

ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS 2014



Second Progress Report

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Commentary

This is the second 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*. It outlines progress made on measures due for completion in the second quarter of 2014. The Monitoring Committee comprises representatives of the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Forfás, and the Office of the Tánaiste. The high-level goal of the Action Plan for Jobs, first introduced in 2012, is to create the environment where the number of people at work will have increased by 100,000 by 2016 (from a 2012 base), and will have reached 2.1 million people by 2020.

The Government published the third in its multi-annual *Action Plan for Jobs* series in February this year. This Plan, which contains 385 actions to be implemented in 2014 by all 16 Government Departments and by 46 agencies, will build on the progress made in 2012 and 2013 and continue to improve supports for job-creating businesses and remove the barriers to employment-creation across the economy. These actions are additional to the over 500 actions already implemented cumulatively under *Action Plan for Jobs 2012 and 2013*, and reported on by the Monitoring Committee in its previous eight quarterly reports (see www.djei.ie).

Six of the seven Disruptive Reforms introduced in 2013 will be progressed further in 2014 as these are multi-annual initiatives (Big Data/Analytics; ICT Skills; Integrated Licensing Application Service; Trading Online; Energy Efficiency; and National Health Innovation Hub). The Jobs Plus initiative, launched in 2013, has already been mainstreamed and has proven particularly impactful. Three new Disruptive Reforms have been introduced in 2014: Entrepreneurship; Winning Abroad; and Manufacturing: National Step Change. In total, there are nine Disruptive Reforms to be advanced in 2014.

Overall, the 2014 Plan aims to create the environment where the number of people at work will increase by 100,000 by 2016, and reach 2 million people by 2020. While unemployment remains high, there are signs of progress in the labour market. The latest data shows that there was an annual increase in employment of 2.3% or 42,700 in the year to the first quarter of 2014, bringing total employment to 1,888,200. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has decreased from 15.1% in February 2012 to 11.6% in June 2014.

Actions due in Quarter 2

In the second quarter of 2014, Departments and agencies were to deliver 144 measures relating to 119 of the Action Plan's 385 actions. Some 123 of the measures due in Quarter 2 of 2014 have been delivered, giving a completion rate of 85%.

In delivering 123 second quarter measures under the Plan, the Government has, for example:

As part of Disruptive Reform 1 – Entrepreneurship

- Legally dissolved the County Enterprise Boards and established 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) fully integrated within the Local Authorities.
- Launched the new LEO website to provide a comprehensive range of information on all national and local enterprise supports to people interested in starting up a new business or already in business.
- Developed a range of programmes and initiatives under the Competitive Feasibility Fund (CFF) and Competitive Start Fund (CSF) including bootcamps, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning to support Youth Entrepreneurship.

As part of Disruptive Reform 2 – Winning Abroad

- Commenced the recruitment process for IDA Ireland to deploy additional resources in strategic locations overseas, including in new emerging markets, with the goal of intensifying FDI employment growth.
- Put a Project Team in place to develop and implement a work programme to deliver the Year of Irish Design 2015.

As part of Disruptive Reform 3 – Manufacturing: National Step Change

- Launched a national award scheme to recognise human resource initiatives by best-in-class manufacturing businesses.
- Launched, through SFI, a call for the recruitment of a number of world leading scientists and engineers in areas such as Manufacturing, Bio-manufacturing and Medical Devices and Medical Technologies.
- Promoted the use of the LEAN guide during 6 Road Show information events to more than 400 businesses, mostly SMEs.

As part of Disruptive Reform 4 - Big Data and Data Analysis

- Approved funding for the further expansion of the Insight Research Centre through the SFI “Spokes” Call.
- Launched a national Open Data initiative in the context of Ireland’s adoption of the G8 Open Data Charter.
- Enacted the Health Identifiers Bill which will provide a legal framework for the introduction of an individual identifier for use in the health system

As part of Disruptive Reform 7 – Trading Online

- Developed an awareness campaign to improve quality applications to the Trading Online Voucher Scheme from small businesses all over the country.

As part of Disruptive Reform 9 – National Health Innovation Hub

- Completed the evaluation of the Healthcare Innovation Hub's Cork Demonstrator Project.
- 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.

And more broadly, in Quarter 2 the Government has, for example:

- Undertaken a competitiveness benchmarking exercise to determine how Ireland performs in terms of international competitiveness across a range of indicators compared to key competitors including in particular within the Eurozone – Action 91.
- Developed integrated local economic and community plans, to promote economic and community development in each local authority area – Action 116.
- Developed through Science Foundation Ireland strategic partnerships with key scientific and research institutions in Northern Ireland and agreed new approaches for engaging in EU Horizon 2020 – Action 142.
- Delivered Smart Futures as a national collaborative government, industry and education framework to raise the awareness of STEM career opportunities for post-primary students – Action 149.
- Rolled out 2014 call for proposals for the ICT graduate skills conversion and Springboard programmes – Action 159.
- Published the 2013 Higher Education System Performance Report – Action 173.
- Implemented a pilot Post Graduate Programme of Professional Practice to provide an opportunity for graduates to acquire cross disciplinary skills in STEM based sectors – Action 174.
- Announced the establishment of the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) which will ultimately provide up to €4 billion in low cost funding for SMEs based on an initiative with KfW, the German Ministry of Finance and other international partners – Action 212.
- Implemented the Communications Strategy developed by the SME State Bodies Group, as part of which the Supporting SMEs online tool, providing SMEs with a guide to the State supports, was launched – Action 221.
- Run a Food Academy to nurture start up food businesses through workshop style training and assistance with routes to market – Action 262.

- Used the Bord Bia Food Graduate development programmes to attract graduate talent into agricultural sector while improving sales and developing commercial marketing skills – Action 266.
- Achieved high level official contact in China and Korea to deliver targeted new markets, (DAFM) and worked to enable Irish export plants access to the U.S.A. beef market – Action 270.
- Published a new comprehensive Code of Practice for retrofitting of homes to deliver growth in the sector by raising quality and standards – Action 298.
- Worked with local communities to translate the Gathering’s legacy into sustainable employment opportunities - Action 336.
- Completed the design of the Postcode system – Action 348.

However, as stated above, 21 of the measures outlined in the Plan have not been delivered on schedule:

- *Publish the National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement* - Action 1. The consultation process and the drafting of the Policy Statement is ongoing. The final draft will be completed in Q3 and presented to the Government for approval to publish.
- *Develop a strategy to support and develop commercial accelerators in the entrepreneurial ecosystem* – Action 11. There has been significant progress made in developing the strategy but it is unlikely to be completed before Q4. It is expected that the implementation will commence in Q4 shortly after the strategy has been finalised.
- *Roll-out Competitive Regional Feasibility funds to the South East* – Action 14. The Regional Competitive Feasibility Fund for the Cork Region was launched in March 2014. Due to the timing of that launch and the evaluation period required it has meant that the remaining launches in the South East and Mid West Regions will be rolled out slightly later than originally scheduled. A Regional Competitive Feasibility Fund to the South East Region will be launched in Q3 of 2014.
- *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 considered. The pilot programme will be ready for launch in Q3.
- *Build upon and roll-out a LEAN Start Initiative to micro manufacturing firms, providing guidance on Lean, facilitating self-assessment and signposting to other relevant services/training* – Action 50. In 2014, the focus in relation to the LEOs has been on establishing a comprehensive LEO website and developing a Customer Service Charter, all of which have been successfully delivered. The second half of 2014 will look to those micro manufacturing firms that will benefit from a Lean initiative with EI providing strategic guidance to those firms on the Lean principles.

- *Enact the Legal Services Bill to deliver a more efficient, transparent and competitive legal services in Ireland and reduce costs for the enterprise sector – Action 98.* The Legal Services Bill Committee Stage in the Dáil was completed in February 2014, and the Report Stage began in July. The intention is to complete the passage of the Bill for enactment in Q4 so that the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority can come into operation early in 2015.
- *Consult around the development of a National Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy – Action 106.* While background research has been undertaken and initial discussions with key stakeholders have taken place, the tendering process to recruit external specialists is still underway. Once the specialists are in place in August, further and more in-depth stakeholder consultations will get underway which are expected to be completed by end Q3 2014. It is planned that the draft and final strategies will be delivered as scheduled in Q4 2014 and Q1 2015.
- *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 is now underway and it is anticipated that the Economic Regulator for the rail market will be established in Q3 of 2014.
- *Strengthen current international strategic partnerships (China, Brazil, India and Japan) and enhance Ireland's reputation as a location for world class research – Action 143 (Will not be delivered).* The International Strategic Cooperation Award (ISCA) 2014 has 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 has been taken to focus on ensuring success in these partnerships and on international engagement in Europe through Horizon 2020.
- *Roll-out HAP Wave 1 in 6 local authorities (in addition to Limerick) – Action 201.* Preparations for the Wave 1 roll-out are underway. HAP will be implemented in the 6 Wave 1 sites based on the full HAP Scheme on enactment of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014.
- *Develop a pilot bank referral programme for Microfinance Ireland (MFI) - Action 209.* The delay in progressing this action is due to the change in CEO in Microfinance Ireland (MFI); the former CEO had initiated contacts with the banks on this subject and the new CEO will pursue this as a matter of urgency.
- *Publish Bi-annual Strategic Investment Portfolio Reports – Action 211.* Monitoring of the National Pension Reserve Fund (NPRF) SME Fund is ongoing and the NPRF/ISIF is currently exploring additional SME fund opportunities that could complement those already in place. A report on the economic measuring of the performance of the NPRF

commitments ahead of the establishment of the ISIF is being prepared by the NPRF and is expected in Q3.

- *Develop a project brand and marketing/communication material including website on Ireland's expertise in the provision of public agri-food support services – Action 271.* Due to a delay in appointing the Project Director this action will now be completed by the end of Q3.
- *Publish the general scheme of a planning bill to implement planning provisions of Mahon Tribunal – Action 306.* General Schemes for two Planning Bills are currently being finalised. Both will go to Government for approval in Quarter 3, 2014, prior to publication of General Schemes.
- *Publish a policy statement on planning outlining an overarching planning policy – Action 306.* Preparation of an overarching statement of planning policy has commenced and will go to Government for approval in Quarter 3, 2014, prior to simultaneous publication with either or both of the general schemes of the Planning No. 1 and No. 2 Bills.
- *Approve and sign the Commencement Order for Construction Contracts Act legislation – Action 328.* Arrangements are being made to ensure that there is no potential for conflict between the Department's role in publishing the public works contracts and the appointment of adjudicators to payment disputes. Proposals will be made to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and stakeholder consultation will commence shortly.
- *Work with retail representative bodies to ensure that they are fully aware of the NAMA guidelines – Action 345.* Following the outcome of a recent Supreme Court case concerning the interpretation of a lease which contained an upward only rent review clause, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is now reviewing how best to proceed with the Q2 commitment.
- *Introduce commencement orders as necessary for the aviation services centre in Shannon, on enactment of the Shannon Group Bill – Action 368.* Following enactment of the Shannon Group Act, orders will be made under section 28 of the new Act to transfer the shareholdings which the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (and his nominees) currently hold in Shannon Airport Authority and Shannon Development to Shannon Group. This will be completed in Q3.
- *Establish (initially within HSE) an entity called eHealth Ireland in line with strategy – Action 379.* The governance arrangements for eHealth Ireland have been agreed within the HSE management structures. The HSE expects a Committee to oversee the operation of eHealth Ireland to be in place later this year.
- *Appoint a CIO for the Irish health care system to lead eHealth Ireland – Action 379.* Approval for the post of CIO/Chief Officer eHealth Ireland issued to the HSE on 14th

April 2014. The post was publicly advertised on 30 May 2014. The recruitment process, managed by the PAS, is currently in train.

- *Establish first eHealth ecosystem meeting and requisite longer term supporting structures – Action 379.* Assuming the recruitment of the CIO is successful, the Chief Information Officer/Chief Officer eHealth Ireland will work with the Department of Health to establish the first eHealth Ecosystem.

“Ongoing” actions to be delivered throughout 2014

The Action Plan contains some 117 measures that are described in the plan as “ongoing in 2014”. Although not due in any specific quarter, Departments and Agencies with responsibility for actions listed as “ongoing in 2014” report progress on them to the Monitoring Committee for this and the quarter four report. In progressing these “ongoing” actions the Government has, for example:

- Rolled out a schedule of Trade Missions and other trade, tourism, investment and education events focussed on key target markets. During Q2, Ministerial led Trade/ Investment Missions and Events were organised to the UK, Saudi Arabia, Oman, USA, Qatar, Switzerland, China and Korea - Action 40.
- Launched a further round of Springboard in June 2014 providing up to 6,100 places for unemployed people on a range of part-time courses from certificate to master's degree levels - Levels 6 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications – Action 69.
- Supported 83 Better Energy Communities energy projects which received €28m in financial support, resulting in substantial improvements in homes, community buildings, local authority premises and sports facilities throughout Ireland – Action 79.
- Introduced a range of policy and regulatory measures to assist in the commercial roll-out of high speed broadband. The commercial sector is now investing approximately €2bn 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 – Action 101.
- Published the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019. This Strategy reflects the priorities as set out in the Action Plan for Jobs in relation to the Skills for Work programme and across the ETB delivered adult basic education programmes – Action 164.
- Delivered a series of large scale employer briefing events to promote employment/recruitment supports available to employers. A total of six employer briefings were hosted by the Minister for Social Protection in Blanchardstown, Waterford, Castlebar, Cork, Limerick, and Dublin Castle. The events were attended by 899 different employers representing 756 organisations. Delegate feedback on the

events and on the schemes available was very positive. Additionally, DSP has worked with the Department of the Taoiseach on the new Supporting SME's campaign, and is promoting the 'Supporting SMEs Online Tool' through its network of Employer Engagement managers. – Action 199

- Sought expressions of interest from promoters/ owners/ franchisees in relation to the provision in Ireland of dedicated audio visual content studio facilities including sound stages and related structures. This is intended to gather information from interested parties in order to inform the Government about the potential availability of, and private sector support for, new dedicated audio visual content studio facilities additional to what is available at present. – Action 359

2 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.* Publication of the Review of the International Education Strategy has been delayed due to the establishment of a Ministerial Taskforce dealing with recent private college closures. The review of the International Education Strategy is expected to be published later in 2014.
- *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 – Action 291.* On April 13th 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.

Update on actions delayed in Quarter 1

5 of the 6 measures outlined in the Plan that were delayed for Q1 have now been delivered. These are:

- *Develop a National Action Plan in consultation with civil society and Departments in respect of Ireland's membership of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), focusing in particular on the progression of Open Data initiatives – Action 70.*
- *Seek Government approval for revision of the legislation underpinning the Credit Guarantee Scheme to enhance the take-up and impact of the scheme – Action 208.*
- *Publish detailed analysis of supply chain opportunities in the context of the investment required to meet Ireland's 2020 renewable energy and energy efficiency targets – Action 294.*
- *Launch an implementation group to oversee delivery of the Construction Sector Strategy – Action 305.*

- *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 – Action 309.*

Action 379, however, remains delayed:

- *Establish the board and governance framework for eHealth Ireland to drive implementation of the Government's eHealth Strategy – Action 379.* It has now been decided that eHealth Ireland will be established initially within the Health Service Executive (HSE) and on an administrative basis. Within the HSE, eHealth Ireland will be overseen by a Committee (rather than a Board) and its Terms of Reference are currently being finalised. It is anticipated that the Committee itself will be in place in the Autumn.

Quarter 2 Measures

2. Disruptive Reforms in 2014

2.1 Entrepreneurship

Action 1: Publish the National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement.

Q2 Measure: Conduct a cross-Governmental consultation on items to be included in the Statement. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

An initial consultation took place with all Government Departments and relevant State Agencies in relation to items to be included in the draft National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement earlier this year.

A further draft of the National Entrepreneurship Policy Statement will be circulated for consultation in Q3, when all Departments will be invited to agree the final draft of the Policy Statement before publication.

Q2 Measure: Publish Statement. (DJEI)

Update: Delayed

Entrepreneurship is a very broad and complex topic covering issues from networking to access to finance, and from culture, human capital and education to market access and public private collaboration. Discussion with the relevant stakeholders has taken longer than anticipated, and publication of the revised strategy is now expected by end Q3 2014.

Action 5: Support the establishment of volunteer peer-mentoring network initiatives, organised and facilitated by individuals, entrepreneurs and industry representative groups.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI and Enterprise Agencies)

Update: Complete

Under the Action Plan for Jobs 2013, Forfás was requested by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) to carry out a review of mentoring services in Ireland. This report, entitled 'Review of Business Mentoring Services in Ireland – July 2014', has now been finalised and will be published shortly. The report contains a number of recommendations including on the need to expand the mentor population to include a higher proportion of volunteer mentors in areas of particular expertise (sectoral, market, technical etc.).

The report also recommends the establishment of a working group by DJEI to drive

coordinated execution of a number of recommendations in the review, including the above recommendation. The establishment of this group is now in train and the first meeting of the group is due to take place in September.

Action 7: Formally establish the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs), a world class enterprise support facility to provide a ‘first stop shop’ service for local start-ups and small businesses.

Q2 Measure: Commencement Order signed, County Enterprise Boards (CEB) legally dissolved and LEOs established. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The Commencement order for the County Enterprise Boards (Dissolution) Act 2014 came in to force on April 9th with a Dissolution date of April 15th. Therefore the CEBs were legally dissolved on April 15th 2014 under S.I. No. 175 of 2014 and on the same day the 31 LEOs were established as an office of the Local Authorities.

The Taoiseach, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government jointly performed the official launch of the LEO network on April 29th. The network of 31 LEOs will comprise of the former staff of the CEBs supplemented by staff from the Enterprise Development/Business Support Units in the Local Authorities who will work together to deliver an improved and enhanced range of local enterprise supports, including referral services to other State Agencies such as Revenue, the Department of Social Protection (DSP), Skillnets, etc, to start-ups and small businesses across the country. The launch of the LEO network means that people thinking of starting or expanding a business in every part of the country will now be able to access the full range of State supports provided by different Government bodies, for example local authorities, Enterprise Ireland, Revenue, DSP, the Credit Review Office, training bodies, in one easily accessible location within the local authority.

The establishment of the LEOs will mean that all categories of business, including sole traders, micro businesses and small and medium sized companies, will have access to Government supports and advice. Previously some businesses, for example companies who were too large to access CEB supports, but were not exporting and therefore did not qualify for Enterprise Ireland supports, fell through the cracks between different agencies.

The Mission of the LEOs is to promote entrepreneurship, foster business start-ups and develop existing micro and small businesses to drive job creation and to provide accessible high-quality supports for business ideas.

Action 8: Launch a Customer Charter to ensure a consistent standard of service available to all clients to respond to all business ideas.

Q2 Measure: Publish Customer Charter to coincide with establishment of LEOs. (EI, CEBs, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The customer charter has been published and is now available in all LEO offices and on the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) website at:

<https://www.localenterprise.ie/Documents-and-Publications/Customer-Service-Charter/>.

The Customer Service Charter outlines the aim of the LEO network and the level of service that customers will receive as part of the mission to promote entrepreneurship.

Action 9: Launch a new website providing information on all national and local enterprise supports as well as guidance and advice on various aspects of starting a business.

Q2 Measure: “Go-live” to coincide with establishment and launch of LEOs. (EI, CEBs, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The new LEO website has been completed and was launched to coincide with the launch of the LEO network, it can be accessed at the following link: www.localenterprise.ie

The website provides a comprehensive range of information to people interested in starting up a new business or already in business, including entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses looking to expand.

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.

Q2 Measure: Finalise the development of a suite of initiatives, to include competitive start and competitive feasibility funds; bootcamps; focused mentoring; peer learning; ring-fenced Microfinance funds, etc. (EI, LEOs, Microfinance Ireland, DJEI)

Update: Complete

A range of programmes and initiatives under the Competitive Feasibility Fund (CFF) and Competitive Start Fund (CSF) have been developed which include bootcamps, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning. These programmes will continue to be rolled out for the remainder of 2014.

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.

Q2 Measure: Develop a strategy to support and develop commercial accelerators in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. (EI)

Update: Delayed

There has been significant progress made in developing the strategy but it is unlikely to be completed before Q4. There is also a Q4 deliverable to implement the strategy. It is expected that the implementation will commence in Q4 shortly after the strategy has been finalised.

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.

Q2 Measure: Roll-out Competitive Regional Feasibility funds to the South East. (EI)

Update: Delayed

The Regional Competitive Feasibility Fund for the Cork Region was launched in March 2014. Due to the timing of that launch and the evaluation period required it has meant that the remaining launches in the South East and Mid West Regions will be rolled out slightly later than originally scheduled. A Regional Competitive Feasibility Fund to the South East Region will be launched in Q3 of 2014.

Action 16: Launch a pilot entrepreneurship internship programme whereby a young person interested in starting their own business can shadow an entrepreneur.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI and Dublin Business Innovation Centre)

Update: Delayed

A suitable structure for delivery of the proposed programme is currently being considered. The pilot programme will be ready for launch in Q3.

Action 18: Roll-out an enhanced Student Enterprise Awards initiative targeting a greater number of students from the third level sector and increasing the quality of applications.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Enterprise Ireland Student Entrepreneur Awards, which are co-sponsored by Invest Northern Ireland, Intel, Cruickshank Intellectual Property Attorneys and Grant Thornton, are part of a major drive aimed at tapping into the potential for students and young people to turn their entrepreneurial ideas into commercial businesses. This is Ireland's largest and longest established third-level student enterprise competition.

The priority is to get students thinking now about starting their own business as a career option once they graduate. The sponsors also bring their expertise to nurturing the finalists in the competition to commercialise their business by providing them with expert guidance in areas such as intellectual property, market research, finances, technology development, public relations and advertising, all aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs to develop viable businesses and create jobs.

Enterprise Ireland launched the Student Entrepreneur Awards competition in February. This competition allowed ambitious and enterprising students to build a real-world business venture, and at the same time, be in with a chance to win a prize from the overall €30,000 cash prize fund and €30,000 consultancy fund, which includes a €10,000 first prize. In addition to winning the top prize, the winner will also receive mentoring from Enterprise Ireland/Invest NI to develop the commercial viability of their overall concept.

Over 400 applications were received from third level institutions throughout the island of Ireland. Ten finalists were invited to make a pitch to a panel of judges on June 12th, with three high-achieving awards and one overall winner identified.

Alexandra Milne, a student from the University of Ulster, won the Enterprise Ireland Student Entrepreneur of the Year Award and was named 'College Entrepreneur of the Year 2014' for her creation of the "Little Deli" app. All the remaining finalists were also given merits, and a new Enterprise Ireland Institute Award of €2,000 was awarded to TCD for their outstanding encouragement and standard of applications submitted to the competition.

Action 22: Launch and co-fund five Development Programmes focused on optimising the business capabilities for women-led businesses.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

In late 2013, Enterprise Ireland (EI) issued a call for proposals for a range of programme

initiatives to support female entrepreneurship. A total of 10 applications were received, these were then evaluated by a panel and, finally, 4 of the proposals were deemed to meet the evaluation criteria. As a result, it was decided that only 4 Programmes would be funded. Going for Growth: www.goingforgrowth.com; the DCU Ryan Academy Female Propeller Programme: <http://www.ryanacademy.ie/accelerators/female-propeller>; and the NDRC Female Founders programme: <http://www.ndrc.ie/news/ndrc-announces-new-female-founders-initiative/> have been co-funded, and a female-led programme, conducted by CIT in Cork, on the skills gaps in the south-east will also be supported.

2.2 Winning Abroad

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

Q2 Measure: Put Project Team in place. (DCCoI, EI)

Update: Complete

Programme Director Alex Milton has been appointed. The team to work with the Programme Director on the initiative is currently being recruited, with applications for a number of those positions having closed on July 1st. A National and international programme is currently being developed for the Year of Design 2015. President Higgins has agreed to become a patron of the Year of the Irish Design 2015.

2.3 Manufacturing: National Step Change

Action 50: EI/ LEOs will build upon and roll-out a LEAN Start Initiative to micro manufacturing firms, providing guidance on Lean, facilitating self-assessment and signposting to other relevant services/training (e.g. Skillnets).

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI, LEOs)

Update: Delayed

In 2014, the focus in relation to the LEOs has been on establishing a comprehensive LEO website, the development of a Customer Service Charter and publishing of the same, all of which have been successfully delivered. The second half of 2014 will look to those micro manufacturing firms that will benefit from a Lean initiative with EI providing strategic guidance to those firms on the Lean principles.

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.

Q2 Measure: Engage during Q1 and Q2 with EI/IDA/LEOs to agree actions to increase awareness & use of national LEAN guide. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) promoted the use of the LEAN guide during 6 Road Show information events held throughout June 2014 in Dublin, Limerick, Galway, Sligo, Cork and Waterford on the update of ISO 9000:2015 management system standard. The events attracted more than 400 attendees, mostly SMEs.

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) is also developing an information brochure for distribution through the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) on the benefits of standards for product and service development and opportunities for participating in standardisation activities through commenting on draft standards on the NSAI Your Standards Your Say web portal. The brochure highlights how the Innovation Guide (SWiFT 1:2009) and the use of LEAN Guide (SWiFT 11:2013) can assist companies to become more productive and competitive.

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

Q2 Measure: Compile scoring criteria, publicise award and invite applicants for assessment through Q3. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI), jointly with CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, launched the Awards event based on Excellence Through People (ETP) at the CIPD annual conference in Dublin Castle on June 9th 2014. NSAI and CIPD have agreed the scoring criteria, and applications for consideration will be open until the end of July 2014. Presentations to the winners will be made at the Awards event arranged for December 4th 2014. Final review and scoring of applicants will take place in November 2014.

Action 59: Adapt funding model to maximise potential funding opportunities for relevant Manufacturing Technology Centres in order to capitalise on existing synergies and to ensure more efficient and effective delivery of research supports to industry partners.

Q2 Measure: Adapt funding model to maximise potential funding opportunities for relevant

Manufacturing Technology Centres in order to capitalise on existing synergies and to ensure more efficient and effective delivery of research supports to industry partners. (EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

A new operational and funding model for the relevant Manufacturing Technology Centres was approved by the Enterprise Ireland Board in June 2014. This will ensure the continued funding of two Technology Centres, ICMR (Manufacturing Efficiency) and I2E2 (Energy Efficiency) as a new merged entity called ICMR (Research Organisation).

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).

Q2 Measure: Launch of themed high-level recruitment scheme. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) worked with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to launch a themed Research Professorship Call which 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. 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.

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.

Q2 Measure: Obtain MNC and indigenous Industry perspective on the economic impact of investment in bioprocess research. (IDA)

Update: Complete

IDA Ireland has encouraged industry stakeholders to form a bio-industry tech group, which has been formed under the auspices of the IBEC group Pharmaceutical Ireland and is known as the Bio-Industry Tech Group. The Group has met several times in 2014. IDA Ireland has encouraged this Group to become more active in trying to build a case for winning competitive State and non-Exchequer funding for bio-process research. The Group has been actively engaged with a number of new submissions for research funding in bioprocessing to Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). In parallel, the Bio-Industry Tech Group is taking a longer-term view on their detailed description of needs and how investment in R&D can support growth in the sector.

The Group has outlined their perspective on the economic impact of investment in bioprocess research and this has been utilised by academic groups, such as the National Institute for Bioprocess Research and Training (NIBRT), as part of recently successful applications for R&D funding to SFI. A detailed consultant's report on NIBRT, with significant input from industry, has been received which assesses the business case for prioritising public (including EU) and/or private funding to the funding of research centres in the bioprocessing area. Further input from industry on the economic impact of bioprocess research will be collated on an ongoing basis as part of future applications for funding for bioprocess research.

Q2 Measure: Obtain MNC and indigenous industry's detailed description of needs and budget estimates for additional investment in bioprocess research, outline of funding options from public and private sector sources. (IDA)

Update: Complete

The recently formed Bio-Industry Tech Group has compiled a list of needs in bioprocess research and this has been utilised by academic groups such as the National Institute for Bioprocess Research and Training (NIBRT), as part of recently successful joint applications for R&D funding to Science Foundation Ireland (SFI).

Further updates on industry needs in bioprocess research will be collected by this group on an ongoing basis for use by research centres such as NIBRT in support of future applications for funding for bioprocess research.

As a result of strong industry support outlining the potential impact of funding proposals in bioprocessing, a number of projects have been successful in winning SFI funding. From the perspective of winning non-Exchequer funding for bio-process research, industry stakeholders working with academic groups, NIBRT, SFI's Synthesis and Solid Sate Pharmaceutical Centre and the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Technology Centre, held a

“town hall” meeting in May 2014 to publicise and discuss opportunities in the upcoming Biotech and Sustainable Process Industry through Resource Efficiency (SPIRE) funding calls within Horizon2020 with all relevant Academic and Industry Stakeholders.

Q2 Measure: Examine the current rationale and benefits derived by the current state funding of bioprocessing training in Ireland and the contribution it makes to the national skills base. (IDA)

Update: Complete

A detailed consultant's report, which examined the business case for State-funded bioprocessing training in the National Institute for Bioprocess Research and Training (NIBRT), has been completed and received. The Report includes an assessment of the net benefit of current state funding of bioprocessing training to the skills base in Ireland, and the optimum arrangements for provision of such training.

Industry stakeholders have also formed a biopharma industry training group. This Group has supported NIBRT in a recent successful application to increase bioprocess training through the 2014 Springboard program, which will involve collaborations with 6 academic institutions (IT Tallaght, IT Sligo, UCD, Limerick IT, Dublin IT and Cork IT) and create 14 training programmes. A new business plan for NIBRT is being prepared, which will ensure full leverage of prior infrastructural investment in NIBRT, and this will be presented to the IDA Board and Government by end Q3.

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

3.1 Big Data and Data Analytics

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.

Q2 Measure: Make funding decisions on INSIGHT applications to SFI Spokes programme aimed at growing collaborations with industry partners. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The INSIGHT Research Centre has recently submitted a project to the SFI Spokes Fixed Programme 2013 entitled "Data Analytics for Internet Services." The project proposal was approved for funding and will involve 8 industry partners including Opennet, Escher Group Ltd, Curtiss-Wright Corporation, Logentries, Ericsson, Jolata Inc., National Institute of

Standards and Technology, and Eircom. This 'Spoke' is aligned with the research priority area "Data Analytics, Management, Security and Privacy".

Action 70: Launch an Open Data initiative, which will include the establishment of an Open Data portal to act as the primary source of public sector datasets, in the context of Ireland's membership of the Open Government Partnership.

Q2 Measure: Establish Open Data Ireland governance Board. (DPER)

Update: Complete/Revised Action

This specific measure and the timeframe for its implementation has been superseded by the detailed and comprehensive Roadmap for the implementation of the Minister's Open Data Initiative which, following review by the Government on July 1st, was launched by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform on July 22nd. The Roadmap sets out a detailed 3 year plan for the objectives, structure and actions necessary to advance publication of national and regional Open data for maximum impact.

Q2 Measure: Establish an Implementation Group on Open Data. (DPER)

Update: Complete/Revised Action

As above. While the establishment of the Group (as is the case for the Governance Board) comprises an important aspect of the detailed implementation model for Open Data in Ireland, in specific terms the measure and the proposed timetable has been superseded by the Roadmap for Open Data in Ireland, which was launched by the Minister on July 22nd.

Q2 Measure: Adopt the G8 Open Data Charter. (DPER, Departments and agencies)

Update: Complete

We have adopted the G8 Open Charter through our instigation of a national Open Data initiative.

Q2 Measure: Audit of existing datasets across Departments and relevant public bodies. (Departments and relevant public bodies)

Update: Complete

An audit has been carried out and an alpha (i.e. early-stage) portal has been developed.

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.

Q2 Measure: Enact the Health Identifier Bill which will provide a legal framework for the introduction of an individual identifier for use in the health system. (D/Health)

Update: Complete

The Health Identifiers Bill 2013 was enacted on July 8th 2014 - now the Health Identifiers Act 2014. It is envisaged that the roll-out of the Individual Health Identifier (provided for in the Act) will commence in the first quarter 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.

Q2 Measure: Appoint expert on Big Data and Data Analytics to undertake review. (DJEI/Forfás, Taskforce on Big Data and Data Analytics)

Update: Complete

Forfás drafted terms of reference for the expert review, which were approved by the Taskforce on Big Data and Data Analytics. The aims of this review are to:

- Identify 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 how they should be addressed; and
- Recommend a detailed implementation plan of practical actions with associated timelines (both immediate and medium- to long-term), actors and financing options (if appropriate) that will support Ireland in addressing these policy issues and opportunities in a systematic manner.

The tender process has been completed and a consultant was appointed on June 27th 2014, to carry out this review.

1.4 Trading Online

Action 77: Develop an industry-led awareness and promotion campaign to increase demand from small business.

Q2 Measure: Develop a campaign in which the technology sector, banks and other businesses would join with Government to encourage small businesses to get on the online trading ladder. (DCENR, Digital Industry)

Update: Complete

An awareness campaign has been developed and is ongoing, with the objective of driving quality applications to the trading Online Voucher Scheme from small businesses all over the country. The initial aspect of the campaign was to support Local Enterprise Office (LEO) staff and business advisors and other relevant industry groups gaining the expertise, the network of contacts and the tools to bring the trading online opportunity to small businesses nationwide.

To support the roll-out of the scheme, a train-the-trainer event was held on June 11th and 12th, in which industry experts from across the range of disciplines involved in small business trading online provided their expertise to the mentoring panels of the Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). Speakers from organisations who define the online trading environment for Irish small business were on hand to support LEO staff, mentors and business advisors as well as industry-led groups, providing first hand insights into all aspects of trading online. A small number of additional small business related entities were also invited. AIB and BoI were present at the event, and are both involved at a local level supporting businesses with the LEOs. In all about 100 people participated in the events representing a good geographical spread from across the country. These participants are now equipped to inspire and inform local small businesses all over the country to trade online.

The following companies have supported the programme:

An Post	IE Domain Registry
Arekibo	Irish internet association
Clicktailing	Micks Garage
Connemara Blue	Music Maker
Digital Marketing Institute	Near Future
Dublin Chamber of Commerce	Olytico
Ebay	PayPal
Elucidate	Realex
Facebook	Send.ie
Google	Software Design

3.6 National Health Innovation Hub

Action 85: 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.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (Chair of National Project Team)

Update: Complete

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 (NHIH) as set out below.

Action 86: Manage external evaluation of the Cork Demonstrator Project.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI (on behalf of the National Project Team))

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has 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 has been submitted to the Healthcare Innovation Hub's National Project Team and the Government on July 1st, as part of a wider proposal around the establishment of a National Healthcare Innovation Hub.

Action 87: Agree optimum arrangements for the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub based on the learnings from the Cork Demonstrator Project and its evaluation.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (National Project Team)

Update: Complete

At its meeting on June 9th 2014, 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 Q2 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 (see Action 88). These were agreed at the Government meeting of July 1st.

Action 88: Prepare proposals for Government consideration outlining next steps required for the establishment of a National Health Innovation Hub.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, D/Health)

Update: Complete

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.

On July 1st 2014, 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 involve the development of a competitive call for hosting the hub by a Joint Agency Project Team, comprising representatives from EI, IDA, SFI and the HSE. The call will be managed by EI.

2. 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.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, Cabinet Committee, Government)

Update: Complete

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs agreed its Quarter 2 Report on Competitiveness at a meeting in June 2014. The report is structured on the basis of five priority competitiveness challenges consistent with the priorities identified by the National Competitiveness Council in its Competitiveness Scoreboard 2014:

- Maintaining Cost Competitiveness (in particular in the areas of labour costs, energy costs, property costs, legal costs and health costs);
- Supplying Essential Skills to Enterprise and Reducing Unemployment;

- Enhancing Access to Finance;
- Developing a More Sustainable Enterprise Base; and
- Investing in Infrastructure to Support Economic Development.

Action 91: Undertake a competitiveness benchmarking exercise to determine how Ireland performs in terms of international competitiveness across a range of indicators compared to key competitors including in particular within the Eurozone.

Q2 Measure: Complete Ireland's Competitiveness Scorecard 2014, submit to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and subsequently publish the final report. (NCC)

Update: Complete

The National Competitiveness Council's report 'Ireland's Competitiveness Scorecard 2014' was completed in June and was submitted to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The report benchmarks Ireland's competitiveness performance against our economic peer group, using 120 individual indicators. These indicators range from measures such as economic growth and quality of life, to the policy inputs that will drive future competitiveness, such as the education system and the delivery of infrastructure. The Competitiveness Scorecard will form the background to the preparation of the NCC's Competitiveness Challenge Report later this year, which will highlight policy directions necessary to promote Ireland's competitiveness.

The Competitiveness Scorecard was presented to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs at its meeting on June 30th and was subsequently submitted to Government for noting prior to its publication in July.

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.

Q2 Measure: Identify sheltered areas of the economy where competition is restricted. (DJEI, Competition Authority)

Update: Complete

Based on a preliminary examination of the topics identified by the Competition Authority, a small number of possible areas have been identified for analysis. Further scoping is to be conducted on each of these topics by the Competition Authority and will be reported upon to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), with a view to enabling the

Minister to determine whether a competition analysis or study is appropriate, by the end of Q3.

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.

Q2 Measure: Assessment of data in relation to waste collection currently available through official channels (e.g., EPA and/or other agencies database). (Competition Authority)

Update: Complete

The waste management policy statement (“A Resource Opportunity - Waste Management policy in Ireland”) published by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) in July 2012 requested the Competition Authority to:

- (a) maintain an ongoing oversight of household waste collection markets;
- (b) produce a report in 2016 as part of a mid-term review of the implementation of the new waste management policy.

Under the Competition Act 2002, it is a matter for the Competition Authority or the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to determine whether or not a study is appropriate. However no decision can be taken on whether such a report is appropriate, unless relevant price data and other information are collected over a significant time period in advance of 2016 to allow for a meaningful assessment of how competition is working in the household waste collection market. This Action is intended to provide for the collection of data, sufficient to permit an analysis in 2016 of:

- (a) the effectiveness of the waste management policy by the DECLG, and/or
- (b) competition in the waste sector by the Competition Authority.

The Competition Authority has completed its assessment of data currently available in relation to waste collection. During the second half of 2014, the Competition Authority will work with the DECLG, EPA and other relevant agencies to determine the full set of data required to facilitate comprehensive analysis of waste collection markets, and establish data collection facility or facilities, accessible on a cross-agency basis.

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.

Q2 Measure: Enact the Legal Services Regulation Bill. (D/Justice and Equality)

Update: Delayed

The Legal Services Bill Committee Stage in the Dáil was completed in February 2014, and the Report Stage began in July. The intention is to complete the passage of the Bill for enactment in Q4 so that the new Legal Services Regulatory Authority can come into operation early in 2015.

4.3 Infrastructure Investment to Underpin Employment Growth

Action 104: Establish the ISIF and NewERA on a statutory basis

Q2 Measure: Publish the NTMA Amendment Bill (2014) establishing the ISIF and NewERA on a statutory basis. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

The NTMA Amendment Bill (2014) was published on May 15th 2014. The Bill is available at: <http://www.nprf.ie/Publications/2014/NTMABill.pdf>

Q2 Measure: Enact NTMA Amendment Bill (2014). (D/Finance)

Update: On Schedule to be Completed

The NTMA Amendment Bill (2014) was published on May 15th 2014; passed all stages of the Oireachtas on July 17th 2014; and is therefore on schedule to be enacted before the Summer recess.

Action 106: Develop a National Intelligent Transport Systems Strategy

Q2 Measure: Consult with stakeholders. (DTTAS)

Update: Delayed

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport decided to recruit Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) specialists to write the National ITS Strategy, as opposed to using internal resources. The associated tendering process is currently underway and is due to be completed by early August. Ancillary work such as background research has commenced. Initial discussions with major stakeholders as to the scope and aims of the strategy have been completed. Once the specialists are in place, further and more in-depth stakeholder consultations will get underway which are expected to be completed by end Q3 2014. It is planned that the draft and final strategies will be delivered as scheduled in Q4 2014 and Q1 2015.

4.4 Reduced Costs through Smart Regulation

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

Q2 Measure: Establish an Independent Economic Regulator for the Rail Market (assignment of additional functions to the Railway Safety Commission). (DTTAS, RSC)

Update: Delayed

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 the Independent Economic Regulator for the Rail Market is now underway. It is anticipated that the Economic Regulator for the rail market will be established in Q3 of 2014.

4.5 Supporting Competitive Regions

Action 116: Develop integrated local economic and community plans, to promote economic and community development in each local authority area.

Q2 Measure: Each local authority to establish a Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). (DECLG, Local Authorities)

Update: Complete

All local authorities have established/agreed membership for their LCDCs and the majority have had at least one meeting. In accordance with the Local Community Development Committee Regulations 2014, which came into effect on 1 June 2014, resolutions will be passed by all local authorities formally establishing/agreeing membership for all LCDCs in Q3.

Q2 Measure: Each local authority to establish a Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support. (DECLG, Local Authorities)

Update: Complete

Following the commencement of Section 48 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 on 1 June 2014, the establishment of a Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support is now a mandatory requirement for each local authority. A circular and general policy guidelines, which local authorities are required to comply with under section 54(2) of the Local Government Act 2001, have issued to all county councils, city and county councils and city councils. Local authorities have appointed chairs to these SPCs and have commenced arrangements to ensure that external

membership includes representatives from appropriate pillars such as the business and employers' organisations pillar.

Action 117: Develop a framework for a Regional Enterprise Strategy to better integrate the efforts of enterprise agencies and the other regional stakeholders in building enterprise based on sustainable competitive advantage of the region.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI, EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

The objective of developing a framework for a Regional Enterprise Strategy is to establish a standardised template that can be applied in each region to ensure coordinated action on the part of the enterprise development agencies (Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices) and other local stakeholders (e.g. Local Authorities, third level institutions, business leaders, community representatives, and other state bodies) to improve enterprise development and job creation. While there is already a significant amount of cooperation taking place at local and regional levels between these players, given the new structural reforms which are taking place in the local government arena and the scale of the current job creation challenge, developing a framework in which cooperation can be improved is both urgent and timely.

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has worked with Forfas, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland to develop a standardised framework that will assist in the preparation of Enterprise Strategies for each region. This Framework provides for a review of the region's enterprise base and assets, the identification of key areas of opportunity, the setting out of the regional plans of the Department's enterprise agencies and those of other key agencies in the region, the setting of clear and measurable targets, and the establishment of a process to monitor implementation of the Regional Strategy.

It is intended that the framework will be applied to regions designated at NUTS III level. It is envisaged that the application of this framework to the different regions will make an important contribution to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies to be prepared by the new Regional Assemblies, and to the Local Economic and Community Plans to be developed by the Local Authorities.

The framework will be applied initially on a pilot basis to produce a Regional Enterprise Strategy for the Midlands region and one other region (potentially the South-East). These pilots will inform any adaptations that might need to be made prior to the framework being applied to other 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.

Q2 Measure: Submit draft priorities for the LEADER elements of the 2014-2020 Programme to DAFM for approval by the European Commission. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

DECLG submitted the LEADER elements of the 2014-2020 Programme to DAFM on 30 June 2014. DAFM subsequently submitted the Programme to the Commission on 3 July 2014.

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.

Q2 Measure: Publish a report on progress on the targets and metrics in the Framework for Monitoring Public Investment in Science, Technology and Innovation. (DJEI/Forfás, Prioritisation Action Group)

Update: Complete

The First Progress Report on the National Research Prioritisation Exercise (NRPE) was published on July 4th 2014. This report, prepared by the Secretariat to the Research Prioritisation Action Group (RPAG) with input from the members of RPAG, presents cumulative progress on NRPE implementation from its inception up to the end of Q1 2014. The report includes an update on the available metrics/targets contained within the Framework of Metrics and Targets for monitoring Public Investment in STI. The Report is available at:

http://www.enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/National_Research_Prioritisation_Exercise_First_Progress_Report_June_2014_PDF_1_3MB_.pdf

Q2 Measure: Publish first progress report on Action Plans for the 14 Priority Areas. (DJEI/Forfás, Prioritisation Action Group)

Update: Complete

The First Progress Report on the National Research Prioritisation Exercise (NRPE) was published on July 4th 2014. Specifically the report includes:-

- a more detailed breakdown of progress for each Priority Area with statistics complemented by a narrative for the Priority Area, providing a high-level overview of key developments and achievements;
- a summary of important contributions to Research for Knowledge and Research for Policy;

and

- developments in relation to education and skills, a fundamental prerequisite for successful implementation of research prioritisation in all fourteen Priority Areas.

Action 122: Take steps to progress the vision for the Innovation in Services and Business Processes research priority area through the introduction of suitable public research, development and innovation supports.

Q2 Measure: Establish the Innovation in Services and Business Processes Advisory Group. (DJEI/Forfás, Prioritisation Action Group)

Update: Complete

The Innovation in Services and Business Processes (ISBP) Advisory Group has been established. It is an inter-agency/department group comprising representatives from IDA, Enterprise Ireland (EI), Irish Research Council (IRC), Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) and Forfás. The group is chaired by Emmanuel Dowdall, IDA Ireland and Champion for the ISBP Priority Area.

The group is focussing inter alia on ensuring that public RDI support programmes are available to fund projects in ISBP as appropriate, developing the most appropriate way of incorporating ISBP into the activities of one or more existing research centres, and defining the parameters for a suitable platform in the ISBP area for Ireland.

Action 123: Address gaps in research capacity identified through the National Prioritisation Exercise Report and build capacity in areas of economic importance to Ireland.

Q2 Measure: Review process complete for the 2013 SFI Investigators programme and funding decisions made. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) announced €47 million in funding through the 2013 SFI Investigators Programme in Q2 2014. This Programme will provide funding over a three - five year period, for 36 research projects involving over 200 researchers and more than 62 companies. Funding for each project will range from €400,000 to €3.1 million. A further 5 proposals deemed fundable have been put on a reserve list due to budgetary restrictions.

SFI's Investigator Programme supports the development of world class research capability and human capital in areas of science, engineering and mathematics that demonstrably support and underpin enterprise competitiveness and societal development in Ireland. To this end, SFI funds outstanding people with innovative ideas and strategic partnerships,

recognising that excellence remains a paramount criterion in the research it funds.

Action 130: Devise an implementation plan following recommendations from the technology centre review.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

A full impact review of the Technology Centre Programme took place; this also involved a review of individual Centres by domain experts to evaluate commercialisation impacts. The key programme conclusions identified by the independent evaluators are:

- The programme is genuinely industry-led, working well and making good progress;
- The Technology Centres address a real industry need for collaborative research across communities of companies and the programme occupies a unique position in the research landscape in Ireland;
- On the evidence gathered from the company participants there are clear needs, which when addressed through collaboration with the research community, lead to significant economic impact. This impact level compares well with other similar programmes; and
- There are high levels of industry commitment with associated high levels of attribution of impact to the Centres in the programme.

Some of the summary economic findings include, inter alia:

- The programme has helped to create €69m of company turnover (based on the €23M invested by Enterprise Ireland to date) to date, expected to rise to €272m) by 2018; and
- The programme has created a Economic Value Add of €8.20 per €1.00 invested.

One of the key outputs of the review was an implementation plan, which has now been developed. Enterprise Ireland is in the process of rolling out this plan across all Centres in the Technology Centre Programme.

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.

Q2 Measure: Review process for 2013 Spokes Call complete and funding decisions made. (SFI)

Update: Complete

As follow-on to the landmark investment in seven world-class Research Centres, 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. Each Centre was permitted to submit a maximum of 5 applications each.

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) received 11 proposals from 5 of the centres. Postal reviews of each proposal were carried out by three - five international technical experts. In Q1 2014 a panel comprising of both scientific and impact reviewers was convened. The scientific excellence and impact of the proposals were assessed and each proposal was ranked. Funding of four Spokes proposals, from I-PIC, INSIGHT, INFANT and SSPC was recommended, with a €5.8 million contribution by SFI complemented by €4.8 million from industry.

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

Q2 Measure: Agree 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 April 30th 2014 at a meeting of Technology Ireland, which includes representatives of all the enterprise agencies, an approach was agreed to marketing and branding research centres of scale funded across the 14 research priority areas by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation. Centres of scale to include those which carry out research, have a national remit and have won competitive funding of at least €5m over at least a 5 year period.

A Production Team including DJEI, the enterprise agencies as well as Knowledge Transfer Ireland (KTI), was established to agree the content of marketing material which may include, inter alia, primary centres of excellence along with key research themes, underpinning centres and contact details for each centre. More granular detail of Principal Investigators aligned to research themes will be included in the web version of the material.

The Production Team, which may be expanded to include other national research funders as appropriate, will work towards the launch of a hard copy brochure and web version (to be hosted by KTI) at EI's industry collaboration event scheduled for Q4 2014.

Action 138: Redevelop the Innovation Partnership scheme in order to encourage additional smaller collaborative research projects in order to address identified industry needs.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

Enterprise Ireland has redesigned the Innovation Partnerships scheme in order to facilitate more mid-sized industry-academic collaborative projects. When this new aspect of the scheme is launched, Enterprise Ireland will be able to support a more comprehensive spectrum of collaborative research projects from €5,000 Vouchers up to €200,000 Innovation Partnership projects.

Action 142: Develop strategic partnerships with major stakeholders in Northern Ireland.

Q2 Measure: Launch the 2014 SFI Investigators programme in partnership with DELNI. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The Investigators Programme Partnership between SFI and the Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI) was signed by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland in January 2014. The Partnership will support collaborative projects involving research bodies from both jurisdictions to undertake internationally peer-reviewed, leading edge, discovery and fundamental research.

This ground-breaking Collaboration Agreement will allow Queen's University and the University of Ulster to participate as partners in Science Foundation Ireland's well-established and highly prestigious "Investigators Programme". This call was launched in February 2014. The review of proposals is carried out by SFI as part of the established and robust international peer review system. If the application is deemed to merit funding, DELNI will automatically fund the research in Northern Ireland and SFI will fund the research in the Republic of Ireland.

This is an excellent example of mutually beneficial collaboration: both parties are funding research in their own jurisdictions and the collaboration between researchers in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland also puts both groups in a strong position to lead on applications to Horizon 2020. Applications under the call were due to be submitted in June 2014.

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

Q2 Measure: 2014 SFI ISCA call launched. (SFI)

Update: Delayed/Will not be delivered

The International Strategic Cooperation Award (ISCA) 2014 has 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 has been taken to focus on ensuring success in these partnerships and on international engagement in Europe through Horizon 2020.

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.

Q2 Measure: Launch the 2014 Employment Based Programme and expand collaboratively with strategic partners. (IRC)

Update: Complete

The Employment Based Postgraduate Programme is a key national mechanism through which to deliver on a number of particular objectives outlined in the government's Action Plan for Jobs and the National Research Prioritisation Exercise. For this reason a number of national research funders are partnering with the Council. After successful collaborations in 2012 and 2013, the following strategic funding partners continue to support the Programme: the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Enterprise Ireland, Sustainable Energy Ireland, Teagasc and Science Foundation Ireland. This year will see the Marine Institute also acting as strategic funding partner. The 2014 programme has been launched by the IRC, with an application deadline of July 22nd. The outcome of the assessment process is expected in October/November 2014.

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.

Q2 Measure: Launch the 2014 SFI Industry Fellowship Programme. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The 2014 SFI Industry Fellowship Programme was launched in March 2014 and is being run as an open call with two assessment rounds per year. The purpose of the Industry Fellowship 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.

Fellowships can be awarded to academic researchers wishing to spend time in industry worldwide and to individuals from industry anywhere in the world (including Ireland) wishing to spend time in an eligible Irish Research Body. The Programme facilitates participation of early career, mid-career and more established researchers and will help to develop a pipeline of industry-informed personnel capable of developing, enhancing and leading mutually beneficial academic-industry partnerships into the future. The duration of a Fellowship may be up to 12 months if full time, or up to 24 months if part time.

2013 was the inaugural year of the Industry Fellowship Programme, and 20 Fellows in total were funded to develop and enhance academic-industry partnerships in Ireland, the United States, Australia, Austria and the UK. SFI has received extremely positive feedback about the Programme from both industry and academia to-date and we are therefore keen to drive an increase in the number of high quality applications to the Programme.

Q2 Measure: Review process complete for the 2013 SIRG and CDA calls and funding decisions made. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The SFI Starting Investigator Research Grant (SIRG) Programme was launched in 2013 and provides an opportunity for excellent early-career-stage investigators to carry out independent research. The SFI Career Development Award (CDA) was launched for the first time in 2013. It supports early- and mid-career researchers who already hold a salaried, independent research post and who are looking to expand their research activities. Funding decisions were made on the SIRG and CDA programmes in Q2 of this year with €23.4 million allocated to 41 early career talented researchers.

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

Q2 Measure: In consultation with key stakeholders identify sectors of economic importance where Ireland needs to build capacity. (SFI)

Update: Complete

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and the Irish Universities Association (IUA) have together identified a number of priority sectors of economic importance where Ireland needs to build capacity. SFI worked with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to launch a themed Research Professorship Call, which was launched at the end of June 2014. This 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.

SFI's Research Professorship Programme is SFI's programme for the recruitment of world-class 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 with a strong industry background, as well as directorship roles in established research centres within Ireland.

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

Q2 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

Smart Futures partnered with SciFest to deliver STEM career talks to post-primary students across the country during April and May 2014 (Q2). SciFest is a national science and technology competition, where post-primary students submit projects at school level, exhibiting in schools which held one day science fairs. The winners of the school heats go on to compete at regional level, at one day events held regionally in the Institutes of

Technology.

Smart Futures delivered STEM career talks to post-primary students attending the SciFest events at ten Institutes of Technology, and worked with partners such as Abbott Ireland, Teagasc, CPL, Eirgrid, Arralis, TrendMicro, UCD and Blackrock Castle Observatory to provide a total of 23 speakers from science, engineering, technology and maths backgrounds, representing industry and research. These talks engaged approximately 1,000 post-primary students over the two month period and were completed within Q2.

SFI Discover, who are responsible for the coordination of Smart Futures, are now reviewing a proposal to deliver similar STEM careers roadshows to Institutes of Technology during Science Week 2014, which takes place 9 – 16 November.

Action 152: Review Enterprise Ireland’s campus incubation strategy to ensure best practice and that industry needs are being met effectively.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

The incubation strategy review was charged with assessing whether or not there is enough incubation space in the current programme. This action is now complete. A contractor was engaged and Enterprise Ireland undertook detailed discussions with campus staff and incubation centre companies. Feedback was delivered at the end of June. A report has been prepared and presented to EI by the external consultant.

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

Q2 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

The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) continues to review new and existing areas of international standardisation work in order to create links for entities involved in innovation and research work of national interest. The most recent area identified is Bio-Banking, a branch of Biotechnology research carried out by the Irish Centre for Fetal and Neonatal Translational Research based in University College Cork (UCC). In May 2014, NSAI and UCC participated in the first plenary meeting of the international working group on Bio-banking (ISO TC 276) in Berlin. NSAI is also following up interest to widen participation in

this standardisation area with the School of Biotechnology in Dublin City University.

Q2 Measure: Co-host a telecoms standardisation seminar with the European Telecommunications Standardisation Institute (ETSI) to facilitate access to specialist standards bodies for emerging companies in the telecoms sector. (NSAI)

Update: Complete

On May 28th 2014, NSAI co-hosted a Telecoms Standardisation seminar with the European Telecommunications Standardisation Institute (ETSI) in Dublin. Expert speakers from ETSI, Enterprise Ireland, the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg), NSAI and the telecommunications industry gave presentations on standardisation issues, new and emerging technologies, and the implications for SMEs of the new EU Radio Equipment Directive. Speakers emphasised the importance of standardisation for the telecommunications industry at global level, as well as endorsing the benefits for individual companies of participating in standardization to assist them in achieving technological leadership, competitive advantage and company growth.

4.7 Aligning Skills with Enterprise Needs

Action 159: Roll-out 2014 call for proposals for the ICT graduate skills conversion and Springboard programmes. The skills areas identified as priority within these calls will include: high level ICT skills; manufacturing sector; foreign languages and selling; International Financial Services and entrepreneurship

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DES, HEA)

Update: Complete

Springboard 2014 which incorporates part-time Springboard courses and full-time ICT skills conversion programmes was launched on June 9th providing for over 6,100 free higher education places for the ong-term unemployed. All courses will be one year or less in duration and will focus on areas such as ICT, high-end manufacturing, international financial services, skills to trade internationally and entrepreneurial/business start-up skills. Work placements of three to six months will be offered on almost all of the courses.

Action 162: Launch an initiative to coordinate branding and improve awareness of the range of industry focused skills initiatives available to jobseekers. Brand will encompass Springboard, high level ICT skills conversion courses, Momentum, Skillnets programmes, JobBridge and JobsPlus.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DES, DSP, Enterprise Agencies)

Update: Complete

The Government's new awareness-raising programme for skills initiatives aimed at getting people back to work was launched on May 19th 2014. 'Skills to Work' brings together key Government initiatives introduced since 2011 to support jobseekers access the training and work experience they need and to help and encourage businesses to employ people currently on the Live Register. The main aim of 'Skills to Work' is to make it easier for both jobseekers and employers to easily access information on the full range of options available to them. Within the first month, the site had nearly 5,400 unique visitors. Online advertising was undertaken to promote the website and proved to be very successful. Approximately, 19,000 people were also informed of the tool via state e-mail/newsletter channels.

Details of the 'Skills to Work' Initiative can be found by following the following link www.skillstowork.ie.

Action 167: Consult with stakeholders and develop implementation arrangements for the recommendations of the Apprenticeship Review Group.

Q2 Measure: Consider the recommendations of the Apprenticeship Review Group and consult with relevant stakeholders on how particular recommendations could be implemented. (DES)

Update: Complete

The report of the Independent Review Group made a number of recommendations regarding a new structure for apprenticeships, which is envisaged as being relevant to a much wider group of industries. Recommendations were also suggested in relation to current apprenticeships. The Recommendations of the Review Group required further detailed discussion to see how best implementation could be addressed. Having further consulted with key stakeholders the Department of Education and Skills developed an Apprenticeship Implementation Plan.

The Minister for Education and Skills published the implementation plan on June 30th 2014. The Plan sets out how a new Apprenticeship Council will make a call for proposals from consortia of employers and education and training providers for the development of new apprenticeships. The Plan also seeks to accelerate the process of reviewing the curricula in existing trades.

Action 171: Prepare and undertake initial implementation of the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy which will include initiatives to address the needs of those who wish to enter the labour force as well as the identified skills needs of businesses.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (SOLAS, DES)

Update: Complete

The Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy was published on May 12th 2014. The Detailed Implementation Plan for the Strategy includes specific actions against each of the objectives with performance indicators, due dates and nominated lead and support agencies for each action. Specific action items in the plan will address the needs of those who wish to enter the labour force as well addressing the skills needs of enterprise. A process to oversee the implementation of the Plan is now in development.

Action 173: Publish the 2013 Higher Education System Performance Report.

Q2 Measure: As part of the development of the Higher Education System Performance Report 2013, the HEA will review higher education institution engagement with enterprise in areas of skills and research in consultation with DJEI and enterprise agencies. (DES, HEA)

Update: Complete

The first higher education system performance report was published on June 11th 2014, and included a chapter on human capital and skills needs. The report is available at: <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2014-Press-Releases/Higher-Education-System-Performance-First-report-2014-2016.pdf>.

Alongside this, the HEA is engaged in developing an enterprise engagement strategy, which is due for publication later in 2014.

Action 174: Implement a pilot Post Graduate Programme of Professional Practice to provide an opportunity for graduates to acquire cross disciplinary skills in STEM based sectors.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (HEA, DES, DJEI, DSP, enterprise agencies, with HEIs and industry,)

Update: Complete

The Programme has been developed by a Joint Taskforce comprising representatives of industry and higher education institutions, supported by the HEA, the American Chamber of Commerce in Ireland, the Department of Education and Skills and other state agencies including Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland.

The pilot PGPP will provide an opportunity for graduates to acquire validated cross-disciplinary skills in a work based environment with potential employers. The pilot PGPP will provide a systemic bridging between education and employment through the acquisition of new workplace relevant skills via a structured on-the-job professional experience. It is intended that this blend of education and skills will help graduates to gain workplace experience in increasingly specialised roles within the world-class industrial base here in Ireland.

The pilot PGPP will comprise three modules, each of 10 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits: Personal Development and Employability; Organisational Context and Practice Specialisation; all aimed at ensuring that the participant gains knowledge, skills and competencies that both broaden and deepen their on-the-job learning. Up to 50 places will be available as part of the pilot phase.

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.

Q2 Measure: Develop programme. (EGFSN)

Update: Complete

An outline of the process for engagement with the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) was discussed at the EGFSN meeting on June 18th, which received inputs from the members. Follow-up discussions are taking place with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the Irish Universities Association (IUA), with a view to commencing its roll-out in 2014.

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.

Q2 Measure: Map the spread of engagement activity already underway in Irish higher education. (HEA, DES, DJEI/ Forfás, HEIs, industry, Enterprise Agencies)

Update: Complete

The HEA is currently developing an engagement strategy between the HEIs and enterprise; the completed strategy will be published before the end of 2014. As an input to that strategy a mapping exercise of higher education-enterprise engagement has been

completed.

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.

Q2 Measure: Establish Forum. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The CSR Consultation Forum has been established and held its first meeting on June 24th. The Forum has been tasked with assisting in achieving the objectives identified in the Government's National Plan on CSR, which was launched in April 2014. Those objectives are as follows:

- Increasing awareness of CSR, its value to businesses and to society as a whole;
- Encouraging enterprises to develop and implement CSR policies and practices and mainstream them into their core business operations;
- Encouraging more small and medium-sized enterprises to build CSR capacity;
- Increasing transparency and reporting of CSR activity by enterprises operating in Ireland; and
- Anchoring CSR principles in public bodies in the context of their own operations.

The Membership of the CSR Stakeholder Forum comprises over 30 people, including a number of senior representatives from the business sector, relevant Government Departments/agencies and the wider community. It is chaired by Mr. Brendan Jennings, Managing Partner with Deloitte, and the secretariat is provided by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

The Forum will be a key vehicle to inform the development of CSR policy in Ireland and to ensure the National Plan remains relevant in the context of evolving best practice, both nationally and internationally.

Q2 Measure: Convene first meeting of the Forum, agree Terms of Reference and schedule of meetings. (DJEI and Forum members)

Update: Complete

The CSR Consultation Forum held its inaugural meeting on Tuesday June 24th 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 first meeting agreed the Terms of Reference, and agreed that the Forum will meet on two further occasions in 2014, on September 30th and November 25th. There was also a substantial discussion to identify how the Forum can help in achieving the objectives of the National Plan on CSR.

Action 189: Conduct a survey to establish an indicative baseline of CSR activity in Ireland.

Q2 Measure: Analyse results of survey and determine findings. (NSAI, DJEI, Business in the Community Ireland, WIT)

Update: Complete

383 businesses responded to the survey carried out by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI), in conjunction with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), Business in the Community Ireland and the Waterford Institute of Technology.

The principal findings were:

- 39% of respondents were not aware of the listed standards or guidelines for CSR;
- 47.4% of respondents have implemented CSR practices and 14.6% are developing practices;

Of those:

- 18% use the BITCI Business Working Responsibility Mark, 14.3% use ISO 26000:2010 and 7.4% use Chambers Ireland Awards, others use none or alternative standards;
- 62% believed standards or guidelines were the preferred support for implementation; and
- Of the important CSR pillars, environment was ranked highest and consumer issues lowest.

NSAI used these findings as input to the International Standards Organisation (ISO) for the review of ISO 26000:2010. The review concluded that the international standard will remain unchanged for the next three years. A report of the findings has also been distributed through the NSAI ezine. A key objective of the Government's National Plan on CSR is to increase awareness of CSR in Ireland and promote its uptake.

3. Pathways to Work and Related Initiatives

Action 196: Identify ways in which the youth sector can contribute to the Government's objectives regarding young people and employment and explore the potential to secure EU Funding to support youth work initiatives that increase young people's employability, enhance their acquisition of transversal skills and aid their preparedness and progression to employment and prevent them from becoming registered unemployed

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DCYA)

Update: Complete

The Department, with the support of the Centre for Effective Services, instituted a mapping exercise to categorise and comment on the Irish youth work response to youth employment. The report shows that some 62,300 young people were engaged in youth employment/employability-type initiatives in 2013 ranging from prevention and early intervention, mainstream youth work, targeted interventions, to work-related programmes. The Department, in consultation with the youth sector, has developed a 'Youth Employability Initiative' which involves the expansion of proven youth work initiatives that increase the employability of marginalised young people in the 15 to 24 age group. It aims to target the hardest to reach young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (i.e. not in employment, education or training) for intensive support to prevent unemployment.

The potential to access ESF funding to support such initiatives is being pursued by the Department in conjunction with other relevant Government Departments.

The Department continues to work closely with the Departments of Education and Skills, Social Protection and Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, to identify ways in which the youth sector can contribute to shared policy objectives to address youth employment.

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

Q2 Measure: Deliver a series of large scale employer briefing events to promote employment/recruitment supports available to employers. (DSP)

Update: Complete

A total of six employer briefings were hosted by the Minister for Social Protection in Blanchardstown, Waterford, Castlebar, Cork, Limerick, and Dublin Castle. The events were attended by a total of 900 employers. Delegate feedback on the events and on the schemes available was very positive.

Q2 Measure: Develop an awareness, information and promotional campaign to stimulate

interest in and knowledge of supports and services provided by the Department. (DSP)

Update: Complete

The Department of Social Protection is working with the enterprise agencies (IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Local Enterprise Offices) to promote the Department's support to the enterprise agencies' client companies. In addition the DSP has worked with the Department of the Taoiseach on the new Supporting SMEs campaign, and is promoting the 'Supporting SMEs Online Tool' through its network of Employer Engagement managers; available at <https://www.localenterprise.ie/Discover-Business-Supports/Supporting-SMEs-Online-Tool/>.

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.

Q2 Measure: Publication of legislation to underpin HAP. (DECLG, DSP)

Update: Complete

The Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014, which will provide the legislative framework for the introduction of the Housing Assistance Payment was published on May 9th.

Q2 Measure: Enactment of Legislation. (DECLG, DSP)

Update: Complete

Following its publication on May 9th, the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014 has passed all stages in the Dáil and Seanad and is awaiting signature by the President.

Q2 Measure: HAP Wave 1 roll-out in 6 local authorities (in addition to Limerick). (Limerick Local Authorities (lead test authority) 6 additional local authorities with assistance from DECLG/DSP)

Update: Delayed

Preparations for Wave 1 are underway. HAP will be implemented in the 6 Wave 1 sites based on the full HAP Scheme on enactment of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014.

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.

Q2 Measure: Commence distribution of draft framework of new programme for stakeholder

consultation. (DECLG, Pobal)

Update: Complete

The stakeholder consultation process was completed on April 28th 2014.

Q2 Measure: Completion of final framework and issuing of update reports to stakeholders. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Framework document has been completed. In Q3, Programme indicators will issue to coincide with Stage 2 of the procurement process.

4. 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.

Q2 Measure: Report on data received from the pillar banks. (D/Finance, Credit Review Office)

Update: Complete

Detailed monthly data received from AIB and Bank of Ireland is analysed by the Department of Finance and the Credit Review Office (CRO). The results of this analysis inform ongoing policy discussions by the SME State Bodies Group in the access to finance area. Quarterly meetings were held on May 26th 2014 with Bank of Ireland and AIB.

Action 206: Survey the demand for SME credit.

Q2 Measure: Undertake survey of demand for SME credit. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

The Department of Finance published the SME Credit Demand Survey for the period October 2013 – March 2014 in June 2014. The results of this comprehensive survey inform ongoing policy discussions by the SME State Bodies Group in the access to finance area.

Action 207: Expand the activities and reach of the Credit Review Office in supporting SMEs to access finance, including an enhanced role in supporting the delivery of state sponsored schemes.

Q2 Measure: As per headline item. (Credit Review Office, D/Finance, DJEI)

Update: Complete

As part of its remit in broader policy, the Credit Review Office is now involved in the SME State Bodies Group; the SME Funding Consultation Committee (both chaired by the Department of Finance); and the Small Business Advisory Group. Improving participation in state-sponsored schemes is one of the issues that is regularly addressed by the consultative fora. The Credit Review Office has also engaged directly with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in relation to both the Credit Guarantee Scheme and the Microfinance scheme. Finally, the Credit Review Office regularly briefs SME representative bodies and professional bodies in relation to both its work and SME supports generally.

The Minister for Finance wrote to Ulster Bank and Permanent TSB inviting them to voluntarily participate in the CRO review process, and a number of meetings to progress this initiative have taken place.

6.2 Increase Participation in Access to Finance Initiatives for SMEs

Action 209: Improve the take-up and impact of the Microenterprise Loan Fund through closer engagement with the SME lending banks and business representatives and implementing appropriate recommendations from the review of the scheme.

Q2 Measure: Commence review of the operation of the Microenterprise Loan Fund Act 2012. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The review into the operation of the Microenterprise Loan Fund Act 2012 has commenced and is scheduled to be completed by end Q3 2014.

Q2 Measure: Develop a pilot bank referral programme for MFI. (DJEI, MFI, Credit Review Office and the main SME lending banks)

Update: Delayed

The delay in progressing this action is due to the change in CEO in Microfinance Ireland (MFI); the former CEO had initiated contacts with the banks on this subject and the new CEO will pursue this as a matter of urgency.

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.

Q2 Measure: Publish Bi-annual Strategic Investment Portfolio Reports. (NPRF)

Update: Delayed

NPRF SME Fund monitoring is ongoing. Across the various managers, including the more recently announced China-Ireland Fund over 400 investment opportunities have been reviewed, 45 Terms sheets have been issued, and this has resulted in 13¹ transactions completed to date.

NPRF/ISIF is currently exploring additional SME fund opportunities (Invoice discounting, Food/Agri, <€5m credit fund) that could complement those already in place, with the objective that the eventual suite of funds would have the capacity to invest across the full spectrum of SME financing needs including the smaller end of the SME spectrum.

The monitoring of the NPRF SME Funds is an ongoing process. A report on the economic measuring of the performance of the NPRF commitments ahead of the establishment of the ISIF is being prepared by the NPRF and is expected in Q3.

6.3 Develop New Sources of Finance for SMEs

Action 212: Work with KfW and the German Ministry of Finance to develop an initiative that will improve funding mechanisms for SMEs.

Q2 Measure: Conclude an agreement with KfW and the German Ministry of Finance. (D/Finance, NPRF)

Update: Complete

An outline agreement has been reached with KfW and German Finance Ministry, and funding from the European Investment Bank has been added to this initiative. On July 1st 2014 the Government agreed to the publication of enabling legislation to allow for the establishment of the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI). This legislation was presented to the Dáil on July 10th 2014.

¹ Engagement & Term Sheet figures as at 31 December 2013, Deals completed as at end Q1 2014.

Action 214: Develop an initiative that will provide a suite of working capital products for exporters

Q2 Measure: As per headline item. (D/Finance, DJEI, EI, NPRF)

Update: Complete

An initiative is being progressed by the Department of Finance, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland, and NPRF in conjunction with the European Investment Bank (EIB). Ongoing work with the Irish Exporters Association and the Banks will also feed into both the further development and implementation of this initiative. The approach to this initiative has been shaped by the decision to develop the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, which is a major policy initiative in the area of SME lending and also our ongoing engagement with the EIB on this and related matters. The nature and scale of the SBCI has meant that the main focus to date has been on developing the policy and associated legislation to establish this new company. It may be the case that the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) will be the most appropriate vehicle to assist in giving effect to a new trade finance initiative.

Action 217: Develop proposals to support the development of alternatives to bank financing within Ireland.

Q2 Measure: Develop recommendations in relation to policy supports for alternatives to bank financing. (D/Finance, DJEI, EI, NPRF)

Update: Complete

As outlined in the response to Action 212, the government is in the process of establishing a new Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland which will increase the availability of longer term flexible debt finance, which is appropriately priced to SMEs. As a wholesale lender, providing funds to “on-lending” institutions, the SBCI will enhance the supply of funding by both using existing channels and encouraging new entrants into the market. On-lenders will include not only the Irish commercial banks but also foreign banks, specialist funds or other qualifying providers of finance. The provision of a steady supply of low cost funding from the SBCI should lower the barriers to entry for any new providers of funding including non-bank financial institutions. In this context the SBCI will support the development to the alternatives to traditional bank finance.

Furthermore, as part of the new work programme of the SME National Funding Consultation Committee a sub group was established in Q2 to look at the issue of equity financing. The sub-group presented its Interim Report to the Committee on the 9th of July. The report outlines the key problems that the group is addressing and sets out the policy areas that it is continuing to explore and the types of policy proposals that are being actively considered.

6.4 Raising awareness amongst SMEs and entrepreneurs of supports

Action 221: Implement the Communications Strategy developed by the SME State Bodies Group.

Q2 Measure: Working with other key agencies, develop audience-focused information material on SME supports for general use, notably by the new LEO offices and other Government outreach services. (D/Finance, DJEI, D/Taoiseach)

Update: Complete

At the launch of the Limerick LEO on May 19th the Minister for Finance launched the “Supporting SMEs” online tool which provides SMEs with a guide to State supports, totalling €2bn, for which they may be eligible. This online tool is hosted on the LEO website and is also on the websites of the stakeholders from the public and private sectors from the SME Funding Consultation committee. The online tool has been showcased at relevant events nationwide and the associated communication strategy is being rolled out to ensure that SMEs are aware of this facility. Within the first month of the Tool going live, the site has received nearly 9,500 unique users. The tool received positive media coverage including online, print and radio and from key stakeholders. Approximately 19,000 people were also informed of the tool via e-mail/newsletter.

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

Q2 and Q3 Measure: The SME State Bodies Group in conjunction with the ESRI to host two research and policy seminars on the topic of Financing for Growth. (D/Finance, DJEI/Forfás, EI, NPRF, SME State Bodies Group)

Update: Complete

The ESRI are undertaking research on “Financing SMEs” on behalf of the SME State Bodies Group. They have circulated draft copies of research papers and presented on their research to date at a seminar on June 26th attended by the members of the SME State Bodies Group. A second half-day seminar is being organised for September 2014 (Q3) at which the ESRI will present the full findings from their research. This seminar will also include presentations from invited international speakers.

7. Growing Irish Enterprise

7.1 Capability Building in Irish Enterprise

Action 227: Convene a working group to drive coordinated execution of the 2013 review of Business Mentoring Services.

Q2 Measure: Establish Working Group. This group will be led by DJEI (or its nominated Chair) and made up of representatives from EI, CEBs, Skillnets, DJEI/ Forfás and other stakeholders as appropriate. Experts and other stakeholders will be invited to participate in focused working project groups as appropriate, to deliver on a number of the recommendations including raising professionalism, expanding the mentor panel, innovative approaches and monitoring framework. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The membership of this group has been agreed and is made up of representatives from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Enterprise Ireland, the new Local Enterprise Offices, Skillnets and a number of individuals from the private sector. Draft Terms of Reference for this group has been agreed and the first meeting is expected to take place in September.

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

Q2 Measure: Establish a family business cohort within the Management 4 Growth 2014 programme to share best practice. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Management 4 Growth Programme has been redesigned in the context of Enterprise Ireland's strategy for the period 2014 – 2017. An integral part of the new programme is the inclusion of a family business cohort in order to share best practice. The programme will be open to new applicants later in 2014.

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).

Q2 Measure: Develop policy choices on SME access. (OGP)

Update: Complete

Circular 10/14 (Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement) which issued in April accelerates some of the key measures contained within new EU Directives on Public Procurement. These measures include requirements to tender in an open and transparent process on-line, reductions in bidder's turnover requirements, proportional and reasonable insurance requirements, and breaking larger contracts down into lots.

Action 252: Introduce, on a pilot basis, a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programme which will provide opportunities for innovative solutions to be developed to meet the needs of public bodies.

Q2 Measure: Commence a pilot SBIR project. (EI)

Update: Complete

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), in co-operation with Enterprise Ireland and ESB, launched Ireland's first Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) competition on June 30th. The SBIR (Small Business Innovation Research) initiative is designed to encourage public sector bodies to look for innovative solutions from Irish SMEs to fulfil their requirements. The competition's first target is smart solutions for charging Electric Vehicles (EVs) in communal parking areas such as apartment blocks for which up to €200,000 will be made available to develop the prototype.

ESB is currently installing home charge points in private driveways for EV owners. However, challenges have arisen where EV owners live in apartment dwellings with parking spaces remote from the meter point. This SBIR competition aims to develop an innovative solution in this area.

The competition will be run in two phases. Phase 1 opened on June 30th 2014 for up to four feasibility studies and contracts are expected to be awarded at the end of October 2014 (with a budget of €25k each). Successful applicants will be asked to provide a robust, evidence-based case for the viability of their proposed solution (for example a desk based feasibility study with some supporting practical work/data). Up to two successful studies (proposed budget of €100k to €200k) will be invited to participate in a prototype demonstration (Phase 2) in Spring 2015 with monitoring to take place over a 6-12 month period.

8. Developing and Deepening the Impact of Foreign Direct Investment

Action 257: Complete and publish FDI Policy Statement to set out the strategic FDI policy direction to 2020.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DJEI/Forfás)

Update: Complete

A new FDI Policy Statement has been prepared by Forfás, approved by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and noted by the Government. Arrangements for publication are subject to Ministerial diary commitments.

The FDI Policy Statement will provide a brief overview of global FDI trends, Ireland's FDI performance and the contribution of FDI to the Irish economy. The statement will set out Ireland's strategy focus in terms of sectors, markets and new modes of FDI. The Statement will reinforce the Government's commitment to FDI and set out a suite of actions needed to focus on differentiating Ireland's offering and ensuring that we remain competitive as a location of choice for investment.

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.

Q2 Measure: Agree a number of priorities for action by the working group. (IDA)

Update: Complete

The priorities for the working group have been established as follows:

- Define how an Irish cluster for the 'Internet of Things' could be formed, how it would operate and how it would promote Ireland (Subgroup 1);
- Prepare proposals around how the 'Internet of Things' activities in Ireland could be promoted (incentive, directives etc. for both companies to establish activities and the State to foster adoption) and how our skills and research infrastructure could be strengthened (Subgroup 1); and
- Define how a 'Pilot Line' supporting the 'Internet of Things' product development and commercialisation would operate (Subgroup 2).

The next stage is to finalise and present a proposal for Government consideration by end-2014.

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

Q2 Measure: Complete Stage 5 of Food Works 2 Programme with target of 6 programme participants. (Bord Bia, EI, Teagasc)

Update: Complete

The 'Food Works 2' Programme started in mid-2013 with 48 applicants, 14 of whom were chosen to proceed to Stage 4. By the end of 2013, 11 feasibility studies had been completed and presented, having benefitted from support from business advisors, consumer research, technical product development assistance, and feasibility funding of €5,000 per participant.

In late January 2014, 5 participants progressed to stage 5 of 'Food Works 2', where the main objective is to assist entrepreneurs to develop financially sound investor-ready business plans. Participants have attended eight Food Works workshops, completed eight advisory sessions with their appointed business advisor and availed of consumer workshops and focus groups to carry out their own primary research. On June 25th the budding entrepreneurs pitched their investor-ready business plans to the Food Works Steering Committee. While the entrepreneurs are at various stages of development, each is working towards exporting their products within the next 12 months. Over the past two years, following a competitive process attracting in excess of 150 applications, a total of 43 start-ups from dairy, snacks, meat, seafood and beverages have participated in the programme.

Action 262: Run a Food Academy to nurture start up food businesses through workshop style training and assistance with routes to market.

Q2 Measure: Roll-out of Food Academy Start Programme across all 35 LEOs. (Bord Bia, LEOs)

Update: Complete

Food Academy Start is a programme developed by Bord Bia with support from Musgraves and run by the newly established Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). It is designed to benefit companies, at start-up and pre-start-up stages, looking to develop at local and regional level. Participants are mentored with one-to-one training covering finance, regulation and the wider marketing field. Graduates of the Food Academy Start programme will continue to work with their LEO and may progress to an in-store trial with SuperValu. For the period to end June 2014, 200 companies/start-ups/pre-start-ups have completed Food Academy Start in 23 LEOs with the remaining LEOs coming on stream when their resources and demand are

aligned.

Action 264: Include in new 2014 -2020 Rural Development Programme enterprise support measures for farms and SMEs.

Q2 Measure: Draft RDP submitted to EU Commission with appropriate enterprise measures. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

The draft RDP with appropriate enterprise measures for farms and SMEs has been submitted to the European Commission. Preparatory work undertaken to date includes drafting the RDP, inviting written submissions on the proposed measures and commissioning an independent, external evaluation which will include an ex-ante evaluation, a Strategic Environmental Analysis and an Appropriate Assessment.

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.

Q2 Measure: Host seminars for farmers and the agri-food industry. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

Teagasc hosted a specific National Collaborative Farming Conference on April 17th in Tipperary; this was in addition to the ongoing presentations and information sessions on collaborative farming which are included in regional seminars and technology adoption group meetings.

Q2 Measure: Support new drystock partnership farming & produce a template agreement. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

Teagasc is working with DAFM on the development of the Statutory Instrument (SI) and detailed rules for the new register of farm partnerships. The SI is to replace the Milk Partnerships with a new register for farm partnership. The existing specimen agreement for milk production partnerships (MPPs) is the template for drystock partnerships and the required minor changes will be made when the SI and detailed rules are fully finalized.

There are currently 705 MPPs registered, 26 of which have been registered in 2014. Data is being collated on new share farming arrangements implemented in 2014.

Action 266: Use the Bord Bia Food Graduate development programmes to attract graduate talent into the sector while improving sales and developing commercial marketing skills.

Q2 Measure: 20 Marketing Fellows to present findings of 75 commercial assignments to 50 companies. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete

The outgoing cohort has presented the findings of their assignments to their respective clients.

Q2 Measure: Recruit 20 Marketing Fellows for next cohort. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete

The next cohort is already selected and contains 21 Marketing Fellows.

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.

Q2 Measure: Achieve high level official contact in China and Korea to deliver targeted new markets. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

China has now accepted proposal to initiate first steps on sheepmeat access. High level contacts continued with beef access raised during the visit by Mr. Liu Yunshan to Ireland in June.

Q2 Measure: Enable Irish export plants access the U.S.A. beef market. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

The issue of beef access to the U.S. was discussed in detail during the recent visit by U.S. Secretary for Agriculture, Tom Vilsack to Ireland and further discussions took place during Minister Coveney's visit to the U.S. on June 22nd. The next step is an audit by U.S. authorities of Irish plants which concluded on July 7th and we now await the preliminary findings of the audit which we expect in the next two months.

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.

Q2 Measure: Recruitment of Project Director and other Project team members. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

A contract has recently issued to the Project Director.

Q2 Measure: Development of project brand and marketing/communication material including website. (DAFM)

Update: Delayed

Due to a delay in appointing the Project Director these actions will now be completed by the end of Q3 2014.

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

Q2 Measure: New collaborative project established with multinational client. Initiate project with client for development of high protein powder. (Teagasc)

Update: Complete

The project collaboration has been agreed and the general work plan signed off. Pilot scale work has been completed successfully. The ingredient has been scaled up to pre-commercial level.

Action 276: Work with partners to implement a Beef Genomic scheme and roll-out new sexed semen technology on dairy and beef farms.

Q2 Measure: Initiate the Beef Genomic scheme by:

- (i) achieving delivery of specialist micro chips at competitive rate
- (ii) selecting targeted animals (120k cows & 30k sires)
- (iii) undertaking required research into genomic values

(DAFM)

Update: Complete

The Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) has taken delivery of a new version of "International Dairy & Beef" genomic chip, with the objective of developing multi-breed

genomic evaluations for Irish beef cattle. They have also worked with Teagasc to identify the most informative cows for the training population work. Some 100k cows in total will be targeted, in addition to 30k natural service stock bulls.

Research to develop multi-breed beef genomics is continuing based on an initial group of 5k AI sires. This work will be greatly enhanced by data from the new suckler beef genomics scheme. The initial research work is expected to be completed by Autumn 2014.

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

Q2 Measure: Present draft industry strategy to FH 2020 Implementation Committee. (IBEC, DAFM)

Update: Complete

A draft industry strategy for the Prepared Consumer Foods Sector was presented to the FH 2020 Implementation Committee on June 3rd 2014.

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

Q2 Measure: Draft RDP submitted to EU Commission with farm agri-environment climate measures. (DAFM)

Update: Complete

The draft RDP with measures supporting farm sustainability has been submitted to the European Commission.

Action 287: Enhance reputation of Irish food on global markets, showing Irish leadership on sustainability and building on the success of Origin Green.

Q2 Measure: Building on the Global Sustainability Conference, roll-out a trade directed publicity campaign. (Bord Bia)

Update: Complete

Bord Bia's Global Sustainability Conference took place in the Convention Centre Dublin in September 2013, and was attended by almost 800 delegates. To date a total of €24.98 million has been generated in sales, i.e. Fish €3.18m, Dairy €21m, Meat/Eggs €0.45m, Prepared Foods €0.35m. The next report will be generated in September 2014.

Bord Bia has started an integrated communications plan for Origin Green. A year-long

partnership with Guardian Sustainable Business (GSB) online started in May 2014. This is an international communication platform for Origin Green, reaching 300,000 unique monthly users; available at <http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/origin-green-ireland-partner-zone/>.

An integrated international media campaign has started online and in print in key markets and across all markets on social media platforms. A French and German version of origingreen.ie was also launched in June 2014.

9.2 Green Economy

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.

Q2 Measure: Consider appropriate responses by relevant agencies. (SEAI, DJEI/Forfás, EI, IDA, DCENR)

Update: Complete

'Ireland's Sustainable Energy Supply Chain Opportunity' was launched on June 11th, and consideration of responses by relevant agencies has now commenced. The Report is available at:

http://www.seai.ie/Publications/Statistics_Publications/Energy_Modelling_Group_Publications/Ireland%E2%80%99s-Sustainable-Energy-Supply-Chain-Opportunity.pdf

Action 297: Develop an Irish Standard on Energy Efficiency Design (EED) Methodology to support the development of the Green Economy and further improve industry energy consumption efficiencies.

Q2 Measure: Create awareness and promote benefits of the standard. (SEAI, NSAI)

Update: Complete

The Energy Efficiency Design Management System Standard was issued for public consultation in March 2014. The new Irish Standard was approved for publication as I.S.399:2014 by the NSAI Board in June. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) will lead the awareness campaign and promotion of I.S. 399:2014 in partnership with the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

The awareness-building and promotion of I.S. 399:2014 commenced during Q2 to support the public consultation process. This focussed primarily on targeted audiences such as the

SEAI Large Industry Energy Network and selected industry group seminars and conferences.

A formal promotional campaign will commence following publication in July to promote its application and adoption. Testimonial and cases studies by companies already benefitting by the processes will be central to this campaign. The promotional campaign will target a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties in Ireland and internationally.

Action 298: Publish a new comprehensive Code of Practice for retrofitting of homes to deliver growth in the sector by raising quality and standards

Q2 Measure: Disseminate new code which can be used as a basis for development of skills and quality in the retrofit construction sector. (SEAI, NSAI)

Update: Complete

A new comprehensive Code of Practice for retrofitting of homes was published by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) on March 20th 2014.

This Standard Recommendation provides technical guidance on the energy efficient retrofit of dwellings that will reduce energy consumption and costs, increase occupant comfort and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

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.

Q2 Measure: Spokes programme in place to enable the funding of a test-bed facility in a Research Centre. (SFI)

Update: Complete

The Spokes Programme is a new vehicle which has been established in 2014 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. This will ensure that each Research Centre retains its ability to do cutting-edge research, and so, enhance its sustainability. It will also allow the Centre to expand and develop in line with new priorities and opportunities, including the development of opportunities for test-bedding Smart Grid technologies.

The Spokes Programme was put in place in Q2 and a rolling call is currently open for applications; if industry is interested in working with a Research Centre on an application in this space, they can apply to SFI at any time, subject to eligibility criteria. A fixed deadline call will also be launched in Q4.

Action 301: Publish a guidance document to assist the public sector to implement and maintain procedures for green public procurement practices, including a standard 'green clause' which could be used in relevant public sector tender documents.

Q2 Measure: Prepare a guidance document to assist the public sector to implement and maintain procedures for green public procurement practices. (EPA)

Update: Complete

Draft guidance was prepared, and indicative green criteria were circulated to selected public bodies for review and comment. This second consultation resulted in the presentation of a more comprehensive and rounded draft of the guidance document. The final guidance document was published on Friday 18th July 2014 and will be circulated to all interested parties by the Environmental Protection Agency. The document is available at: <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/other/greenprocurementguidanceforthepublicsector.html>

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

Q2 Measure: Consideration of consultation responses and drafting of legislation to give effect to proposals to revise the regulation of household waste collection , including, where appropriate, proposals which support the development of recycling and recovery infrastructure. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

A total of 91 submissions were received from industry and other stakeholders in response to the consultation paper on the regulation of household waste collection. The submissions have been considered and evaluated and a first draft of legislation to give effect to proposals to amend the regulatory regime applying to household waste collection has been prepared.

9.3 Construction and Property

Action 306: Publish the general scheme of a planning bill to implement planning provisions of Mahon Tribunal and publish a policy statement on planning outlining an overarching planning policy.

Q2 Measure: Publish the general scheme of a planning bill to implement planning provisions of Mahon Tribunal. (DECLG)

Update: Delayed

General Schemes for two Planning Bills are being finalised. Both Planning Bills will implement various actions under the Construction 2020 strategy. Planning Bill No. 1 will place the successor framework plan to the national spatial strategy on a statutory footing, as recommended by the Mahon Tribunal (C2020 Action 12), and provide for the establishment of the Office of Planning Regulator, as also recommended by the Mahon Tribunal (C2020 Action 13). Planning Bill No. 2 will cover amendments to the Part V provisions on social housing (C2020 Action 9), the introduction of incentives aimed at activating the development of vacant urban sites (C2020 Action 23) as well as certain other actions in C2020.

The Memo for Government seeking approval of the General Schemes will be submitted to Government in Quarter 3, 2014, prior to publication of the two General Schemes.

Q2 Measure: Publish a policy statement on planning outlining an overarching planning policy. (DECLG)

Update: Delayed

An overarching statement of planning policy has been finalised and will be submitted to Government for approval in Quarter 3, 2014 as part of the Memo for Government relating to Planning Bill No. 1. It is intended that this will be published in association with one or both of the two General Schemes.

Action 307: Monitor and report on compliance of local authorities with the new Development Contribution Guidelines published in January 2013.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (DECLG)

Update: Complete

DECLG issued guidance to all local authorities in relation to the adoption of new Development Contribution Schemes in January 2013 on foot of which 17 local authorities have adopted revised schemes to date. These revised schemes have resulted in a 26% reduction in contributions applied to businesses and developers in the 4 Dublin local

authorities alone. Due to reforms being introduced in the local government sector (i.e. the dissolution of Town Councils and the amalgamation of a number of administrative areas), other local authorities were not in a position to revise their development contribution schemes to date. DECLG will issue reminders to these local authorities in Q3 2014 and will continue to regularly monitor the adoption of these schemes and their impact on the promotion of local development and increased construction activity on an ongoing basis.

Action 320: Complete and implement the review of the public works contract.

Q2 Measure: Complete review of public works contract. (DPER)

Update: Complete

The review of the Public Works Contracts is underway - submissions from stakeholders have been received, an on-line questionnaire has been published to assemble data on the performance of the contracts. The format of the review has been re-considered in light of the submissions received. It is now proposed to put forward interim recommendations and a medium-term strategy to the Minister of Public Expenditure and Reform. A submission on the matter will be sent to the Minister shortly and, subject to his approval, stakeholder engagement will commence thereafter.

Action 328: Finalise work and commence Construction Contracts Act legislation.

Q2 Measure: Ministerial approval and signing of the Commencement Order. (DPER)

Update: Delayed

Implementation of this critical piece of commercial legislation encompasses a range of challenges to ensure stakeholder buy-in and maximum benefits for the construction industry. The arrangements being made will ensure that there is no potential for conflict between the Department's role in publishing the public works contracts and the appointment of adjudicators to payment disputes which may arise under those contracts and are designed to secure the long-term success of this important measure. Proposals will be made to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and stakeholder consultation will commence shortly.

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.

Q2 Measure: Up-skill LA Energy Efficiency Liaison Officers on Procurement, IHER Database

Tool and new Retrofitting Code of Practice. (DECLG, SEAI, National Procurement Agency, IHER Energy Services Ltd., Tipperary Energy Agency)

Update: Complete

Up-skilling of LA Energy Efficiency Liaison Officers on procurement and Code of Practice for Energy Efficient Retrofit of Dwellings has been completed and Code of Practice for Energy Efficient Retrofit of Dwellings published. As part of the Government's €200m stimulus for the construction sector in May 2014, an additional €20m is being provided for the retrofitting of vacant houses. €15m of this is for spending in 2014 with the objective of bringing 1,000 extra houses back into productive use.

9.4 Tourism

Action 336: Work with local communities to translate the Gathering's legacy into sustainable employment opportunities.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Complete

On April 15th, the Minister of State for Tourism and Sport launched a new Community Tourism Initiative for the diaspora which seeks to build on the legacy of The Gathering 2013. The initiative, a joint partnership between Fáilte Ireland, IPB Insurance and the 34 Local Authorities will provide an annual fund of €1m over the next three years to support up to 700 local community-based events and festivals each year. Applications for funding are currently being processed and, in some cases, funds have already been allocated.

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.

Q2 Measure: Finalise the review of Tourism Policy. (DTTAS)

Update: Complete

Review of tourism policy now completed and draft Tourism Policy Statement published on July 8th. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is now engaging directly with relevant Departments and agencies on the proposals contained in the Statement before bringing the final version for Government approval in Q3.

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.

Q2 Measure: Agree composition of Forum and invite nominations from sectoral representatives and relevant Departments/agencies. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

As part of the establishment of the Retail Consultation Forum, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) sought nominations from a number of relevant business representative bodies. The Forum is being chaired by DJEI and the Secretariat is also provided by DJEI. The membership includes representative bodies for the retail sector, as well as a number of retailers across a number of sub-sectors within the sector. The Department has endeavoured to ensure a suitable mix of retail outlet sizes and an urban-rural mix within the Membership of the Forum. Key Government Departments and bodies are also represented on the Forum, but the emphasis is on giving a voice to the retail members who form the majority of the membership.

Q2 Measure: Convene first meeting of the Forum; agree schedule of dates for subsequent meetings. (DJEI)

Update: Complete

The inaugural meeting of the Retail Consultation Forum was held on June 9th in Dublin Castle. The Forum will consider issues of relevance to the retail sector on a thematic basis. The focus of the first meeting was on potential items for consideration in the context of Budget 2015 which might assist the recovery of the sector. There was a good exchange of ideas on this topic at the meeting and a number of the Forum members subsequently submitted further details to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) in support of suggestions made at the meeting. The proposals made by the retail representatives on the Forum are currently being collated by that Department with a view to channelling those suggestions into the Budgetary process for consideration.

The meeting concluded with agreement that the Forum would meet again on Monday 8th September, and Monday 10th November. Account will be taken of the suggestions made by the members in setting the thematic topic for discussion.

Action 344: Increase the annual cash receipts basis threshold for payment of VAT by businesses from €1.25 million to €2 million. This will assist retail suppliers in the areas of cash flow and reduced administration.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (D/Finance)

Update: Complete

The VAT registration threshold was increased on May 1st 2014. This option assists a significant number of firms and focuses in particular on small firms in the critical area of cash flow.

Action 345: Highlight, through the retail representative bodies, the NAMA rent review guidelines and seek to ensure that they are widely understood and utilised, where appropriate, including in cases where public sector bodies are the owners of premises.

Q2 Measure: Work with retail representative bodies to ensure that they are fully aware of the NAMA guidelines, which are aimed at supporting businesses who are having difficulty paying rents which are above the market price on premises where NAMA, or other public bodies, are the landlord. (DJEI)

Update: Delayed

This action was delayed pending the outcome of a recent Supreme Court case concerning the interpretation of a lease which contained an upward only rent review clause. Following the conclusion of that case, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation is now reviewing how best to proceed with the Q2 commitment.

Action 348: Progress the introduction of a National Postcode System in 2014, with a view to rolling out the system in the first half of 2015. The National Postcode System will improve logistics efficiencies for retailers, particularly facilitating on-line trading and reducing the risk of purchasing fraud.

Q2 Measure: Complete design of Postcode system. (DCENR)

Update: Complete

The design of the postcode is now complete and has been approved by Government. The project is on target to achieve the roll-out of the system in the first half of 2015. The Minister launched the new website www.eircode.ie on April 28th 2014, and further information will be made available there as the project progresses throughout the year.

9.6 Creative Services

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.

Q2 Measure: Acquire sites (where appropriate), complete design specification and initiate interpretation works. (DAHG, An Post, other relevant bodies)

Update: Complete

The capital project at the GPO is progressing according to schedule. Full planning permission is expected in the near future and consultants have already been appointed for the design and fit-out of the museum. The Brian Ború and the Battle of Clontarf programme was delivered successfully in June.

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.

Q2 Measure: Development of a focussed plan. (DAHG, NPWS, National Trails Office, Fáilte Ireland)

Update: Complete

The development of a focussed plan is progressing; the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's (DAHG) Cultural Tourism Strategy has been formulated and agreed, and a DAHG Cultural Tourism Working Group has been established. The plan includes a programme of trailway development in National Parks and Nature Reserves, in partnership with key stakeholders.

9.7 Aviation Services

Action 368: Facilitate the expansion and development of an aviation services centre at Shannon

Q2 Measure: Establishment of Shannon Group. (DTTAS, DJEI)

Update: Complete

The State Airports (Shannon Group) Bill 2014 was published on April 23rd 2014 and was passed by the Oireachtas on July 15th. The Bill provides, *inter alia*, for the establishment of

Shannon Group plc. The new company will be incorporated shortly, subject to the Bill being signed into law.

Q2 Measure: On enactment of the Shannon Group Bill, introduction of commencement orders as necessary. (DTTAS, DJEI)

Update: Delayed

Following the incorporation of Shannon Group, orders will be made to transfer the shareholdings which the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (and his nominees) currently hold in Shannon Airport Authority and Shannon Development to Shannon Group. This will be completed in Q3.

Action 369: Launch a Competitive Start Fund targeted at the Aviation and Engineering Sectors.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (EI)

Update: Complete

A special Competitive Start Fund call, targeting applications from the Aviation and Manufacturing sectors, was launched on Wednesday April 9th 2014. 42 eligible applications were received by the call close on April 30th. Following a 2 phase assessment process, 10 projects were identified and recommended for support. The investment in these companies takes the form of ordinary shares to the value of €50,000 per company.

9.8 International Financial Services

Action 373: Assess the opportunities for Ireland as a global hub for Compliance and Risk Management.

Q2 Measure: As per headline action. (CHG, D/Finance, EI, IDA)

Update: Complete

Initial assessment completed on the potential opportunities for Ireland in the provision of risk and compliance services. 8 specific areas of opportunities have been identified, with further engagement between the industry and government planned, to scope out the opportunities in greater detail.

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

Q2 Measure: Establish (initially within HSE) an entity called eHealth Ireland in line with strategy. (D/Health, HSE)

Update: Delayed

The governance arrangements for eHealth Ireland have been agreed within the HSE management structures. The HSE expects a Committee to oversee the operation of eHealth Ireland to be in place later this year.

Q2 Measure: Appoint a CIO for the Irish health care system to lead eHealth Ireland. (D/Health, HSE)

Update: Delayed

Approval for the post of CIO/Chief Officer eHealth Ireland issued to the HSE on April 14th 2014. The post was publicly advertised on May 30th 2014. The recruitment process, managed by the PAS, is currently in train and interviews are scheduled for late August.

Q2 Measure: Establish first eHealth ecosystem meeting and requisite longer term supporting structures. (D/Health, HSE (eHealth Ireland))

Update: Delayed

Assuming the recruitment of the CIO is successful, the Chief Information Officer/Chief Officer eHealth Ireland will work with the Department of Health to establish the first eHealth Ecosystem.

Action 380: Advance legislation to provide a legal framework for the introduction of an individual identifier for use in the health system.

Q2 Measure: Enact the Health Identifier Bill. (D/Health)

Update: Complete

The Health Identifiers Bill 2013 was enacted on July 8th 2014 - now the Health Identifiers Act 2014. It is envisaged that the roll-out of the Individual Health Identifier (provided for in the Act) will commence in the first quarter of 2015.

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: Roll-out 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: Ongoing

A new competition to find Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur was advertised and launched in May, with the closing date for applications being extended by one month to July 31st, to facilitate as many applications as possible from young entrepreneurs. A total fund of €2million is available to invest in winning businesses and entrepreneurs in every county in the country.

The competition is being run by the new Local Enterprise Offices, and the winners at county level will be eligible for an investment in their business of up to €25,000, while the winners at national level can receive an additional investment of up to €50,000. Investments in winning businesses will be determined according to business prospects and investment needs. Mentoring, marketing and other supports will also be available to participating businesses at various stages of the competition.

The first stage is a county-based competition (run by the 31 LEOs) leading to the naming of the Best Young Entrepreneur in each county. This stage will include bootcamps and mentoring programmes. This will be followed by regional finals and ultimately national finals with one businessperson being awarded the title of Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur before the end of the year.

The competition is open to individuals aged 30 and under and will be judged under three distinct categories:

- Best new idea;
- Best start-up business; and
- Best established business with new add-on.

A significant number of applications have already been received throughout the country. Preparation for the workshops and bootcamps is underway and the next major step once applications close is to identify the finalists for the various county competitions.

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

A number of dedicated female entrepreneurship initiatives have been launched, for example:

- Enterprise Ireland online network for female entrepreneurs;
- An online peer-to-peer networking platform has been launched and is building momentum in terms of participants and content. This is an EI proprietary online networking tool available to female entrepreneurs. Updates and interactions around female entrepreneurship are posted on the platform;
- Sponsorship of female targeted conferences and awards:
 1. Tatler Women in Business, Convention Centre May 2014 – 500 delegates
 2. Belfast International Women’s Conference, May, Belfast City Hall – 400 delegates
 3. Women’s Executive Network, Ireland’s top 25 awards and conference June 2014

Enterprise Ireland supported and presented to ‘Network Ireland National Women’s Day’ in March, to the Cavan Business Club, and to North Tipperary Women’s Network in June 2014.

There is also a dedicated section on Enterprise Ireland’s website which outlines Enterprise Ireland supports and services in the area of female entrepreneurship: www.enterprise-ireland.com/ambitiouswomen

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: Ongoing

The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) has been consulting with IDA and EI and is producing updated marketing material for both the Immigrant Investor Programme (IIP) and the Start Up Entrepreneur Programme (STEP) that is coherent with Ireland’s overall investment marketing strategy. The INIS has also been in consultation with other national immigration services through the international IGC immigration forum regarding their experiences of marketing and operating migrant investor and entrepreneur programmes,

with a view to refining communications into a unique selling point for the Irish programmes that balances the objectives of the national programmes with the demands of the target market.

2.2 Winning Abroad

Action 29: Target the creation of an additional 10,000 new jobs (6,000 direct and 4,000 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: Ongoing

35 'Winning Abroad' positions were advertised in the national press on Friday May 23rd 2014, with a closing date of Friday June 6th 2014. Over 650 applications were received and a screening process has commenced with recruitment to commence as soon as possible.

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: Ongoing

In cooperation with other Government Departments and State agencies, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) prepared a set of coordinated promotional messages for use abroad during the St. Patrick's Day period. The messaging and promotional opportunity of St Patrick's Day was fully utilised by the Embassy network, in coordination with the State agencies, to deliver:

- Trade focussed visits across 60 cities in 23 countries;
- 300 engagements with international media;
- Promotion of key economic messages in op-eds and interviews reaching an international audience of at least 23.5 million;
- 108 business events involving over 13,600 company representatives;
- A promotional video, IrelandInspires, coordinating input from all State agencies, and

viewed on YouTube by over 1.3 million people;

- 124 engagements to promote Ireland's positions to high-level office-holders internationally;
- 115 focussed company engagements with potential to support new export opportunities or win new investments; and
- Largest ever 'Global Greening', involving the Great Wall of China for the first time, as well as over 100 other iconic sites.

On average, 17 promotional events or engagements were delivered by each Embassy or Consulate across 133 cities in 68 countries.

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: Ongoing

In February 2014, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade announced a programme of Ministerial Trade Missions and international trade events for 2014. During Q2, Ministerial-led Trade/Investment Missions and Events were organised to the UK, Saudi Arabia, Oman, USA, Qatar, Switzerland, China and Korea. This has brought the total overseas Ministerial Led Trade Missions/Events to 17 for the year to date (excluding Saint Patrick's 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

The Local Market Team structure has been fully implemented in all 27 priority markets. Local Market Teams, chaired by the Ambassador, submit annual Local Market Plans to the

Export Trade Council. This process was further strengthened by the recently published review of the Government Trade, Tourism and Investment Strategy (coordinated by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) which streamlined the Action Plan which guides the work of Local Market Teams.

The review also included a more nuanced “new market approach”, which recognises the vital importance of some markets within the existing 27 priority markets while also accommodating promotional activities in dynamic, rapidly developing economies not previously listed in the Strategy, through the addition of seven ‘Exploratory and High Potential Markets’ (Turkey, Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico, Vietnam, Thailand, Chile).

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: Ongoing

An analysis of impacts to date in terms of employment and audience numbers has been undertaken and this is informing future measurement. A system to measure impact and outcomes of major initiatives such as Year of Irish design 2015 is being developed by the Design and Crafts Council of Ireland.

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: Ongoing

This is being developed for Year of Irish Design 2015 and will be explored for application in a more general way with the Global Irish Economic Forum this Autumn.

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: Ongoing

Through Culture Ireland grant support, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht has supported over 70 Irish artists and companies to date in 2014 to perform across 25 different countries. Over 100 further events will be supported through the remainder of 2014 and into 2015. In addition, Culture Ireland’s annual Edinburgh Festivals Showcase in

August is a key opportunity for Irish artists to build their international profile and generate further touring opportunities for their work. Other key events in 2014 will include Tanzmesse in Dusseldorf and World Music Expo (WOMEX) in Spain.

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: Ongoing

Publication of the Review of the International Education Strategy has been delayed due to the establishment of a Ministerial Taskforce, dealing with a range of private college closures which have taken place over the past number of months. It has been necessary to re-direct resources away from the review and towards the work of the Taskforce and development of a strengthened regulatory environment.

Work on finalising the mid-term review of the International Education Strategy will recommence following the conclusion of work related to the Taskforce report and regulation. Publication of the review is expected later in 2014.

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: Ongoing

The Africa Section in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has confirmed that the fourth Africa-Ireland Economic Forum will be held on October 30th 2014. Agreement was reached in July between the Africa Section and the Dublin-based African Embassies that the agenda will include a session on Infrastructure and Construction. Representatives from International Finance Institutions include the Private Infrastructure Development Group and the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank.

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: Ongoing

SFI worked with the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to launch the Research Professorship Call which 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. The call was launched at the end of June, 2014.

The purpose of the Research Professorship scheme is to assist higher education institutes to bring world-class researchers in particular fields of STEM into the country, who will in turn build up teams, which in turn develops these skills or expertise in our universities. This year, the scheme includes specific themes including Manufacturing and Bio-manufacturing, which means that SFI is looking for leading researchers in these fields in particular to come to Ireland.

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: Ongoing

The activity in relation to ‘Data Analytics, Management, Security and Privacy’ is being supported under a number of agency programmes. Work in this area is progressing well to date. Detail is provided in the recently published “National Research Prioritisation Exercise:

First Progress Report June 2014” available at www.forfas.ie.

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

A further round of Springboard was launched in June 2014 providing up to 6,100 places for unemployed people on a range of part-time courses from certificate to master's degree levels - Levels 6 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications. A range of courses selected for funding under Springboard 2014 focus on Data Analytics.

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: Ongoing

A specific deliverable of the Taskforce was to identify at least two pilot initiatives whereby data analytics could be employed to address specific challenges delivering economic impact and/or improved public services. The Taskforce agreed criteria for the identification of pilot projects, the funding for which must come from existing funding lines and/or “own resources”. A wide trawl for potential pilots was coordinated by Forfás and involved significant engagement by Taskforce members including IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland. Following this trawl, the Taskforce identified two initiatives to be progressed.

The first initiative relates to the application of Big Data in an agricultural setting and will explore the commercial impact of Big Data solutions aimed at optimising farming production. An application for funding has been submitted to Enterprise Ireland’s Innovation Partnership Fund and is currently being evaluated.

The second initiative relates to the use of data analytics to support policy-making in respect of labour market activation in Ireland. The Department of Social Protection in conjunction with both industry and research partners is finalising the scope of a project that will utilise Big Data and data analytics solutions to analyse the new Intreo service in terms of

operational efficiencies and activation outcomes for clients.

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: Ongoing

This is being delivered through the Better Energy programme, including the Better Energy Homes scheme, the Better Energy Warmer Homes scheme, and the Better Energy Communities scheme. On July 4th it was announced that Better Energy Communities will be supporting 83 community energy projects in 2014, which will receive €28m in financial support, resulting in substantial improvements in homes, community buildings, local authority premises and sports facilities throughout Ireland.

Information on these schemes is available at <http://www.seai.ie/Grants/>.

Action 82: Continue to support the Exemplar Projects.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DCENR)

Update: Ongoing

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: Ongoing

Maintaining competitiveness remains a key national priority which requires an ongoing, whole-of-Government focus and this is reflected in the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs and other relevant Cabinet Committees. As part of its focus on competitiveness, progress and outstanding challenges on competitiveness issues set out in the National Competitiveness Council's Competitiveness Scorecard 2014 have been identified and prioritised by Government through its Cabinet Committee structures. To give special focus to this in 2014, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs prepares a quarterly report on competitiveness for Government consideration.

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: Ongoing

As part of the quarterly report on competitiveness prepared through the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, Government Departments review key competitiveness issues within their remit and report on actions to be undertaken to improve Ireland's competitiveness performance. The quarterly report is prepared through the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs for Government consideration.

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: Ongoing

As part of the quarterly report on competitiveness prepared through the Cabinet

Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, Government Departments review challenges around doing business in Ireland and report on actions to be undertaken to further improve Ireland's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business report and other measures to improve the environment for doing business in Ireland.

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: Ongoing

The National Competitiveness Council's 'Competitiveness Scorecard 2014', was presented to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs at its meeting on June 30th. The report benchmarks Ireland's competitiveness performance against our economic peer group, using 120 individual indicators. These indicators range from measures such as economic growth and quality of life, to the policy inputs that will drive future competitiveness, such as the education system and the delivery of infrastructure. The report was submitted to Government for noting following the Cabinet Committee meeting, and was published in July.

The Cabinet Committee also considered a report entitled 'Key Competitiveness Issues in the Irish Economy' at its meeting on June 30th. The report drew together key messages from the Competitiveness Scorecard, inputs from Government Departments, material published by the European Commission in the context of the Country Specific Recommendations for Ireland, and other related sources. It was agreed that progress on competitiveness would be reviewed again by the Cabinet Committee in September.

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: Ongoing

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) business support programmes covering the Large, and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sectors are continuing to receive a steady stream of enquiries and interest regarding 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: Ongoing

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 billion 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.

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: Ongoing

All remaining OJEU Notices for projects in the PPP Infrastructure Stimulus Package have been issued. The first project to reach financial close, and the largest in the Stimulus Package, was the N17/N18 valued at over €300m which closed in April. A particularly positive indicator of the successful reopening of the Irish PPP market was the involvement of international institutional investors in this project.

The use of social clauses to maximise job creation impact is also being considered. This is currently being done on a pilot basis for the Schools Bundle 3 project which superseded the Stimulus Package. Job creation is being closely monitored and will be considered for all PPP projects within the Stimulus Package.

Ongoing Measure: Work with stakeholders to help ensure the delivery of projects in line with the timeframes indicated above. (DPER, NDFA, D/Finance)

Update: Ongoing

All projects in the PPP Infrastructure Stimulus Programme are ongoing with positive feedback on the rate at which projects are being released to the market.

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: Ongoing

An annual review of progress will be monitored through Cabinet Committees and a Memorandum for Government will be prepared in Q3.

Ongoing Measure: Progress project outlined in Fourth Programme of Law Reform – Project 1) Corporate offences and regulatory enforcement. (LRC)

Update: Ongoing

The Law Reform Commission (LRC) is prioritising and progressing Project 1 (corporate offences and regulatory enforcement) in the Commission's Fourth Programme of Law Reform. An extensive scoping exercise on the various matters included in the project has been completed, and the Commission is now engaged in the part of the project involving criminal law enforcement mechanisms for corporate offences, and this includes examining the laws of other jurisdictions. The LRC will be consulting with the public in the Autumn through the publication of an Issues Paper or Papers on this aspect of the project (an Issues Paper is a document which the Commission uses to consult publicly on a project and to ask specific questions of interested parties). The Commission will address the civil law mechanisms (administrative sanctions and regulatory enforcement) next.

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: Ongoing

Construction contracts in Athlone (awarded to Kilcawley Construction) and Waterford (awarded to Walls Construction) have commenced with estimated building completion dates of November 2014. The private sector is constructing a new office block in Letterkenny, work has commenced on the site and the completion date for the building is end 2014.

Action 116: Develop integrated local economic and community plans (LECP), to promote economic and community development in each local authority area.

Ongoing Measure: Each Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) to develop the community elements of a LECP which will be completed and adopted in 2015. (DECLG, LCDCs)

Update: Ongoing

The drafting of Regulations and guidance regarding preparation of the community elements of the LECP are advanced and will issue in July 2014 to enable each LCDC to commence drafting the community elements of a LECP.

Ongoing Measure: Each Strategic Policy Committee (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: Ongoing

The drafting of Regulations and Guidance regarding preparation of the economic elements of the LECP are advanced and will issue in July 2014 to enable each local authority to commence preparation of the economic elements of a LECP.

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 the first half of 2014, Ministers have discussed with their Northern Ireland counterparts opportunities to prioritise economic development, job creation and the best use of public funds. Of particular note is the establishment of an all-island Horizon 2020 Steering Group whose aim is to help both jurisdictions to maximise the drawdown of EU funding for research and innovation through increased North South collaboration.

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)

Update: Complete

The First Progress Report on the National Research Prioritisation Exercise (NRPE) was published on July 4th 2014. The Report outlines progress against the thirteen systemic recommendations, and is available at:

http://www.enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/National_Research_Prioritisation_Exercise_First_Progress_Report_June_2014_PDF_1_3MB_.pdf

Ongoing Measure: Monitor implementation of Action Plans for the 14 Priority Areas. (DJEI/Forfás, Prioritisation Action Group)

Update: Complete

The First Progress Report on the National Research Prioritisation Exercise (NRPE) was published on 4th July 2014. Specifically the report presents:-

- an overview of the Action Plans in terms of the timeline and the key actors responsible for implementation and a high-level statistical overview of progress;

- a more detailed breakdown of progress for each Priority Area with statistics complemented by a narrative for the Priority Area, providing a high-level overview of key developments and achievements;
- a summary of important contributions to Research for Knowledge and Research for Policy; and
- developments in relation to education and skills, a fundamental prerequisite for successful implementation of research prioritisation in all fourteen Priority Areas.

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: Ongoing

Ireland is involved in a Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) project in the European Defence Agency (EDA). In November 2013, with the assistance of Enterprise Ireland in formulating tenders, two Irish entities were successful and awarded contracts in relation to this EDA CBRN project. The entities will draw down the finances for their respective projects over the coming years.

The Department of Defence is working closely with Enterprise Ireland to identify further initiatives within the Horizon 2020 programme and the EDA, which may be suitable for Enterprise Ireland support and Irish enterprise participation. The Defence Forces are involved in a number of academic collaborations, research and commercial projects.

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, which will contribute to Naval Service capabilities.

The Department of Defence will continue to provide assistance to EI and EI companies in 2014. Collaboration will also continue between the Naval Service, IMERC and a range of companies engaged in Horizon 2020 projects during the coming years.

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: Ongoing

A total of 929 volunteers have now been trained to deliver Smart Futures talks promoting science, technology, engineering and maths related careers to post-primary students across the country. 427 school visits have been delivered, reaching approximately 13,296 students during this academic year. 5 trainers have been inducted to support the programme in further rolling out volunteer training.

SFI Discover, responsible for the coordination of the Smart Futures programme, is currently reviewing other additional routes to help accelerate the training of volunteers.

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: Ongoing

The Smart Futures three year strategy was launched to the media on April 17th 2014 by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in the Science Gallery, Dublin. The media campaign included the unveiling of Smart Futures Ambassador Shane O'Connell – Clare hurling champion and Genetics student in UCC. A press release and photos were issued, which resulted in 17 online articles, 10 print articles, 6 radio mentions and interviews, and coverage on social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook.

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: Ongoing

A further 10 STEM career profiles have been posted on the SmartFutures.ie website in Q2. These profiles involve interviews with people working in various aspects of STEM. Career and study areas discussed have included bioinformatics, aerospace, chemical engineering, diagnostics and software development. Approximately 50% of this content focuses on females in STEM careers. Six news stories have also been published in the same period, relating to STEM careers. The website had over 3,400 visits and over 6,000 page views in Q2. Over 1,800 parents, teachers, students and stakeholders follow Smart Futures social media channels. Two Smart Futures STEM career videos have been developed featuring two female STEM ambassadors. A third video will be developed during Q3. The videos are due for release in Q3.

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

Update: Ongoing

This action commenced in Q2 and is on target to deliver a coordination booking system that meets the needs of both post-primary schools and volunteers by end of Q4. A review of the current Client Relationship Management (CRM) tools used by SFI Discover to connect with schools was completed in Q2 to determine if this system offers a means to manage the Smart Futures online booking system for schools to request career talks, as well as to manage the volunteer database. Following this review, it has been determined that the current system will not adequately support the requirements without significant development. SFI is working with Smart Futures partners, Engineers Ireland, to consolidate existing databases and implement one shared central booking system that Engineers Ireland have piloted.

The requirements for sharing this database and creating a seamless interface for schools and volunteers are currently being reviewed. While work is continuing to deliver this central online booking system, work is also underway to ensure sufficient numbers of trained and available volunteers are available before the system is made live.

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: Ongoing

A successful interim review has been carried out for Clinical Research Facilities (CRF) in Cork. Monitoring of CRFs in St James's Hospital and Galway University Hospital is ongoing.

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: Ongoing

The Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019 was published by SOLAS on May 12th 2014. This Strategy reflects the priorities set out in the Action Plan for Jobs in relation to the Skills for Work programme and across the ETB-delivered adult basic education programmes.

The Skills for Work programme is promoted across all employment sectors in 2014 including in the manufacturing and the food and beverage industry. Since January, 1,682 participants have engaged in 241 SFW courses. Of these, 182 participants are from the manufacturing industry and 103 participants were from the Food & Beverage sector.

The Skills for Work programme works in partnership with NALA, AONTOS, ICTU, IBEC and Forfás to promote the Skills for Work programme. The SFW National Co-ordinators provide reports to the ETBI Adult Literacy Forum, while SFW Regional Co-ordinators provide up-to-date information on SFW activities including recruitment strategies, participant numbers, progression and accreditation to all the ETBs. The SFW National Co-ordinator has also delivered a presentation at a Trade Union conference to promote the Skills for Work programme and to enhance the partnership approach already in place.

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: Ongoing

Skillnets continues to engage with the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and is actively participating in 2 current sectoral reviews.

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: Ongoing

The CSR Consultation Forum held its inaugural meeting on June 24th. 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 first meeting agreed the Terms of Reference, and agreed that the Forum will meet on two further occasions in 2014, on September 30th and November 25th. There was also a substantial discussion to identify how the Forum can help in achieving 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: Ongoing

The Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation launched Ireland's first National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) 2014-2016: "Good for Business, Good for the Community", 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, SFA and ISME.

A key deliverable under the National Plan was the establishment of a CSR Stakeholder Forum, which held its inaugural meeting on June 24th. The Stakeholder Forum is comprised of over 30 participants, including senior representatives from the business sector, SMEs, relevant Government Departments/agencies and the wider community. The Forum will be a key vehicle to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to raise awareness and disseminate best practice across the enterprise sector, and encourage enterprises to develop and implement CSR policies and practices.

In addition to the establishment of the CSR Stakeholder Forum, a number of bodies have held events which support this action. Chambers Ireland launched its annual CSR awards in March, and announced the shortlist for the 2014 awards on July 16th. 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 and are presented in a variety of categories covering all areas of CSR. Chambers Ireland also held an awareness-raising seminar for SMEs in conjunction with the South West Regional Authority in Cork in April.

BITCI have a calendar of CSR events ongoing throughout the year. In May, they held a "Business Impact Celebration", which showcased Ireland's only interactive Business Impact Map highlighting the impact of their member companies all over Ireland in addressing social issues and causes in their communities. In June, BITCI participated in 4 breakfast seminars on "Making the most of your company's Green Credentials". These seminars were organised in Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny and Tralee, in collaboration with the Southern Region Waste Management Office's project 'Encouraging CSR among Small to Medium Enterprises', as part of the EPA-sponsored Green Enterprise Programme. BITCI are currently planning a major conference on sustainable business, which will take place in November 2014.

The NSAI recently conducted a survey on the uptake of CSR within business in Ireland and is an active member of the CSR Stakeholder Forum. At the first meeting of the Forum held on

June 24th 2014, NSAI made available findings of the recently conducted survey.

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: Ongoing

Implementation of Pathways to Work 2013 is ongoing, with quarterly reporting of progress on its 50 action points. The next update will be published in Q3 2014.

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: Ongoing

Legislation has been drafted to provide for differential treatment of young people on labour market programmes, particularly in relation to JobsPlus and JobBridge. This legislation was enacted on July 17th 2014, and design work on the related programme reforms is proceeding so that these can be implemented as soon as possible.

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: Ongoing

The Department of Social Protection has organised a series of events 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.

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: Ongoing

The implementation of 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 ongoing. The implementation of the protocol is monitored by the Steering Group, which is chaired by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

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) has been developed by the Communications and Change Management Sub Group of the HAP Project Board and is being implemented.

Ongoing Measure: The development and specification of a new IT system for HAP. (DECLG, Limerick Local Authorities, DSP)

Update: Ongoing

Work 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 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: Ongoing

Significant work has been undertaken to date and a draft comprehensive employment strategy was submitted to the Minister of State for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People on March 31st 2014. The draft Strategy has issued to the National Disability

Strategy Implementation Group for consideration, and further development of the draft Strategy is ongoing. Progress is ongoing for expected publication of the Strategy in Q4 2014.

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: Ongoing

Of the thirteen projects providing equality supports to Further Education and Training providers, twelve are now completed while one has been extended until July. 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: Ongoing

Five projects approved for funding under the 2013 'Call for Proposals for Equality Mainstreaming Projects' are nearing completion:

- 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 May 17th 2014 at the IBOA House. A dissemination campaign in workplaces will follow.
- Cavan County Council launched its DVD on workplace equality on June 27th 2014 and is delivering some 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 are finalising the case law review report on mental health in the workplace and the mental health policy template for employers. A training module based on these reports will be devised and delivered to a group of employers.
- The Irish Universities Association Equality Network is finalising its Connect-ability project

that 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 will be 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: Ongoing

The Irish authorities, with the Department of Finance being the primary contact point, continue to engage with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF). A Joint Ireland-EIB High Level Working Group agreed its third report in Q1 2014, setting out targets for 2014 and beyond which includes supports for SMEs as one of the key objectives for the Irish authorities and the EIB.

There have been ongoing discussions between the Irish authorities, the EIB and the major banks operating within Ireland to further open up intermediary financing through traditional bank channels.

Furthermore, there has been engagement with the EIB in relation to its involvement with the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI). It is expected that this vehicle will provide over €500m in additional credit to Irish SMEs in the next term. The SBCI will be financed by KfW, the EIB and the NPRF.

Initiatives are also being explored with the EIB in relation to trade finance including working capital for SMEs (Action 214 refers).

In respect of the EIF, the enhanced use of the EIF Risk Sharing instrument to guarantee loans to innovative SMES is being explored. In addition, the EIF have been putting in place regulatory structures to roll-out the angel fund concept across Europe. This has now been completed. Enterprise Ireland are now engaging with the EIF to put in place and finalise legal agreements for the Irish Angel Fund. In addition, the EIF are continuing to engage with Irish Venture Capital funds that are currently fundraising. Enterprise Ireland look forward to ongoing dialogue with the EIF in 2014.

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: Ongoing

A European Commission agreement with the European Investment Bank Group was signed on June 12th 2014, paving the way for a new generation of EU financial instruments and advisory services to help innovative firms to access finance more easily. 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: Ongoing

The Department of Finance, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, and NPRF continue to work with public sector stakeholders and private sector suppliers of supply-chain finance software to identify and progress areas where supply-chain finance could be possible and effective. A private company which is promoting the advantages of the adoption of supply chain financing within the public sector recently presented to the SME State Bodies Group.

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: Ongoing

Members of the SME State Bodies Group have attended numerous events nationwide showcasing the “Supporting SMEs” online tool.

Ongoing Measure: Establish and participate in training opportunities regarding Access to Finance. (D/Finance, DJEI, D/Taoiseach)

Update: Ongoing

Group members attended a training session focusing on utilisation of the online tool and customer service. A new round of training is being organised for the relevant stakeholders.

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: Ongoing

Promotion of the programme continues. An update briefing was provided to the SME State Bodies Group in June. The programme has been amended to make it more accessible to the target market. Participant feedback is being used in programme promotion.

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: Ongoing

The ESRI are undertaking research on “Financing SMEs” on behalf of the SME State Bodies Group. They have circulated draft copies of research papers and presented on their research to date at a seminar on June 26th attended by the members of the SME State Bodies Group.

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 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. Enterprise Ireland 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. This group are 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, Enterprise Ireland 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 Enterprise Ireland 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. Enterprise Ireland is sharing with DCU its knowledge of family owned businesses, their challenges, etc. As research continues by the DCU Centre, Enterprise Ireland clients will be identified to participate in the broader research agenda.

On Wednesday May 28th, 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: Ongoing

A review of the banking landscape has been undertaken, as this has been identified as a sector with significant opportunities for Business Process Outsourcing. 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 April 9th 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: Ongoing

The SME stakeholder group was established earlier this year and has met twice since its establishment.

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: Ongoing

The SME Working Group contributed positively to the work carried out in advance of publishing circular 10/2014. The circular was aimed at reducing the administrative burden on SMEs tendering for public sector procurement opportunities and, by association,

enhance their competitiveness in tendering.

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: Ongoing

The Operations Unit of the Office of Government Procurement has reviewed the eTenders portal to enhance the user experience. As part of this initiative the supplier registration and company profiles update functions are being enhanced in a release scheduled for July 2014. All stakeholders will receive direct communications on these enhancements during July 2014. It is expected that these communications will result in increased numbers registering on eTenders.

Ongoing Measure: In consultation with stakeholders, assess options to encourage registration on E-Tenders. (OGP)

Update: Ongoing

As above. The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) will also, in consultation with the SME Working Group (which includes industry representatives) continue to encourage registration on eTenders national portal.

Ongoing Measure: Promote the e-procurement web portal to companies at 6 public sector procurement events in 2014. (EI)

Update: Ongoing

A number of public sector events have been undertaken or are scheduled for the remainder of 2014. The last event was in relation to consortia building. Titled "Pitch-Network-Build Consortia", the event took place in June and was attended by 82 delegates from 66 companies (with 20 of those being EI/LEO client companies from various regions). The seminar provided the attendees with insights on tendering as part of a consortium targeting national public sector construction projects. Enterprise Ireland presented at that event which provided another opportunity to promote the e-procurement web portal.

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: Ongoing

Two 'Meet the Buyer' events will be held later in 2014 (one north and one south).

Ongoing Measure: Deliver Go-2-Tender and Advanced Go-2-Tender SME tender training programme on an all-island basis. (InterTradeIreland)

Update: Ongoing

Between January and June 2014, 13 standard and 2 advanced workshops have been held. These workshops were attended by 224 SMEs across the island.

Ongoing Measure: Maximum usage of Procurement.ie and E-Tenders websites. (OGP)

Update: Ongoing

The OGP will continue to work with Enterprise Ireland and InterTradeIreland who are represented on the SME Working Group to promote maximum use of these websites. Circular 10/14 was issued in April and requires buyers to advertise all contracts for supplies and services with an estimated value of €25,000 (exclusive of VAT) and upwards on www.etenders.gov.ie. The advertising threshold for works and works-related services remains at €50,000 (exclusive of VAT). The circular also requires buyers to extend the use of the e-Tenders website to include tenders for low value purchases where possible.

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: Ongoing

Enterprise Ireland's Public Procurement in partnership with National Development Finance Agency will run a series of Meet the Buyer events in 2014 to provide information on supply chain opportunities on the PPP programmes. For year to date (January – June 2014) one Meet the Buyer event has taken place relating to the Schools PPP programme. The event was held on January 31st in Portlaoise and was attended by 320 delegates from 251 companies who participated in speed meetings with the 3 shortlisted bidders on the programme.

The next Meet the Buyer event will take place on August 13th in Citywest Hotel, Saggart, Co Dublin and will relate to the DIT Grangegorman campus development. Meet the Buyer events relating to Primary Care centres and Courts PPP building programme are planned for Quarters 3 and 4 in 2014.

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: Ongoing

The Consortia Facilitator Service has been promoted through the Go-2-Tender workshops, participant database and specific events. Three specific workshops on the Consortia Facilitator Service will be delivered in July, September and November in Dublin and Belfast.

To date 14 SMEs have availed of the Consortia Service resulting in the following:

- The formation of one consortia;
- The submission of 4 bids;
- One entry onto Framework Agreement – HSE;
- The facilitation of 7 meetings with public sector buying organisations;
- 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: Ongoing

Enterprise Ireland's Public Procurement held a seminar titled "Pitch-Network-Build Consortia" in Dublin on June 11th 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 consortium targeting national public sector construction projects.

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: Ongoing

These events are being organised by Enterprise Ireland (EI) through the cluster entitled 'Consulting Ireland' workshops. Consulting Ireland is a new initiative, supported by EI that

provides practical support to Irish-based consultancy practices, individual consultants and businesses in Ireland in targeting and developing new business opportunities in emerging markets. The focus is on opportunities funded by the main International Financing Institutions (IFIs) such as the European Commission and World Bank.

June 2014 saw the finale of a 9 month training programme for EI clients around winning business in new and emerging markets, many of which are funded by International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The programme included engagement from experienced practitioners from the major IFIs, regional and international companies, foreign embassies as well as state and trade agencies. A World Bank seminar is scheduled to take place on September 12th in Dublin, which will be delivered to EI services companies and non EI clients, and which is about tendering and winning business with the World Bank.

Enterprise Ireland will also explore possible engagement with the UN through consulting Ireland in Q4.

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: Ongoing

As part of circular 10/2014 contracting authorities are now encouraged, where possible and appropriate, to consider new and innovative solutions by indicating in tender documents where they are prepared to accept reasonable variant to the specifications.

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: Ongoing

The first seminar was held in Dublin City University in June on best practice in green energy. This was organised in partnership with The Green Way programme. The second seminar will take place in Q3 or early Q4 2014.

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

- four technical training courses
- 2 product development courses
- 2 regulatory compliance courses
- 2 food innovation and technology transfer events

(Teagasc)

Update: Ongoing

To date in 2014, Teagasc has:

- Provided technical advice and support in product development to 15 SMEs;
- Delivered 2 technical workshops/courses on meat product development; and
- Presented and provided technical information at industry SME events hosted by FSAI, Bord Bia and UCC in Q1.

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: Ongoing

As above.

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: Ongoing

At the end of June, 31 significant food and drink projects were approved, four of which were FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) projects. It is anticipated that a further 10 significant projects will be approved in the remainder of 2014.

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: Ongoing

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine led a Trade Mission to the United States on June 22nd 2014. The Chinese took the first move recently in relation to access procedures for Irish sheepmeat, and the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine met with senior Chinese politician Mr. Liu Yunshan in June to press for access for Irish beef to China.

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: Ongoing

A broad paper setting out the range of suitable projects has been drafted. A number of follow-on enquires have been received but these cannot be pursued in any tangible way until the agency has been set up and its remit established.

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: Ongoing

A number of Cleantech companies have participated on Ministerial Trade Missions since the start of 2014, including to the Gulf States in January and to China in June. Water and Waste Water firms followed up Enterprise Ireland's January trade mission to the Gulf States with a trade mission to Qatar and Oman at the end of May. Companies are continuing to work at securing further contracts. LED companies also took stands 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: Ongoing

Negotiations for an Environmental Green Goods Agreement were launched on July 8th 2014 at the World Trade Organisation. Fourteen WTO member countries accounting for 86% of world trade in this area, including the EU, will be involved in these negotiations. 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.

DJEI is working with Enterprise Ireland to identify Irish-produced technologies and services, and we will seek to have trade in these liberalised under the agreement in order to create new market opportunities for Irish enterprises. There will be further opportunities for new markets for Irish environmental service providers under the WTO Trade in Services Agreement negotiations which were launched in 2013.

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 April 13th 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: Ongoing

'Ireland's Sustainable Energy Supply Chain Opportunity' was launched on June 11th 2014, and the consideration of responses by the relevant agencies has now commenced.

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: Ongoing

The relevant Government Departments and Agencies regularly provide speakers for events related to the driving the Green Economy agenda. In Q1 and Q2, events for which speakers were provided included conferences, workshops and seminars in Ireland on energy research, wind energy, ocean energy, water and climate change. Examples include the Marine Renewables Industry Association's Ocean Energy Conference in February and the International Energy Research Centre Annual Conference in May. In the second half of 2014, speakers will be provided for further events including conferences on environmental policy and management and Smart Grid Technologies.

Ongoing Measure: Engage with key stakeholders in the context of relevant policy developments. (DJEI, EI, DCENR, EPA, SEAI)

Update: Ongoing

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 Q1 and Q2 included the Offshore Renewable Development Plan whose Steering Group met with stakeholders in the renewable energy sectors recently, and the National Waste Prevention Plan 2014-2020 which was open for consultation in Q1 2014. The Final Report on the Review of Producer Responsibility Initiative Model in Ireland was also published recently and is open for consultation until September 2014.

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: Ongoing

A total of 91 submissions from industry and other stakeholders have been evaluated with a view to introducing new regulatory regime for household waste collection with focus on supporting development of viable indigenous waste treatment industry in second half of 2014. A workshop to discuss future legislation was held with industry on June 4th, 2014 to further inform the process.

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: Ongoing

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 of 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 fourth meeting of the Committee took place in Q2 2014 and the theme was Research, Development and Innovation in the Green Economy. Representatives from Enterprise Ireland (Horizon 2020 and EI Research Supports) and Science Foundation Ireland also attended the meeting. The meeting highlighted areas of potential for Ireland in relation to Horizon2020 and research into ocean energy. Further meetings of the Consultative committee will be held in the second half of the year.

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: Ongoing

It is intended that General Schemes of two Planning Bills will be submitted to Government in Q3, 2014. Both bills will contain measures giving effect to this Action.

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: Ongoing

Draft of first Report submitted on June 30th 2014 currently under consideration by Departmental senior management.

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: Ongoing

A High Level Working Group (HLWG), chaired by the Department of Finance and comprising representatives of the Department of Finance, the National Asset Management Agency, the National Pension Reserve Fund, Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland, Ulster Bank, the Irish Banking Federation, the Construction Industry Federation and Property Industry Ireland was established to explore the issue of bank and non-bank financing for the construction sector. This Group's discussion and subsequent submissions focused on understanding the current financing conditions for development and the impact of other possible interacting factors. The Group has issued questionnaires to stakeholders to get insight on the current situation and has begun meeting with stakeholders. An interim report is now finalised for consideration by the Mortgage Arrears and Credit Availability Subcommittee, following the HLWG's discussions on the key issues and a synthesis of the submissions received from stakeholders.

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: Ongoing

NAMA has to date approved over €1.4 billion in development funding for projects in Ireland, over €1 billion of which has already been drawn down and is supporting the delivery of a range of residential and commercial development projects in Ireland currently. A number of significant projects are currently progressing through the planning system.

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: Ongoing

NAMA funding is already supporting the completion of existing residential development projects and the development of new projects to meet demand in key growth areas, including, in particular, in Dublin. NAMA's planning in terms of the delivery of new Grade A office space in the Dublin central business district is significantly advanced. As the primary focus in this regard is on the Docklands SDZ, NAMA notes and welcomes the recent adoption of the planning scheme by An Bord Pleanála. NAMA has an interest in over 70% of the 22 hectares available for development in the SDZ area and, through debtors, receivers and joint venture arrangements, expects to finance significant new commercial and residential development in the SDZ over the medium-term. NAMA is working closely with all key stakeholders in these matters.

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: Ongoing

The provision is being met via transposition of the Mortgage Credit Directive. A consultation Forum has been established to support the transposition process. The objective of the Directive is to enhance consumer protection and it includes requirements on transparency and on the provision of documentation in a consistent fashion across Member States, which will allow for improved comparability of mortgage products. Transposition of the Directive by March 2016 is required.

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: Ongoing

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. This includes, for example, NAMA funding the fit-out of an office block in Cork to facilitate its acquisition by leading multinational pharmaceutical firm, Eli Lilly; the letting of 120,000 sq. ft. in Dublin's Grand Canal Square to Facebook for its European headquarters; and lettings at Burlington Plaza, an office development in Dublin 4, to international broadcasting group BskyB, global e-commerce firm Amazon, and U.S. digital company Adroit.

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: Ongoing

To end June, almost 30% of the 2014 capital budget had been spent by Departments. This is in line with spending trends from previous years. No major delays with individual infrastructure projects have been flagged by Departments and so the Public Capital Programme is rolling out in line with expected timeframes.

Action 319: Explore mechanisms for private financing and greater use of Public Private Partnerships.

Ongoing Measure: As per headline action. (DPER)

Update: Ongoing

Engagement with the relevant stakeholders on this measure is ongoing.

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: Ongoing

The use of social clauses will be extended into the PPP programme as it is believed that this is an appropriate area for their deployment because it constitutes an increase in expenditure in the sector (approximately €1.5bn). The pilot programme is Ongoing and three contracts under the Devolved Schools Programme have been awarded. Whilst preliminary data is yet to be presented, it is understood that the clause is operating as intended and consideration will be given to any necessary modifications to the clause in advance of their introduction into any contracts to be awarded under the PPP element of the Stimulus Programme.

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: Ongoing

The Construction Industry Register Ireland (CIRI) governance board is now in place and the website went live on March 1st 2014 and is open for applications for registration. The voluntary register has been available for use by consumers since mid-May 2014 and was officially launched on July 7th 2014. 201 construction companies, sole traders and builders are already listed on the CIRI register and another 565 prospective registrants are at various stages of the application process. The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) continues to work closely with the CIF and the Board of CIRI to pave the way for the transition to a statutory register in 2015 and will bring legislative

proposals to Government in that regard by the end of 2014.

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: Ongoing

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 May 22nd and 23rd. EI offices (France, Germany, Benelux, Spain, Italy, Sweden and Turkey) invited and hosted more than 40 international buyers to attend the event and associated site visits to Pfizers (Cork and Dublin), Eli Lilly & 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 Enterprise Ireland-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 contract to use a BIM approach by 2016, companies need to be preparing now. In the recently published Irish Government White Paper on Construction 2020 "A Strategy for a Renewed Construction Sector", Enterprise Ireland was tasked with the introduction of a staged development programme to support companies advancing to Level 2 BIM capability.

It is now proposed to introduce a sequenced two-part BIM support package (BIM-Enable and BIM-Implement) 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. The Enterprise Ireland Executive Committee will be considering a paper on the matter at its July meeting.

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: Ongoing

Over 800 commencement notices under SI No. 9 of 2014 have been lodged to date in March, 2014. A range of initiatives to support and complement the new regulatory arrangements are being progressed including the continued development of the recently launched online Building Control Administration System, the develop an Agreed Operational Framework for Building Control Authorities to standardise work practices, systems, procedures and decision-making in relation to oversight of building control activity across the local authority sector, the move towards a risk based approach to inspections by building control authorities, the statutory registration of builders and contractors, broadening the arrangements in place for the registration of construction professionals and exploring the potential for suitable construction insurance cover as an ultimate means of recourse for home-buyers.

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

The introduction of the online system for entering details of qualifying works carried out was launched on April 7th 2014. This was widely publicised in the media and on the Department of Finance and Revenue websites. Literature has been produced and published on the Revenue website to provide information to homeowners and contractors in relation to the scheme; available at <http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/reliefs/hri/hri-general-fags.html>. Revenue also publicise the Incentive Scheme at public events such as the Ideal Homes Exhibition.

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: Ongoing

Measures included in the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 were submitted by government to EU on April 22nd, 2014.

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: Ongoing

The objective of the Retail Consultation Forum is to identify actions which can be taken by the Government, and/or its Agencies, to support the recovery of the retail sector. At its first meeting on June 9th, Forum Members were asked to identify potential actions that could be considered in the context of Budget 2015 which would support the retail sector. A number of the Forum members subsequently submitted further details to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in support of suggestions made at the meeting. The proposals made by the retail representatives on the Forum are currently being collated by that Department with a view to channelling those suggestions into the Budgetary process for consideration. The second meeting of the Forum, scheduled for September 2014, is likely to consider proposals for potential inclusion in the Action Plan for Jobs 2015.

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: Ongoing

The measures detailed in the Finance Act 2014 have been applied and implementation is ongoing. These are measures to give Revenue more powers to tackle the illicit trade in alcohol, tobacco and fuel. They will also assist in tackling VAT fraud.

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: Ongoing

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 jobseekers across a range of events. Examination of whether these periods of flexible arrangements could be extended is continuing.

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: Ongoing

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) intends to make Regulations in the coming months exempting further development from planning. 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, and in that context Retail Ireland (an IBEC affiliate), Chambers Ireland, Retail Excellence Ireland, RGDATA, the Small Firms Association, the Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association were advised on February 14th 2014 that a consultation process had commenced and that submissions in relation to a review of the planning application process with a view to making this process more efficient were sought by March 14th 2014. No proposals in relation to new planning exemptions have yet been received from the retail sector. A reminder issued on to representatives of the sector on April 29th 2014. On receipt of specific proposals from the retail sector DECLG 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 will help the owners of small and medium sized businesses to raise their awareness of the sources of finance available, increase their confidence and ability to discuss the firm's finances and make a case for securing finance for the business, increase their understanding of how banks are assessing credit applications in a non-asset backed application, and raise their awareness of how the Credit Review Office might assist the business in the event that an application for credit is declined. The programme is being promoted on an on-going basis.

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: Ongoing

The JobBridge database indicates that some 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, working and receiving training at festivals, galleries, with artists and arts

and cultural organisations in communities right across the country. While almost half of these are ongoing, a pattern is already emerging where one in three of those who complete their arts strand internships get a job.

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: Ongoing

To date in 2014, the Arts Council has committed funding to 280 individuals and 390 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: Ongoing

Work is on schedule and ongoing in this major refurbishment programme.

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: Ongoing

In June, the Irish Film Board (IFB) in conjunction with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht announced that they are seeking expressions of interest from promoters/owners/franchisees in relation to the provision in Ireland of dedicated audio visual content studio facilities including sound stages and related structures. The seeking of expressions of interest is intended to gather information from interested parties in order to

inform the Government about the potential availability of, and private sector support for, new dedicated audio visual content studio facilities additional to what is available at present.

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: Ongoing

Joint funding of €1.75million has been provided by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and UCD for the period 2014 – 2016. This funding will enable the creation of a digital archive, a data management system and an online public search interface which will be available free of charge to the public. The funding will create 3 full-time jobs and 5 internships over the next three years. The site went live at end 2013 and will continue to be developed and populated during the three year period.

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: Ongoing

Funding has been approved for 13 Irish Language publishers. The “Scríobh Leabhar” scheme for schools is underway, and discussions are ongoing regarding “Scéim na nOidí” – a mentoring scheme for new writers. 11 Drama Companies were awarded funding under the Drama Company scheme, and a festival scheme has been advertised and applications are currently being evaluated.