014 included a stakeholder consultation by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government on National Low Carbon Road mapping to 2050 and a public consultation on the Environmental Impact Statement guidelines by the EPA.

Action 303: Review the potential for job creation through the greater use of waste as a resource in Ireland including through the preparing for reuse, recycling/reprocessing and recovery of waste and explore what additional actions are required to stimulate the further development of indigenous recycling and recovery infrastructure

Ongoing Measure: Consultation with waste management industry regarding the development of recycling and recovery infrastructure. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) has engaged with the waste management industry on this issue throughout 2014 on an on-going basis, including in the context of reforming the collection of household waste.

Action 304: Continue to identify opportunities for developing the Green Economy through meetings of the Consultative Committee on Jobs in the Green Economy.

Ongoing Measure: Convene meetings of the Consultative Committee over the course of the year focusing on thematic issues relevant to the Green Economy. (DJEI, Consultative Committee)

Update: Complete

As part of the Action Plan for Jobs 2012, the Government published a Policy Statement on Growth and Employment in the Green Economy – Delivering Our Green Potential. The Policy Statement envisaged the establishment of a Consultative Committee on Jobs in the Green Economy to identify emerging opportunities for Ireland in the Green Economy, to be chaired by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The Committee was established in Q1 2013 and comprises six representatives each from industry and the public sector. Relevant industry practitioners and other stakeholders are invited to meetings to discuss thematic areas as required. The fifth meeting of the Committee took place in Q4 2014 in DCU Innovation Campus and the Director of the Campus gave a presentation to the Committee on the success of the campus, which has a cleantech focus, in attracting companies and creating jobs since it opened in January 2013. Arising from the discussion it was also agreed to take forward a sub-group to examine in more detail access to finance issues for the cleantech sector. The sub-group comprising representatives from industry, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and Enterprise Ireland met in January 2015.

9.3 Construction and Property

Action 309: Identify planning related measures, including updating the planning legislative framework through the upcoming Planning Bill and making necessary targeted revisions to the planning system, to support sustainable development and economic recovery.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG)

Update: Complete for 2014

The General Scheme of Bill Number 1 has been published and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) is now engaging with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel on drafting matters. The General Scheme of Bill Number 2 will be published shortly.

Action 311: Continue to engage with Dublin Local Authorities in monitoring the housing supply situation in Dublin with a view to ensuring a co-ordinated and integrated approach in planning policies and investment in necessary infrastructure.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG and relevant local authorities)

Update: Complete

The first Report of the Dublin Housing Supply Task Force was received by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) in June 2014. This Report identified the level of housing supply currently in the planning system and assessed the adequacy of the current volume of zoned land. It highlighted a number of supply-related issues which required further examination, and the Task Force created a work programme of coordinated actions, meeting on a monthly basis with a view to their completion.

Action 313: Develop metrics with banking and other interested funding providers to ensure the availability of sufficient finance to support a sustainable construction sector.

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

Update: Complete

A High Level Working Group (HLWG), chaired by the Department of Finance and comprising representatives of the National Asset Management Agency, the National Pension Reserve Fund, banks and construction and property sector was established under Construction 2020

to explore the issue of development financing for the construction sector. The group has established that the funding model has fundamentally changed – banks are willing to provide c.65% of development funding costs but bridging the remaining gap with equity is proving to be a challenge. A conference will be held in Q1 2015 to bring together providers of senior debt, equity and property developers, with the dual aims of addressing the knowledge gap and matching developers with project financing.

Action 314: NAMA will advance up to €2 billion in development funding over the next three years, in addition to the €500 million that has been already advanced, to complete or commence new development on property held as security for its loans, subject to commercial viability and appropriate cost recovery arrangements. This funding will be advanced directly by NAMA or through appropriate commercial partnerships.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (NAMA)

Update: On Schedule

To the end of 2014, NAMA has approved a total of €3.2 billion in advances to debtors and receivers. This includes €1.6 billion in approved funding for the completion of construction projects currently in progress in Ireland and to develop new projects to meet prospective supply shortages in certain sectors. Close to €1 billion of this has already been drawn down. NAMA is prepared to advance additional funding for commercially viable Irish projects, including the Dublin Docklands and residential development programmes mentioned above.

Action 315: NAMA will focus on projects that address particular supply shortages, e.g. it will facilitate the construction of 4,500 new houses or apartments in the Greater Dublin Area, office space in the Dublin Central Business District and projects in other key urban areas, subject to commercial viability and appropriate cost recovery arrangements. A core focus will be development in the Dublin Docklands, subject to the delivery of a commercially viable Strategic Development Zone.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (NAMA, DECLG)

Update: On Schedule

Residential Delivery:

As part of its contribution to address emerging residential supply shortages in the Greater Dublin area, NAMA established a dedicated Residential Delivery team in April 2014. The team is driving delivery of NAMA's commitment to facilitate the completion of 4,500 new residential units in the period to the end of 2016 and to assess the scope for delivery of additional units thereafter. The end-2014 delivery target of 1,000 units has been exceeded; it is expected that another 1,500 residential units will be delivered in 2015 with the residual

to be delivered in 2016. Most of the units will be delivered on 63 'Tier 1' sites where construction has already commenced or which are 'shovel ready'.

Dublin Docklands SDZ:

Following adoption of the Docklands SDZ Scheme in May 2014, NAMA has intensified its preparatory work in relation to the development land within the SDZ in which it holds an interest: this comprises 75% of the 22 hectares of developable land in the Docklands SDZ area. From the initial appraisal exercise conducted by NAMA, it is estimated that up to 3.4m sq. ft. of commercial space and 1,848 apartments could potentially be delivered if all the sites in which NAMA has an interest were to be fully commercially developed over the next five to seven years.

NAMA has prepared detailed business plans which include strategies for each of the 13 individual sites within the Dublin Docklands SDZ in which it has an interest. NAMA is engaging intensively with Dublin City Council - the development agency and planning authority for the area.

NAMA is involved in a number of initiatives which were announced in late 2014:

- It will provide funding for the planning application to Dublin City Council for the development of the landmark Boland's Mill site in Dublin's south Docklands. The planning application submitted by the site's receivers includes proposed office, residential, cultural and retail development, totalling almost 400,000 sq. ft.
- NAMA is a minority shareholder in the South Docks Fund, which has recently submitted a planning application to Dublin City Council for the development of over 450,000 sq. ft. of office and residential accommodation at 5 Hanover Quay and 76 Sir John Rogerson's Quay in the Docklands. Subject to planning approval, construction is likely to begin during the first quarter of 2015 and the new developments are expected to accommodate up to 2,400 workers and 158 apartments.
- NAMA is also a shareholder in the City Development Fund, which will begin the construction of a new building, comprising 50,000 sq. ft. of office space, at 6-8 Hanover Quay. When completed, the building will accommodate 300 staff in the European headquarters of a major U.S.-based corporation.

NAMA announced on 17 December that Oxley Holdings Limited is its preferred bidder for a key site located at 72-80 North Wall Quay. Subject to completion of the transaction, Oxley will acquire a long leasehold interest with the right to develop, manage and realise the site. NAMA will retain the freehold interest and will receive a secure income stream in addition to a percentage of any future sales proceeds. Oxley's proposal comprises the development of more than 645,000 sq. ft. of Grade A office space, with capacity for up to 5,500 employees, and the delivery of over 200 apartments. The planning application is likely to be submitted in early 2015 and, subject to this, it is envisaged that construction will begin in late 2015/early 2016.

Action 316: Work with mortgage providers to ensure a sustainable approach to mortgage provision including more transparency and information for applicants through the mortgage approval process.

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

Update: Complete

The Department of Finance continues to work with Banking and Payments Federation Ireland (BPFI) to monitor new mortgage lending. Lending increased to over €1.1 billion in Q3 2014. Work is also underway on the transposition of the Mortgage Credit Directive (this has to take place by March 2016) which is intended to set out minimum regulations and information standards to better protect consumers.

Action 317: Actively engage with the IDA to facilitate the property needs of companies seeking to create jobs in Ireland.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (NAMA)

Update: On Schedule

NAMA is facilitating significant property transactions that might not otherwise take place by offering structured engagement between its debtors and receivers and potential new investors. In particular, NAMA is working actively with the IDA in identifying suitable properties to support FDI investment and employment.

Action 318: Continue to implement the Public Capital Programme and outline public investment plans for 2015-2019.

Ongoing Measure: Continue to implement the Public Capital Programme. (DPER and relevant Departments)

Update: Complete

Expenditure under the Public Capital Programme is on track to end-2014 with some Departments due to spend more than their capital allocation for the year. This is due to an additional amount being allocated for repairs arising from last winter's storms and additional employment intensive stimulus projects. The improvement in the economic and fiscal positions also allowed for additional spend on the Transport Vote. Unspent moneys totalling €79m will be carried into 2015 for expenditure on priority projects in that year.

Action 319: Explore mechanisms for private financing and greater use of Public Private Partnerships.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DPER)

Update: Complete

DPER consults with the Department of Finance on an ongoing basis with regard to financing matters. Alternative sources of funding are being examined in the context of the Capital Review.

Action 321: Extend the use of social clauses in public works contracts where appropriate, drawing on the experience of the pilot programme.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DPER, NDFA, NRA)

Update: Complete

The Devolved Schools Programme which is administered by the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) is being used as the pilot programme to trial the use of a social clause which requires a certain percentage of the person weeks necessary to complete a project to be undertaken by individuals recruited from the ranks of the long-term unemployed and by apprentices. This clause will be included in the PPP element of the stimulus programme. Construction work on many of the PPP stimulus projects will commence from 2015 onwards and the contracts for these projects will include the clause that was used in the pilot programme.

Evidence from the pilot has shown that contractors are having no difficulty fulfilling the requirement with regards to the long-term unemployed with Intreo providing support to contractors. However meeting the requirement for apprentices has proven more challenging due to the collapse in numbers undertaking apprenticeships. Given the recent expenditure commitment on social housing and the much reported shortage of housing in urban areas, skills deficits in the traditional trades will quickly become apparent. As demand for apprenticeships is employer-led, it is proposed to explore the potential to extend the apprenticeship requirement into public works contracts with a value in excess of €5m. Engagement with industry and SOLAS will begin shortly to establish the appropriate level of apprenticeship based on the capacity of employers and SOLAS, as the training provider, to meet such requirements.

To date a total of three contracts have been awarded off the Devolved Schools Programme which cover fourteen sites. The works comprise both stand-alone, new build and extensions/refurbishment works. Construction work started on all three of the contracts during Spring 2014. The aggregate capital value of the contracts is circa €70m. By September 2014, across the three contracts awarded to date on the Devolved Schools Programme there were 39 employees working on the sites who had been unemployed for more than 12 months and 12 further employees who were either apprentices or trainees, of

whom 7 (of the 12) have also been unemployed for more than 12 months.

Action 322: Facilitate the development of a robust voluntary register of Builders, Contractors and Construction Trades to be available to registrants from 1 March 2014 and further developed in consultation with relevant statutory agencies.

Ongoing Measure: Facilitate the development of a robust voluntary register of Builders, Contractors and Construction Trades to be available to registrants from 1 March 2014 and further developed in consultation with relevant statutory agencies. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) is up and running since 1 March 2014 on a voluntary basis in tandem with the coming into effect of the Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014. Over 460 construction businesses have registered to date with the voluntary register (i.e. Construction Industry Register Ireland) and over 700 further applications are at various stages of completion. Arrangements to place the register on a statutory footing in 2015 are well advanced.

Action 323: Continue to support the expansion of construction firms into international markets, in particular through measures supporting capacity building in management and training and through the overseas support of Embassies and Enterprise Ireland offices.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI and Agencies)

Update: Complete

Inward Buyer Visit to IPSE Conference, Cork, May 2014

Enterprise Ireland (EI) teamed up with the International Society of Pharmaceutical Engineers (ISPE) to co-host a major Conference in Cork on 22/23 May. EI offices (France, Germany, Benelux, Spain, Italy, Sweden and Turkey) invited and hosted 40+ international buyers to attend the event and associated site visits to PfiZers (Cork and Dublin), Eli Lilly, and Janssen Biological (Cork). 25 Client Companies participated at the event including at the Table Top exhibition area, presenting papers, or in general attendance. Many of the EI-hosted visitors also participated in plant visits to client companies, mainly within the Cork region.

Building Information Modelling

Building Information Modelling (BIM) is the first truly global digital construction technology and will soon be deployed in every country in the world. It is a 'game changer' - but in common with all innovation, this presents both risk and opportunity. BIM is a managed approach to the collection and exploitation of information across a project. At its heart is a

computer-generated model containing all graphical and tabular information about the design, construction and operation of the asset. With the UK Government mandating all public sector build contracts to use a BIM approach by 2016, companies need to be preparing now. In the recently published “Construction 2020: A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector”, EI was tasked with the introduction of a staged development programme to support companies advancing to Level 2 BIM capability. In July 2014 EI approved the introduction of a sequenced two-part Building Information Modelling (BIM) business offer to incentivise EI clients to adopt and embed BIM principles in their organisation, thereby leading to increased business performance, productivity and competitiveness improvements and facilitate access to emerging international opportunities. Based on a successful pilot undertaken in 2013, two new BIM Business Support Grants, BIM Enable and BIM Implement will form the basis of this new offer. The BIM Enable grant aims to support companies to develop a clear, customised BIM delivery roadmap while the BIM Implement grant will help companies achieve the necessary skills and learning to tender for BIM Level 2 contracts.

This is a collaborative programme, led by Enterprise Ireland’s UK office, based on a clear end-market opportunity, and supported by Enterprise Ireland’s Construction, Timber and Consumer Retail team. The design of the BIM implementation programme is based on BIM principles of design and process improvement.

Action 327: Ensure effective implementation of Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2013 from 1 March 2014, and introduce a wider package of building control reforms to accompany the new regulations to ensure stronger consumer protection.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

Indications to date suggest that the construction industry is making a successful transition to the new arrangements for the control of building activity introduced under the Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014. A total of 5,000 building projects have commenced under the new regulations since they came into operation on 1 March 2014. Oversight of activity by industry and by local building control authorities has improved immeasurably and authorities have ready access to detailed data on projects via the new online Building Control Management System. The online system streamlines building control administration and enables authorities to identify risks and track progress. A Framework for Building Control Authorities was adopted by the City and County Management Association on 17 July 2014 – these common protocols add clarity, efficiency and consistency to building control activities across the local government sector.

Action 329: Publicise the Home Renovation Incentive (HRI) Scheme, to assist with encouraging take up of the scheme, providing stimulus for the construction sector.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance, Revenue)

Update: Complete

An extensive information campaign has been underway since the HRI was announced in Budget 2014. In Budget 2015, to support legitimate operators in the rental and construction sector and to help upgrade the quality of private rental stock, the HRI was extended to include rental properties owned by landlords subject to income tax.

Action 331: Oversee implementation by Local Authorities of a programme of works to improve the quality and enhance the energy efficiency of the existing Local Authorities housing stock.

Ongoing Measure: Develop proposals with the European Commission (ERDF) and the European Investment Bank for funding in respect of €100m energy retrofitting intervention, involving 2,000 apartments and flats in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. (DECLG, S&E Regional Assembly (SERA), EIB, Dublin City Council, Cork City Council, Limerick Local Authorities)

Update: Complete for 2014

The recently approved Operation Programme of the S&E Regional Assembly has made provision for European Commission (ERDF) support for this measure.

9.5 Retail Sector

Action 341: Establish a Retail Consultation Forum to provide a structured ongoing engagement between Government and the Retail sector. This Forum will include representatives from the sector and from key Government Departments/agencies to consider ongoing and emerging issues facing the sector.

Ongoing Measure: Identify issues which can be addressed to help support job growth in the Retail sector. (DJEI, Forum members, Relevant Departments/agencies)

Update: Complete

The Retail Consultation Forum was established in June 2014 and is chaired by Minister for Small Business and Employment, Ged Nash. The objective of the Retail Consultation Forum is to identify actions which can be taken by the Government, its Agencies and industry itself to support the recovery of the retail sector. At its first meeting on 9 June, Forum Members

were asked to identify potential actions that could be considered by the Forum which would support job growth in the retail sector. A Work Programme was drawn up on the basis of the discussion at the first meeting of the Forum, which seeks to reflect the priority which members place on the various topics identified. The Work Programme includes addressing such issues as: revitalising town centre shopping, replicating best practice initiatives from Local Authorities to support retail, identifying costs to business in retail, the black economy, and skills needs for the retail sector.

Following discussions at its second meeting in September, the Forum prepared a pre-Budget submission for the Department of Finance which identified a range of proposals to support the retail sector which could be addressed in the Budget. Discussions held in the November meeting of the Forum fed into the preparation by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation of proposals in support of job growth in the retail sector for inclusion in the 2015 APJ.

Action 343: Implement measures announced in Budget 2014 to tackle the Shadow Economy in the areas of VAT fraud, illegal tobacco selling, unlicensed trading in alcohol products, and fuel laundering.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (Revenue)

Update: Complete

Tackling all aspects of the shadow economy activities across all sectors, continues to be a key corporate priority for Revenue and significant resources are devoted to a range of programmes aimed at reducing its impact and at creating a level playing field for the legitimate trade. Revenue is fully committed to doing all it can to minimise the shadow economy and will continue with its multi-faceted approach in that regard.

Action 347: Widely promote the greater flexibility that has been introduced into the social welfare system to enable unemployed people to move more easily between the welfare system and paid employment when opportunities arise for short periods of employment. We will also examine the potential to extend the period for which these flexible arrangements apply.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DSP)

Update: Complete

The greater flexibility that has been introduced into the social welfare system to enable unemployed people to move more easily between the welfare system and paid employment when opportunities arise for short periods of employment has been promoted to employers and job seekers across a range of events. The current position of allowing up to 8 weeks

employment without having to close a claim is an extension of previous arrangements to facilitate quicker processes where jobseekers' recipients find temporary work. People who are currently on a jobseekers payment can elect to sign off over the phone or on-line and where the subsequent period of employment exceeds 8 weeks, customers would be fast-tracked on re-applying for a jobseekers benefit where no substantive change in their circumstances exist. In such cases, claims could be expected to be back in payment within a week from the date of the new claim.

In addition to this, the new Intreo processes has greatly reduced the overall length of time it takes to actually make a new jobseekers claim with the Department. 46 Intreo offices have been opened with the full Intreo service and it is intended to open the remaining 14 offices during 2015. In the meantime 12 of these offices are, notwithstanding that physical works are not complete, offering the full Intreo service. The remaining 2 offices require infrastructural works to support the Intreo service model.

The impact of the promotion of schemes such as the Family Income Supplement is evident in the increase in the number of people availing of the scheme from 32,000 to 49,000 between 2012 and October 2014. Other schemes such as JobBridge and JobsPlus are also widely promoted and have had significant take up. A Back to Work Family Dividend (BTWFD) that will allow persons who return to work to retain part of their payment for up to 2 years was announced as part of Budget 2015.

Action 350: Consider future specific proposals from retail representative groups for planning permission exemptions for certain types of minor works to town centre retail operations

Ongoing Measure: Retail representative bodies to make specific proposals for planning exemptions to DECLG. (Retail Representative Groups/ DECLG)

Update: Complete for 2014

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) has committed to considering specific proposals from retail representative groups for planning permission exemptions for certain types of minor works to town centre retail operations. In that context, Retail Ireland (an IBEC affiliate), Chambers Ireland, Retail Excellence Ireland, RGDATA, the Small Firms Association and the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association were asked to submit proposals on a review of the planning application process with a view to making this process more efficient. Such proposals have not yet been received from the retail sector. On receipt of specific proposals from the retail sector the Department will consider if it is feasible to amend the exempted development provisions of the Planning Regulations in this regard.

Action 352: Make available to the retail sector a new two day training programme to

enhance the financial capacity of SMEs.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, Skillnets)

Update: Complete

The Building Financial Capability training programme for SMEs was launched in February 2014 by Skillnets. The course is designed to help the owner-managers of small and medium sized businesses from all sectors, including Retail, to better present their business case when seeking finance for their business. The programme is delivered by training and financial professionals experienced in working with SME owners, and combines two one-day workshops with business owners followed by two one-to-one private mentoring sessions for each business. The programme is promoted on an on-going basis and there have been a number of participants from the retail sector. An evaluation of the scheme has been carried out as part of Action 222.

Action 353: Examine the potential for increased support for training specific to the Retail sector through programmes such as Momentum and the Skillnets Training Networks Programme.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DES)

Update: Complete

New rounds of Momentum and Springboard will provide education and training programmes in skills areas identified by the EGFSN.

9.6 Creative Services

Action 354: Support a new initiative between the Arts Council, DAHG, Local Authorities and the Department of Social Protection to provide more than 100 new places on the Jobbridge programme specifically for arts practitioners through placements with Local Authorities.

Ongoing Measure: Allocation of supports by Arts Council under existing programme. (Arts Council, DAHG, Local Authorities, DSP)

Update: Complete

Over 200 interns have so far been placed and are receiving training through the scheme in a wide range of arts-related positions underwritten by local authorities. These include working and receiving training at festivals and galleries, with artists, and the arts and

cultural organisations in communities right across the country.

Action 355: The Arts Council will support some 450 individuals and over 870 organisations across a wide range of arts venues, festivals, arts organisations and touring initiatives around Ireland in 2014.

Ongoing Measure: Allocation of supports by Arts Council under existing programmes and activities. (Arts Council, DAHG)

Update: Complete

In 2014, the Arts Council will have supported some 500 individuals and have made over 560 grants covering up to 490 organisations across a wide range of arts venues, festivals, arts organisations and touring initiatives around Ireland.

Action 356: Create up to 300 direct/indirect jobs arising from the major refurbishment programme for the National Gallery of Ireland, a 3-year project on which work is commencing in Q1 2014 following the award of the contract.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (National Gallery of Ireland, DAHG)

Update: Complete

Work has commenced on this labour-intensive €31.4m project, which will create approximately 300 jobs, and is on schedule to be completed by the end of 2015.

Action 359: Continue to implement actions set out in the Creative Capital Report to double employment in the film and audiovisual sector by 2016, supporting in the region of 40 significant projects and creating up to 800 jobs in the audiovisual production sector in Ireland in 2014.

Ongoing Measure: Roll out by IFB of supports to deliver the number of projects planned for 2014. (DAHG, Irish Film Board)

Update: Complete

One of the main recommendations in the Creative Capital Report was the extension of the Section 481 Film Tax relief Scheme until 2020. The work on the extension of the scheme was completed in 2014, and furthermore, there was an increase in the value of the tax relief to 32% from 28%. This brings Ireland into line with other countries in Europe and keeps Ireland competitive in the international audiovisual content production sector. The other

recommendations in the report continue to be acted upon as appropriate.

Action 365: Support the development of www.duchas.ie, a project to digitise the National Folklore Collection of Ireland. The initial phase of the project will advance the digitisation of a significant part of the Schools' Collection in time for the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

Ongoing Measure: Recruitment and contract placement. (DAHG, UCD and DCU)

Update: Complete

Recruitment and contract placement are completed; material from County Galway is available online since October 2014. 10.5 full-time equivalent employees have been directly employed on the project, with additional employment generated in firms providing contracted services.

Action 366: Support a range of Irish language arts, publishing, creative writing, training and other schemes, as well as festivals and drama companies.

Ongoing Measure: Provide funding for existing programmes and activities. (Foras na Gaeilge)

Update: Complete

A full range of supports was provided in 2014 as planned. The highlights include funding awarded to 65 festivals and funding totalling €229,779 awarded to 11 drama companies. Grants totalling €662,932 were awarded to 13 publishing companies and 100 multi-genre books to be published (including ebooks) as a result of grants under the Publishing Scheme. Funding was provided to two publishing companies to organise events for school children and young adults to promote the reading of Irish language literature. Book of the Year Awards made in October 2014. The intensive writing workshops in An Scríobhlann are underway; the literary festival IMRAM took place from the 9 – 18 October 2014 and the Writers' Centre hosted a series of events in November 2014, Scéim na nOidí is also being administered. Funding approved for the new on-line newspaper www.tuairisc.ie and funding approved for a new "Lifestyle Magazine" to be published monthly online.