



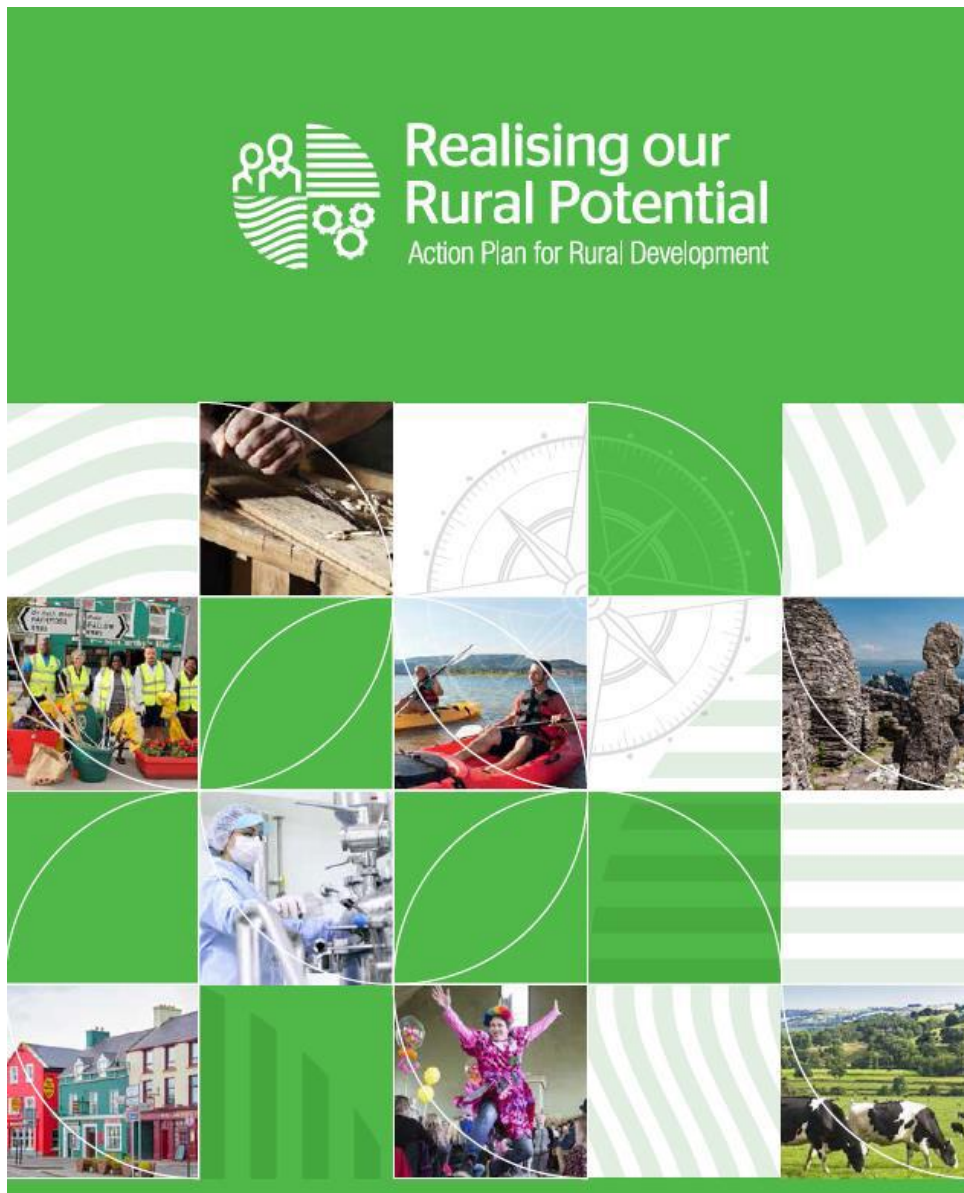
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Action Plan for Rural Development

Third Progress Report

Prepared by the Department of Rural and Community Development

**Realising our Rural Potential
Action Plan for Rural Development**



Third Progress Report

October 2018

Minister's Foreword

Rural Ireland makes a huge contribution to our economy and society. Rural areas support innovative industries of varying sizes, across a wide range of sectors, from the traditional to more modern industries. Our towns and villages are at the heart of rural communities, engaging in thriving community activity, attracting tourism, and preserving and developing our creativity and culture.



The Government is supporting rural communities across the country, through a wide range of initiatives, many of which are outlined in this Progress Report. The cross-Government approach of the Action Plan is reaping rewards, with Ireland's economy growing and unemployment falling in the regions. Key impacts include:

- Between Q1 2015 and Q2 2018 there has been an increase in numbers employed of 146,400 in regions outside of Dublin and 240,600 additional jobs nationwide.
- 281 projects were funded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2017. A further 224 projects were approved for funding of €21.2 million under the 2018 scheme. This brings to over 670 the total number of projects support by the Government under this scheme since the second half of 2016.
- A total of 1,567 allocations, with a total value of almost €46 million, were made to projects outside of Dublin under the Sports Capital Programme.
- The development of a new tourism brand for the Midland region, "Ireland's Hidden Heartlands" has been launched by Fáilte Ireland, further boosting employment in local economies.

Earlier this year Project Ireland 2040 built further on the commitments in the Action Plan for Rural Development. The National Planning Framework sets out a strategic objective of Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities. It places a focus on supporting the traditional pillars of the rural economy, diversifying rural economies and strengthening our rural communities so that they remain great places in which to live, work and raise a family.

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, launched in May 2018, further demonstrates this Government's commitment to supporting rural development. The Fund will provide an additional €1 billion investment for collaborative and complementary projects to transform our rural towns and villages and outlying rural areas. The Fund will further support rural renewal, and deliver real and lasting impact for people who live and work in rural areas throughout Ireland.

As Minister for Rural and Community Development I am committed to ensuring the measures set out in the Action Plan for Rural Development continue to be delivered and that the positive impacts of both policy measures and increased investment in rural Ireland are felt throughout the country. I look forward to continuing to working with my colleagues throughout Government to achieve this goal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Ring', written in a cursive style.

Michael Ring T.D.
Minister for Rural and Community Development

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Executive Summary

Background

Realising our Rural Potential, the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development, was launched in January 2017. The Action Plan contains 277 actions for the delivery across Government, State agencies and other bodies over the next three years to support the economic and social progress of rural Ireland.

The actions are broken down across 5 thematic Pillars as follows:

- Pillar 1: Supporting Sustainable Communities
- Pillar 2: Supporting Enterprise and Employment
- Pillar 3: Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential
- Pillar 4: Fostering Culture and Creativity in rural communities
- Pillar 5: Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity

Each action has been assigned to a lead body which is responsible for implementation of the action. Progress on the implementation of the actions is overseen by a Monitoring Committee which includes senior representatives of relevant Government Departments and key rural stakeholder interests.

Progress Reports on the implementation of the Action Plan are published twice-yearly. Following on from an interim Progress Report in May 2017, the first Progress Report was published in August 2017, followed by the second Progress Report in May 2018. These reports are available on the website of the Department of Rural and Community Development at www.drcd.gov.ie.

Summary of Progress

This Third Progress Report outlines the progress which has taken place in relation to all of the actions due for delivery between January and June 2018, or which are being implemented on an ongoing basis over the course of the three year Action Plan.

A total of 275 actions are reported on in this latest Progress Report, covering measures due for delivery between January and June 2018, or which are being implemented on an ongoing basis. Of the actions reported on, 266 have been completed or are substantially advanced, representing a delivery rate of 96%. 9 actions due for delivery were delayed. These are summarised in the following table.

Delayed Actions

The 9 actions which were not completed on schedule in the first half of 2018 were:

Action No.	Measure to be delivered	Lead Body
7	Increase delivery of small housing schemes in towns and villages as an alternative to one-off housing.	DHPLG
9	Consider the relative requirements and identify appropriate targets for an additional Rural Resettlement Initiative as a measure to facilitate wider re-utilisation of existing housing stock.	DHPLG
36	Expand provision of affordable childcare through the implementation of the Affordable Childcare Scheme, which will assist in delivering greater accessibility to childcare services across the country.	DCYA
97	Conduct a review of the REDZ initiative to measure its impact on rural communities, and to support the development of future calls for projects under the scheme.	DRCD
113	Finalise the Draft Bioenergy Plan, which will capture the potential of the bioenergy sector and help generate employment opportunities.	DCCAIE
176	Agree and implement a scheme to indemnify private land owners with regard to recreational users of their lands.	DRCD
240	Explore whether take up of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) can be improved, including through a review of the pricing and other arrangements relating to connections.	DCCAIE
251	Conduct a full review of public transport policy, including the rural transport dimension, to ensure that it meets the needs of rural communities.	DTTAS
257	Conduct a review of the small public service vehicle driver licensing framework to ensure, amongst other things, the availability of taxi/hackney services including in rural areas.	NTA

Key Developments and Case Studies

Pillar 1 – Supporting Sustainable Communities

The objective of this Pillar is to make rural Ireland a better place in which to live and work; to achieve this, we must support our rural communities. We need to enhance local services, support social cohesion and empower the people that live in our communities to ensure that their voices are heard.

Some recent key developments under this Pillar include:

1. 281 projects were supported across the country under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2017 to a value of €21.6 million. A further 224 projects were approved for funding of €21.2 million under the 2018 scheme. (Action 1, DRCD)
2. On 11 October a pilot scheme was announced to develop innovative proposals to encourage town centre living. The pilot will involve six rural towns (Boyle, Callan, Ballinrobe, Banagher, Castleblayney, Cappoquin). Each of these towns will receive funding of up to €100,000 to engage with their communities and local businesses, and arrive at practical solutions that can be delivered to achieve the objective of increasing the number of people living in rural towns. The lessons learnt through the pilot will inform future investment in rural towns and villages. (Action 2, DRCD)
3. As part of Budget 2018, additional capital funding was secured to increase the Social Housing Build Acquisition and Leasing targets under Rebuilding Ireland from 47,000 to 50,000 units, with a greater emphasis on accelerating new build activity. Budget 2019 has now secured further capital funding, to increase 2019 targets by a further 460 homes, or 10,000 units overall. Strong progress against these targets is already being made. The latest quarterly Construction Status Report (Q2 2018) includes 1,067 schemes (or phases), delivering 16,351 homes – a substantial increase on the 11,049 homes which were in the programme at the end of the same quarter last year. (Action 5, DHPLG)
4. Draft Planning and Development (Amendment) No. 2 Regulations 2018, relating to change of use of vacant commercial properties into residential units, were signed into law on 8 February 2018, bringing them into operation with effect from that date. In addition, in July the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 relating to derelict sites was signed into law, commenced upon enactment. These legislative changes will strengthen the powers of local authorities to tackle dereliction and facilitate urban regeneration. (Action 6, Action 8, DHPLG)
5. Under CLÁR 2017, €6.9 million was provided for 231 projects, providing funding for small scale infrastructural projects in disadvantaged rural areas that have experienced significant levels of depopulation. The 2018 CLÁR programme was launched on 15 March 2018. Total funding of €8.7 million was allocated to 310 projects across Measures 1-3 in June and July 2018. Further funding has been

announced under Measure 4 (Mobility and Cancer Care Transport) to the value of €1.5m in August 2018 programme (Action 10, DRCD)

6. The Heritage Council, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, manage an annual grants scheme for the conservation and repair of traditional farm buildings and related structures for farmers in the Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS) scheme. In 2018, it is anticipated that up to 59 projects, comprising 97 buildings, will be supported under the scheme. (Action 14, Heritage Council)
7. The Department of Rural and Community Development is on course to provide, by the end of 2018, €3.7 million funding for Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Information Services, as well as national organisations such as Volunteer Ireland, which aims to strengthen those organisations and foster a culture of volunteering in Ireland. (Action 19, DRCD)
8. A new pilot initiative called 'Digital Assist', which enables local post office to be used as a digital gateway for Government business, has now been launched. The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment unveiled the first "Digital Assist" unit in Ballymore Eustace on 1 October 2018 (Action 20, DCCAIE)
9. 257 GP practice units are in receipt of supports under the Rural Practice Support Framework, encompassing 347 individual GPs benefiting under the new scheme. This is a significant increase in the number of GPs benefitting from rural supports, which stood at 167 prior to the introduction of the new scheme in May 2016. (Action 24, HSE)
10. Between January and end June 2018, 9 Primary Care Centres have become operational. These are in Ballymote, Co Sligo; Ballinrobe, Co Mayo; Claremorris, Co Mayo; Westport, Co Mayo; Boyle, Co Roscommon; Wexford Town, Co Wexford; Kilcock, Co Kildare; Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary; Drogheda North, Co Louth. A further two, in Dungarvan and Tullamore, will also become operational in 2018 and will complete the delivery of the 18 Primary Care Centres. (Action 28, HSE)
11. Since 2015, annual funding of up to €50,000 has been provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development in respect of each Public Participation Network, supplemented by at least €30,000 from the relevant local authority. Funding is used for the purposes of developing the PPN including the cost of employing a Resource Worker, renting office space and other ancillary expenses incurred in carrying out activities. (Action 37, DRCD)
12. Over 1,300 projects have now been approved for LEADER funding, representing a value of over €39 million, with a further 295 projects at various stages of the approval process. In this year alone, over €20m in funding has been approved for a myriad of projects across all programme themes, demonstrating the increased level of engagement with rural communities by the LAGs. The LEADER Food initiative was launched on the 1st May 2018. An overall budget of €15 million is being made available for the artisan/small food and beverage businesses, with an initial tranche of at least €5 million in 2018. (Action 47, DRCD)

13. To date in 2018, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine has announced the award of €3.1 million in EMFF FLAG grants to 247 beneficiaries. These investments will add to the €1.8 million paid out in 2017 by the 7 FLAGs. Successful projects included investments in micro seafood enterprises, marine tourism and marine leisure projects, heritage projects, small harbour facilities, and environmental and training projects. (Action 48, DAFM)
14. The new Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) commenced on 1 January 2018 and will run until the end of 2022. It replaces SICAP 2015-2017. SICAP 2018–2022 has supported a total of 1,386 local community groups with over 5,000 interventions recorded for mid-year 2018. SICAP 2018-22 has supported 14,155 clients from target groups such as low income workers, disadvantaged young people, disadvantaged women, lone parents, the unemployed. In doing so the programme has supported lifelong learning and community education opportunities for disadvantaged communities and individuals. Over 42,000 interventions were recorded to date for mid-year 2018. The average number of interventions per Individual was 3. (Action 49, DRCD)
15. Up to June 2018 just under 2,000 recruits have attested as members of An Garda Síochána and have been assigned to mainstream duties nationwide. A further 400 recruits will attest before the end of this year. It is anticipated that the overall number of Gardai will stand at approximately 14,000 by the end of 2018. As at 31 May 2018 there were approximately 2,300 civilians employed in An Garda Síochána. The number of civilians working in An Garda Síochána continues to increase. (Action 56, DJE)
16. On 02 January 2018, the Minister for Justice and Equality announced that his Department would be providing an additional €50,000 in financial support to Community Text Alert Groups as a further measure in this Government's support to crime prevention. This is in addition to the €100,000 which the Minister announced at the National Ploughing Championships in September 2017. (Action 59, DJE)
17. Under the Seniors Alert Scheme investment of €2.68 million was made in 2017. The 2018 spend is estimated to be in the region of €6 million. The Scheme has a total of 33,217 participants as of 31 July 2018. This represents an increase of 100% (16,290 new participants) since the relaunch of the scheme in October 2017. (Action 61, DRCD)
18. Men's Sheds: The reach, scale and ambition of Sheds for Life has continued to expand in 2018. As well as the expanded offering to shed members, such as the large-scale Health Expo being arranged for the IMSA's annual conference in Cork, a major research project, run in conjunction with the Irish Research Council and the Waterford and Carlow Institutes of Technology, will commence in October 2018. (Action 67, Irish Men's Sheds Association)

Case Study: Supporting Sustainable Communities

Town and Village Renewal Scheme: Cnoc na Gaoithe Centre, Co. Clare

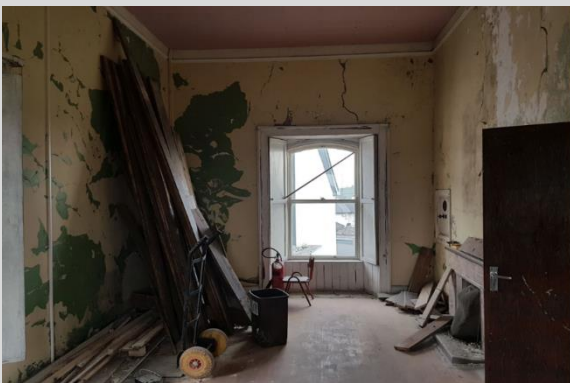
Formerly a Mercy Convent the building in Tulla, Co. Clare, now operates as a cultural centre known as Cnoc na Gaoithe (Windswept Hill), run by the renowned Comhaltas organisation. The centre opened its doors in 2012 and has thrived ever since, teaching traditional Irish music, song, dance and Irish language, along with classes teaching computer skills, French language, yoga and meditation. Top class musicians, singers and dancers have emerged from the centre since its opening, with many All-Ireland titles to their name. Cnoc na Gaoithe has taken performing groups to Europe, America and China. The centre has also hosted groups from Washington D.C., Shetland Islands, and Norway.



In order to build on the success of the existing centre and continue to attract national and international groups, students and visitors Clare County Council have expanded the services of Cnoc na Gaoithe by offering accommodation. The proposed expansion sought to turn the first floor of the building into facilities capable of hosting up to 30 visitors. This project came to fruition using the €100,000 in funding provided by the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

The images below show before and after pictures of the community room which was just one of the rooms renovated for the accommodation section. Additionally there were also bedrooms, en-suite bathrooms and a hallway renovated.

Community Room (Before Renovation)



Community Room (After Renovation)



The project was completed in June 2018 and opened its doors to the public on the 1 July 2018. This expansion of Cnoc na Gaoithe is also set to generate prosperity for the wider community of Tulla and Clare. The availability of accommodation allows the centre to offer week long workshops and also packages which combine these workshops with afternoon tours to the attractions of County Clare. Literary and wellness retreats can also now be facilitated in the centre.

Due to the increase in visitors that these activities will attract, Cnoc na Gaoithe will also become a tourist information point with stands containing information about tourist attractions all over Clare and also flyers from businesses like local restaurants, pubs and shops. It is also expected that additional employment opportunities will be created due to the influx of visitors to the area. Furthermore this refurbishment completes the restoration of a listed building in the village which is of significant historical, heritage, and conservation importance.

Case Study: Supporting Sustainable Communities

A Framework for Town Centre Renewal

Towns and villages across the country face many challenges in creating vibrant, thriving town centres. Addressing the challenges of town centre renewal was identified as a key issue by members of the Retail Consultation Forum as a means of strengthening recovery in the retail sector, both in terms of sustainable jobs growth and retail sales.

The Retail Consultation Forum is an initiative of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, established to provide a platform for structured engagement between the Retail sector and relevant Government Departments/bodies. The Retail and Town Centre Renewal Working Group, as part of the Retail Consultation Forum, was set up to examine and identify practical ways to give effect to recommendations that focused on making towns and village centres better places to work, shop and live in. The objective of the Working Group was to develop a Framework for Town Centre Renewal.

The Framework, published in 2017, sets out the key characteristics of a successful town centre and identifies both existing supports and best practice examples from around the country. The Framework includes an Action Plan for Town Centre Renewal which is intended to be a blueprint for policy makers, Local Authorities and key stakeholders in towns and villages, guiding them through the three stages of town centre renewal:

1. Stakeholder Engagement and Health Check - The first step is to prepare a database of all key stakeholders in order to engage with them as part of the Health Check. Carrying out a Health Check will give the stakeholders vital information on the key attributes and opportunities within the town, which will help inform a Town Centre Plan.
2. Establish a Town Centre Management Partnership or “town team” - A core group of key stakeholders should be brought together as a Town Team or Partnership to oversee the recommendations of the Health Check and development of a Town Centre Renewal Plan.
3. Prepare and Implement a Town Centre Plan - The Town Team needs to prepare a Town Centre Plan which sets out the vision for the town, the strategy of key objectives, priority projects and measurable goals or Key Performance Indicators. The Plan needs to be implemented, monitored, and reviewed.

The Framework also includes a number of case studies which provide practical examples of best practice from a number of towns and villages around the country which demonstrate the significant improvements that can be achieved through the dedication and hard work of the people throughout Ireland who are passionate about their town or village. A key output of the Retail Consultation Forum in 2017, the full Framework document can be downloaded at www.dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/A-Framework-for-Town-Centre-Renewal.html

A number of recommendations in the Framework document are being progressed. For example, as part of the collaborative Town Centre Health Check Training Programme, managed by The Heritage Council, pilot Town Centre Health Checks are underway in seven towns (Ballina, Cashel, Ennis, Dundalk, Monaghan, Naas, Tralee). To date Town Centre Health Check reports have been published for Tralee, and Ennis.



Pillar 2 - Supporting Enterprise and Employment

The focus of this Pillar is on supporting enterprises to start up and grow, and supporting job seekers in rural areas to access jobs. Increasing employment opportunities for people across all regions of the country is a key objective for the Government. Supporting the growth of enterprises at regional level – whether start-ups, scaling companies or FDI companies – will bring increased job opportunities for people who live in rural areas, and will increase economic activity in rural areas.

Some recent key developments under this Pillar include:

1. In 2015 the Regional Action Plan for Jobs initiative was launched, supporting a key Government ambition to create 200,000 new jobs by 2020, 135,000 of which would be outside of Dublin. Progress across the eight regions has been very positive since the launch, with an increase in numbers employed of 146,400 from Q1 2015 to Q2 2018 in regions outside of Dublin and 240,600 additional jobs nationwide. In April, Minister Humphreys requested that the Regional Action Plan for Jobs Implementation Committees in each region lead a process to 'Refresh and Refocus' their Plans to ensure their relevance out to 2020. (Action 68, DBEI)
2. In May 2017 Enterprise Ireland launched the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) with funding of up to €60m, designed to support the ambition, goals, and implementation of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs. The second call for projects from the remaining balance (approximately €30m) of the €60m budget available opened for applications on 16 April and closed on 28 June 2018. The results of the second call will be announced during Q3/Q4 2018. (Action 69, Enterprise Ireland)
3. IDA's current strategy places a large focus on winning investments for the regions. IDA have some significant announcements in regional locations across the country to date in 2018, which include 600 jobs in the Mid-West at Edwards Life Sciences, and 400 new jobs promised for Dundalk by Chinese life sciences company Wuxi Biologics. There were also two significant announcements in Longford in Avery Dennison and Red Seal Sups, bringing 300 jobs to the Midlands region. IDA will finish its current programme of regional property investment with new Advanced Buildings in Limerick, Dundalk and Waterford. There have been 344 investments approved for the regions in the three and a half years of the IDA's current five year Winning strategy. (Action 70, IDA)
4. As part of a €150m property investment programme IDA Ireland has directly completed the construction of five new Advance Building Solutions under the current building programme and has successfully secured investments for three of the buildings at Waterford, Athlone and Sligo. The two remaining buildings, Castlebar and Tralee, are being actively and extensively marketed by IDA. In 2018 IDA is continuing with the building programme with three buildings currently under construction in Limerick, Waterford and Dundalk and tenders recently received for the planned Galway. There are also buildings planned for Athlone and Carlow. (Action 71, IDA)
5. In Q1 2018, LEOs organised over 300 events during 'Local Enterprise Week' across every Local Authority area. These events included one-to-one business clinics, start your own business boot

camps, finance workshops, trading on-line seminars, data protection briefings and Brexit-themed workshops. (Action 74, LEOs)

6. The development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor is being progressed with the aim to attract investment, grow jobs and economic opportunities in the western region. AEC Officers in local authorities across the Corridor are working to further develop and progress the initiative at local level. A website www.atlanticeconomiccorridor.ie was launched in June to promote the opportunities available across the Corridor. (Action 78, DRCD)
7. In partnership with DCU Ryan Academy, Boeing, Datalex, the Irish Aviation Authority and Enterprise Ireland has successfully launched 'Propeller Shannon' an aviation/aerospace start-up accelerator programme, which will drive the development of innovative Irish and international start-up companies in the aviation sector. The initiative will provide them with the opportunity to tap into the unique aerospace ecosystem that has seen over 60 companies employ over 2,600 people in Shannon Free Zone, reaffirming its position as the largest Aviation/Aerospace cluster in Ireland. (Action 84, Shannon Group)
8. Over 150 female entrepreneurs have taken part in ACORNS to date. Many report increased sales, exports and job creation. Progress made by participants on most recent programme demonstrates these encouraging outcomes: Participants reported an increase in annualised sales of 97% over the six months of the cycle. There were nine participants that became exporters for the first time, representing an increase of 112%. There were 13 additional full-time employees and 19 additional part-time employees hired during the period. A new cycle of the ACORNS programme was launched in August 2018 by the Minister for Agriculture, Farming and Marine. (Action 94, DAFM)
9. The Audiovisual Action Plan launched in June 2018 is an industry-wide, long-term plan, under the Creative Ireland Programme, which will support the Government's ambition to enable Ireland to become a global hub for the production of Film, TV drama and animation. The Action Plan is underpinned by an Economic Assessment of the Audio-Visual Industry in Ireland, carried out by international consultants Olsberg SPI with Nordicity. (Action 95, DCHG)
10. Implementation of Ireland's Seafood Development Programme is funded under the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Operational Programme 2014-2020, which is in its third full year of operation, with 19 support schemes currently operational. Investment to end 2017 was €58 million, with expected investment of €40 million forecast for 2018. Areas being funded include Fisheries, Aquaculture, Data Collection, Control & Enforcement, Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGS), Seafood Processing and Integrated Maritime Policy. (Action 111, DAFM)
11. Following the publication of the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy in March 2018, an Implementation Group consisting of representatives from key Government Departments and State Agencies has been established to address a number of key actions for the future success of the Bioeconomy in Ireland. The Bioeconomy promotes the more efficient use of renewable resources supporting economic development and employment in rural Ireland. (Action 118, DCCAE)

12. Since the establishment of the Regional Skills Fora there is a greater focus on strengthening and establishing positive relationships between employers and the education and training system in the different regions. 2018 trends show Manufacturing, Construction and ICT continue to be the three main sectors engaged with by the Regional Skills Fora and the focus of engagement continues to be with Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (60% of interactions in 2017). Audits of skills needs within individual enterprises continue to be carried out by the Regional Skills Forum Managers in each of the nine regions as part of the Skills for Growth project. (Action 121, DES)
13. To date 11 new apprenticeships (2 in 2018) are operational. A further 10 programmes are scheduled to get underway during 2018. As of 30 June 2,280 new apprentices registered on apprenticeship programmes in 2018. A total of 14 new traineeships (4 in 2018) have now been developed with 1,184 enrolments to-date in 2018. Apprenticeships and traineeships are regionally dispersed and offer good opportunities for training and employment in the regions. (Action 122, DES)
14. In April 2018, Tech Week, Ireland's national festival of technology aimed at students, parents and the public, took place all over Ireland. Over 120,000 students took part in a range of fun activities, including the finals of several national Tech Week events. (Action 125, SFI)
15. In the first half of 2018, SFI funded five awards for research proposals in Smart Agriculture/ Precision Agriculture to improve farm management and increase quality of life for farmers in rural Ireland. The combined value of these five awards was greater than €5 million. (Action 126, SFI)
16. During Q1 2018, 1,103 training places were provided to industry professionals through the ConnectEd Programme which aims to provide businesses and professionals working with the agri-food sector structured access to Teagasc research, education, knowledge resources and online tools. Eleven regional economic briefings were delivered across the country during February and March. (Action 130, Teagasc)
17. The Opt-In portal, aimed at helping rural dwellers find the means and skills necessary to increase their income generating options, is now live and has over 300 people registered to receive information. The ETBs and LEOs have agreed automated update of the Opt-in Website from their respective websites and the portal is also being used by LEADER, Skillnets and Teagasc to promote their respective courses. (Action 133, DAFM)
18. In July, the Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2018 was launched. Funding of almost €40 million was announced for 45 measures across 10 Departments and State Agencies. The measures provide supports for economically, educationally and socially disadvantaged people and people with disabilities in communities across the country. (Action 138, DRCD)

Case Study: Supporting Enterprise and Employment

Westire Technologies Teo continue to brighten our nights!

Westire Technologies Teo, based in the idyllic northwest Mayo Gaeltacht town of Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), design and manufacture photocells and photoelectric sensors that control streetlights. From this rural base on the Wild Atlantic Way, the company has invented and patented a ground-breaking technology in the streetlighting control space.

Westire Technology Limited, originally known as SELC IRELAND, was established in 1982 by Seán Noone with the support of Údarás na Gaeltachta. It was, and continues to be, an important employer in this rural Gaeltacht town which currently supports over 32 jobs in the area.



Seán, an astute electronic engineer and successful inventor, was inspired to develop the light sensor device now used on street lights and soon after setting up SELC, Seán and his team launched a ground-breaking Silicon Eye ambient light sensor. It became the industry standard globally as it switched on streetlights accurately and this led to energy efficiency and energy savings on street lights of up to 40%. This Gaeltacht company have brought a new meaning to street lighting controls, pioneering game-changing technologies such as: Silicon Eye Response Ambient Light Detectors, RAT Switching, Candelon PLC Communications, Smart HID Ballasts, Dimmable Electronic Ballasts and Astro Time Clocks.

With over 35 years' experience in the provision of photocell street lighting technologies, Westire Technologies are supplying Utilities, Lighting Luminaire OEM's, and Municipalities throughout Europe, North America, Canada & South Africa.

Údarás na Gaeltachta have supported Westire Technologies Teo and its predecessors every step of this inspirational journey, in a partnership that has supported enterprise and employment in the local area by encouraging innovation and skills development at every juncture.

Westire Technologies are committed to Research and Development and rely on the creative and diverse global team that they have assembled over the years to continue breaking new ground in the provision of world-class smart street light and smart city control products. From one of Ireland's most westerly points the world can look forward to continuous new breakthroughs in green technology development and in the Smart City green technology space.

So for anyone on a winter's evening stroll on a street lit path anywhere in the world it was most likely ground-breaking technology from the Béal an Mhuirthead Gaeltacht area that turned on the light for you!

Case Study: Supporting Enterprise and Employment

ACORNS Programme

The ACORNS programme, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, addresses the skills, enterprise and capability gaps of rural start-up female entrepreneurs. The objective of ACORNS is to provide female entrepreneurs with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations. ACORNS (www.acorns.ie) is now in its fourth year, the latest round of the programme which will run from October 2018 to April 2019. In the course of the first three years, over 150 early stage female entrepreneurs were supported by ACORNS.

ACORNS 1: 43 entrepreneurs who participated in the pilot programme in 2016 availed of the opportunity to participate in a further development phase. The progress of these 43 entrepreneurs since their first involvement in ACORNS is very impressive. Their combined sales increased by just over €2million over the 15 months to the end of 2016, to €4 million (increase of 103%). The number of exporters increased to 11. Their combined employment increased over the 15 months by just over a third, to 107.



ACORNS 2: 55 participants completed ACORNS 2, which ran from October 2016 to April 2017. At the end of the cycle, 47 of the businesses were trading, including 9 that had started to generate sales for the first time during the cycle. Among those trading, there was a reported 21% increase in turnover over the six month cycle. 8 participants were already exporting before the start of the cycle, 3 more have since started to export.

ACORNS 3: Progress made by participants on this programme, which ran from October 2017 to April 2018, demonstrates these encouraging outcomes:

- Participants reported an increase in annualised sales of 97% over the six months of the cycle.
- There were nine participants that became exporters for the first time, representing an increase of 112%.
- There were 13 additional fulltime employees and 19 additional part-time employees hired during the period.

Past participants of ACORNS are also offered the opportunity to participate in a further development phase and to join the ACORNS Community, to ensure they continue to reap the benefits of the programme and of the valuable connections they have made through broadening their support network.

ACORNS has been selected to represent Ireland in the European Enterprise Awards 2018, *investing in entrepreneurial skills*.

"An invaluable programme which has opened my eyes to several new paths my business can now take. I couldn't recommend ACORNS enough".

GERALDINE BYRNE, MEDISKIN



ACORNS
Accelerating the Creation Of
Rural Nascent Start-ups

Pillar 3 - Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential

Tourism is a key driver of economic development in rural Ireland and this Pillar of the Action Plan aims to maximise the potential of the sector for the benefit of rural communities. In 2015, 85% of visitors to Ireland visited at least one region outside Dublin. With the revenue this generates in the regions, tourism has a significant role to play in supporting sustainable jobs and growth in rural areas and will be supported through targeted marketing initiatives and co-ordinated approaches at national and local level.

Some recent key developments under this Pillar include:

1. Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, Fáilte Ireland's new experience brand for the Midland's region, campaign was launched in July 2018. An initial €2m has been allocated to start the development stage of the brand, with further funding to follow. This first round of investment will help to develop visitor experiences, support industry development and develop marketing campaigns for the region. (Action 153, Fáilte Ireland)
2. In January 2018, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland launched a joint initiative, specially designed to boost tourist numbers from Britain to the Wild Atlantic Way. A €1.35 million marketing campaign in Britain by Tourism Ireland is being complemented by a Fáilte Ireland €500,000 programme to support businesses along the Wild Atlantic Way to position themselves to benefit from the campaign, as well as to boost its own marketing campaigns in Northern Ireland. (Action 157, Tourism Ireland)
3. The Strategy for the future development of National and Regional Greenways was launched on 20 July 2018. The Strategy sets out how National and Regional Greenways in Ireland should be planned and constructed and is backed by a fund of €53m for the years 2019 to 2021. (Action 167, DTTAS)
4. The Royal Canal Blueway in Mullingar was officially launched in July. Blueway maps and promotional material for the Royal Canal Blueway in Mullingar have been created. An activity provider now operates from the Mullingar Blueway Hub, offering paddling and cycling facilities for members of the public. (Action 168, DCHG)
5. An indicative budget of €12 million is available to successful projects under the 2018 Outdoor Recreation Scheme. A total of 128 applications were approved for funding of €1.8 million under Measure 1 (Small Scale Maintenance/Promotion and Marketing) in September 2018. Successful projects under Measures 2 and 3 will be announced later in the year. (Action 170, DRCD)
6. Under the Structures at Risk Fund funding of €1.3 million is being provided in 2018 in respect of 76 projects. (Action 193, DCHG)
7. The Historic Towns Initiative was launched by the Heritage Council in early 2018 and capital funding totalling €1m has been made available under this Initiative. Projects in Youghal (Co. Cork), Carrick on Suir (Co. Tipperary), Kells (Co. Meath), Ballinrobe (Co. Mayo), Portlaoise (Co. Laois) and Kilmallock (Co. Limerick), have been offered a total of €1 million in capital funding. Works include conservation, public realm improvements and street scape conservation. (Action 196, Heritage Council)

Case Study: Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

Following on from the highly successful worldwide marketing of the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East, comes Fáilte Ireland's latest experience brand for the Midland's region, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The brand taps into the growing demand for soft activity holidays, offering visitors the chance to relax with friends and family, visit less well known areas, and experience nature at their own pace through a range of activities including walking, cycling, fishing, and boating. The Midlands region has an abundance of heritage sites and rich natural assets including its many lakes, walkways, and blueways, offering numerous options to explore the area.

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands covers the 'heart' of the country, from Leitrim down to East Clare and extending through Longford, Roscommon, East Galway, as well as parts of Westmeath, Cavan, North Tipperary and Offaly. The two central spines of the region are the River Shannon and the Beara Breifne Way, Ireland's longest inland walking and cycling trail, following the route taken by Gaelic armies during the early 17th century.



Activities available range from steering a cruiser along the Shannon, water sports and angling, to pony trekking and cycling trails that wind around the towns and small villages dotted along the Shannon and the Beara Breifne Way. There are castles, stately homes, award-winning pubs and restaurants, lakes, beautiful forests and even a mine to visit.

There is already considerable work taking place on the ground. A Shannon Master Plan is currently being developed by Waterways Ireland in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, to drive tourism opportunities both on and off the water and in the towns surrounding it. Work is also underway on an Activation Master Plan for the Beara Breifne Way, a long-distance route spanning the entire region that is another key asset for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and where a compelling walking and cycling trail experience will be developed to international standards. This Plan will see a number of towns along the route identified as walking hubs to support this ambition and drive visitors into nearby areas.

While these key work strands will be central to Fáilte Ireland activity plans for 2019 and beyond, other plans also include the development of a food networks and trails, highlighting the local food scene and giving rise to further tourism and enterprise potential.

Visitors can explore all that Ireland's Hidden Heartlands has to offer through the website www.irelandshiddenheartlands.discoverireland.ie

Case Study: Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme: Royal Canal Greenway

The final section of the Royal Canal Greenway in Co. Longford was completed at the start of 2018, and officially opened by Minister Michael Ring in February. The 6km stretch of greenway between Ballymahon and Killashee was built by Longford County Council using €525,000 allocated from the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.



250 projects with a value of €13.6m were approved under the 2017 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme to improve walking trails, greenways and other recreational amenities. Over €23 million has been allocated to almost 500 projects under this scheme since 2016.

With the opening of the Longford Greenway, there is now a continuous greenway along the Royal Canal all the way through counties Longford and Westmeath. This stretch of the Royal Canal Greenway provides an off-road cycling and walking route which will serve as a wonderful local amenity and encourage outdoor leisure activity within Co. Longford. It will also benefit tourism in the region and help attract visitors to the Longford area.

Opening the final section of the Royal Canal Greenway, Minister Michael Ring T.D. commented “According to Fáilte Ireland Tourism Facts 2016 over 2.5 million visitors engaged in either walking/cross country walking or cycling when they visited Ireland in 2016. This coupled with the increasing use of such facilities by our own population reinforces the importance of facilities such as the Royal Canal Greenway.”

On 20 July 2018 the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross and Minister of State for Tourism and Sport Brendan Griffin, launched the *Strategy for the future development of National and Regional Greenways* which sets out how National and Regional Greenways in Ireland should be planned and constructed and is backed by a fund of €53m for the years 2019 to 2021.

Pillar 4 - Fostering Culture and Creativity in Rural Communities

Many rural communities all over Ireland have a thriving arts scene and it is important that facilities and assets in rural areas are enhanced to strengthen the social fabric of rural life. This Pillar aims to increase access to the arts and to develop culture and creativity in rural communities. The Irish language is also a vital part of our culture and heritage and is a key resource in Gaeltacht communities.

Some recent key developments under this Pillar include:

1. A total of €138,950 has been awarded to 15 projects in regional museums across the country under the Regional Museum Exhibition Scheme 2018 ensuring access to our cultural heritage for rural communities. (Action 204, DCHG)
2. A Culture and Creativity Plan in every county was included as part of the Creative Ireland programme. The plans were launched on 12 September 2018. (Action 211, LAs)
3. The Creative Schools initiative aims to put the arts and creativity at the heart of children and young people's lives by establishing a range of collaborative opportunities between schools and cultural organisations. The initiative is now taking place as a pilot in 150 schools, starting in September 2018, meaning more rural schools engaging with creativity in their school life and in the community. (Action 219, Arts Council)
4. The allocation for the Irish-Language Assistants Scheme increased by €230,000 to €1.02m in relation to the 2018/19 school year to facilitate the provision of language assistants in up to 136 schools throughout the Gaeltacht. The allocation for the Summer Camps Scheme increased by €30,000 in 2018 to €330,000 to facilitate over 200 summer camps for young people throughout the Gaeltacht in summer 2018. (Action 224, DCHG)
5. 46 Festivals were funded under the Foras na Gaeilge Festivals Scheme with a budget of €116,379 approved. Applications under the Drama Scheme were approved in May 2018, with 18 Companies funded and a budget of €208,896 approved. (Action 229, Foras na Gaeilge)
6. Under Foras na Gaeilge Schemes, which create capacity building for young people in the Irish language community such as summer camps and special youth events, 86 Summer Camps were completed during Summer 2018 and 85 Youth Event Schemes approved for 2018/2019 (September to June). (Action 230, Foras na Gaeilge)
7. Under the Techspace as Gaeilge Initiative, the inaugural TechFéile event was held in Limerick School of Art and Design in April and the feedback from participants was very positive. Capital funding is provided to schools and youth groups to facilitate the purchase of equipment. STEM training will be provided by Camara Ireland in September/October in Kerry and Cork to teachers and youth club leaders. (Action 225, DCHG)

Creative Schools



Creative Youth, A Plan to Enable the Creative Potential of Every Child and Young Person, was published in December 2017 as part of the Creative Ireland Programme. The Creative Youth Plan aims to give every child practical access to tuition, experience and participation in art, music, drama and coding by 2022.

The implementation stage of the five-year plan incorporates a number of actions commencing in 2018-2019. These include piloting Scoileanna Ildánaca/Creative Schools; piloting a Creative Clusters Schools Scheme to generate creative cultural and artistic projects; and developing creativity programmes for young people in disadvantaged communities.

Creative Schools is one of the key initiatives in the Plan and is led by the Arts Council in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Creative Schools initiative aims to put the arts and creativity at the heart of children and young people's lives by establishing a range of collaborative opportunities between schools and cultural organisations. Schools will be partnered with a Creative Associate, who will support them in planning and implementing a creative programme for their school. The long term aim is for every school to be supported to fully embrace the arts and creativity.

Following receipt of applications from over 400 schools across the country, 150 schools have been selected to participate in the Creative Schools pilot programme beginning in September 2018. These include primary, secondary, special, DEIS and co-educational rural urban, single-sex and Irish-language medium schools, as well as Youthreach centres.

Case Study: Fostering Culture and Creativity in Rural Communities

Local history comes to life online - The Irish Community Archive Network

The National Museum of Ireland has partnered with the Creative Ireland Programme to encourage communities across the country to document and digitally safeguard the irreplaceable artefacts of their local heritage. The Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) works with community volunteer groups to create online digital archives that record and reflect each locality's particular history, heritage and culture.

The strength of a community can often depend on how connected its people feel to it. With iCAN, active citizenship is bolstered and tangible creative engagement with cultural heritage grows. From old photographs to birth certs, children's toys to musical instruments, not to mention the stories people passed down from generation to generation, all of this contributes to the jigsaw that is a community's story. Community archives encourage all to collaborate with, and take ownership over these local collections.

Getting involved enables the community itself to curate its story onto custom-built 'community archive' websites, ensuring all manner of precious artefacts and memories are safely stored online for future generations and for the global Irish diaspora.



'Community archiving' is a relatively recent practice in Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland is the first National Cultural Institution to facilitate a project of this kind. With 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage, this is a timely opportunity to begin the process of documenting local history and heritage.

The project is taking place right across the country and will offer unprecedented insight into the life and history of individual Irish communities. In addition to learning about their history and heritage the initiative will get people learning new skills and connecting with others within their community and beyond.

The website www.ouririshheritage.org offers groups, schools or individuals with an interest in their local history and heritage an opportunity to contribute stories, memories, snapshots, research and observations of life around the country. The archive on the website contains information submitted by people from Ireland and abroad, with many of the photos, records, testimonies and memories having never before been published.

Pillar 5 - Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity

The objective of this Pillar is to improve the connectivity of rural communities through improved broadband connection, improved transport links, and by reducing the risk of flooding in vulnerable areas.

Some recent key developments under this Pillar include:

1. The Government's National Broadband Plan aims to ensure high speed broadband access to all premises in Ireland, regardless of location. In 2012, approximately 700,000 or 30% of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland had access to high speed broadband. As of Q2 2018, this has risen to over 7 out of 10 of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland have access to high speed broadband. This includes 175,000 premises passed as of Q2 2018 as part of in the eir rollout of high speed broadband to 300,000 rural premises. (Action 232, DCCAE)
2. So far this year, DRCD has hosted five Regional Action Group (RAG) meetings. These meetings allow DRCD, DCCAE and other stakeholders to meet with Broadband Officers and other Local Authority personnel. The RAGs also provide a networking opportunity for Broadband Officers leading to the sharing of experiences, innovation, planning and co-ordination. (Action 235, LAs & DRCD)
3. DRCD has engaged the services of Indecon Economic Consultants to research and produce local Digital Readiness Assessments for all local authorities. These Assessments provide local authorities with the quantitative data needed to identify where their digital strengths and weaknesses are when preparing their Digital Strategies which are due to be completed by year end. (Action 236, DRCD)
4. Between January 2017 and June 2018, over 29,000 citizens, including 3,500 unemployed people, received training under the Digital Skills Training Programme. 28% of participants have stated that the skills learned will improve their job prospects and 60% of all trainees now feel competent to use online government services. (Action 237, DCCAE)
5. ComReg is in the process of developing a national 'coverage map' to help mobile phone users understand the quality and extent of coverage across Ireland. This map will show coverage across 2G, 3G and 4G platforms for all networks. (Action 245, COMREG)
6. DRCD and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment are actively engaged with local authorities and mobile phone operators to address the issue of mobile phone blackspots. Specific measures in progress include: a mapping exercise to identify priority mobile phone blackspots and identify any infrastructure that could potentially be used to improve mobile coverage in these blackspot areas. (Action 246, DCCAE)
7. The second annual Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce was held on 12 October. The event brought together key stakeholders to engage in open dialogue, to discuss issues impacting on

broadband and mobile phone coverage and to identify solutions to those challenges in order to enhance and improve services. (Action 247, DRCD)

8. A programme of island infrastructure works totalling over €1 million, has been agreed between the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and relevant local authorities, for 2018. Project Ireland 2040 specifically refers to capital investment for marine infrastructure at Inis Oírr and Inis Meáin, County Galway and for Toraigh, County Donegal. This will greatly benefit those islands. (Action 250, DCHG)
9. New evening and night time Local Link Services were officially launched in Tipperary and Kerry in June 2018. Following a funding call, all 17 Local Link companies have been awarded funding to deliver a total of 64 new evening services nationally. These services will run until December 2018 on a pilot basis. (Action 252, NTA)
10. The 2018 Local Improvement Scheme, which covers improvement works on small private/non-public roads, was launched in February, with an indicative allocation of €10.8 million. A further €10 million in funding was announced in October. In total, since the Scheme was re-launched in 2017 over €37 million has been allocated, and over 1,100 individual roads have benefited. (Action 259, DRCD)
11. €17 million in additional capital funding was secured for the Regional Airports Programme as part of last year's Review of the Capital Plan, which will be available in the period 2019 to 2021. €21.7 million is being provided in 2019, an increase of €8 million over 2018. Funding under the Regional Airports Programme helps to support capital investments and operational aid in the areas of safety and security at the airports, as well as PSO air services between Dublin/Donnegal and Dublin/Kerry. (Action 260, DTTAS)
12. The Government's National Development Plan 2018–2027 includes a total funding allocation of €940 million over the lifetime of the Plan to underpin the delivery of the existing flood relief capital works programme and additional recommended prioritised flood relief schemes. The annual allocation for flood defence measures will increase to €100 million by 2021 demonstrating the priority placed by the Government on addressing Ireland's flood risk. (Action 264, OPW)
13. An interagency taskforce to develop measures to revitalise the Uíbh Ráthaigh Gaeltacht area in Co. Kerry was established in September 2017 and has held a number of meetings to date. As part of research, a survey of those who have left the South Kerry area in the last 10 years has been completed. The Taskforce is finalising a comprehensive action plan for publication, and exploring funding options to resource the implementation of the action plan. (Action 277, Údarás na Gaeltachta)

Case Study: Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity

Local Link

The National Transport Authority manages the Rural Transport Programme now operating under the 'Local Link' brand, and funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. 17 Local Link Offices (Transport Co-ordination Units) around the country manage the delivery of the Local Link services on behalf of the NTA, including approximately 1,000 Public Bus Services in local and rural areas. During 2017 1.9 million passenger journeys were completed, these figures include 0.2 million passengers who required assistance. Over 400 private operators provide the services using almost 900 drivers. The funding allocation for Local Link services for 2018 is €14.9 million.



In June 2018 Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Shane Ross officially launched the nationwide new evening Local Link services. The new services are aimed at addressing unmet transport needs and social isolation in rural areas, and will run until December 2018 on a pilot basis.

A total of 65 additional services were approved for funding, throughout the country, covering all 17 Local Link areas. The new services in Kerry cover two loops from the outskirts of Listowel Town into the town centre, and will operate on Friday nights, offering door to door pick-ups for customers who wish to access services and amenities in the town. Local Link Kerry already co-ordinates 160 routes in rural Kerry, the weekend service is an extension of the existing network used by 150,000 passengers a year in the county.

In July 2018 Donegal Local Link and Fáilte Ireland announced a collaborative partnership aimed at improving public transport links between key attractions, while also promoting Local Link services on a county level. Speaking at the launch, Minister of State Brendan Griffin said: "In addition to providing a local transport service, the new routes resulting from this partnership will greatly enhance visitors' ability to access a range of tourism attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way, thus enhancing the tourist experience and further growing the brand".

Case Study: Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity

gteic Gréasán Digiteach na Gaeltachta

gteic Gréasán Digiteach na Gaeltachta is a network of 31 innovation & digital hubs with high speed broadband connectivity to be developed by Údarás na Gaeltachta in locations throughout Ireland's Gaeltacht Area. The innovation hubs are to be dotted along the majestic Wild Atlantic Way in Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry and Cork in addition to Waterford and Meath in Ireland's Ancient East. Six Gaeltacht islands and seven non-Gaeltacht islands also form part of this growing digital ecosystem, which is providing vital infrastructure and facilitating worldwide connectivity to these rural areas.



Four hubs have been opened to date in Gaoth Dobhair in Co. Donegal, Béal an Mhuirthead in Co. Mayo, An Cheathrú Rua (pictured) in Co. Galway and the Mol Teic/Dingle hub in Daingean Uí Chúis in Co. Kerry. It is expected that a further two *gteic* hubs will be completed and welcoming customers in Na Forbacha and Carna in Co. Galway by the end of 2018.

The *gteic* digital hubs will provide a vibrant network of high speed broadband facilities in rural Gaeltacht areas to stimulate job creation, to assist remote working, to encourage and enable the return of Diaspóra na Gaeltachta, to facilitate concept development and new business and to develop a community of hubs where the unique Gaeltacht culture drives creativity and innovation.

gteic hubs include hot desk and shared space facilities for remote workers and e-workers in addition, depending on location, to fully equipped office spaces and incubation units with high speed internet connectivity to facilitate innovation and concept development.

These developments will give the Gaeltacht community, both at home and abroad, an opportunity to return to or live in their home area by providing remote working opportunities at hot desks, co-working spaces or private offices at these hubs. This in turn will support, bolster and assist these unique language communities and help them to face the challenges of rural depopulation.



The official opening of *gteic*@An Cheathrú Rua in June 2018

This growing digital ecosystem is providing an excellent opportunity for new technology companies to establish or locate themselves in the rural areas which encompass the Gaeltacht and for their employees to enjoy the excellent work-life balance that these picturesque areas can offer.

Progress Status of Actions

The table below provides a brief update on the status of individual Actions.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update	
Pillar 1 – Supporting Sustainable Communities					
1	Support over 600 towns and villages through an enhanced Town and Village Renewal Scheme, with funding of up to €12 million per annum, to support their revitalisation, boost their potential to support increased economic activity and improve the living and working environment of rural dwellers.	DRCD	2017-2019	In progress	281 projects were supported across the country under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2017 to a value of €21.6m. A further 224 projects were approved for funding of €21.2m under the 2018 scheme.
2	Develop and pilot an initiative to encourage increased residential occupancy in town and village centres.	DRCD	Q3 2017	In progress	On 11 October a pilot scheme was announced to develop innovative proposals to encourage town centre living. The pilot will involve six rural towns (Boyle, Callan, Ballinrobe, Banagher, Castleblayney, Cappoquin). Each of these towns will receive funding of up to €100,000 to engage with their communities and local businesses, and arrive at practical solutions that can be delivered to achieve the objective of increasing the number of people living in rural towns. The lessons learnt through the pilot will inform future investment in rural towns and villages.
3	Complementing the Town & Village Renewal Scheme, roll out the National Town Centre Health Check Programme in selected rural towns across Ireland to maximise the contribution of important facilities and assets within rural towns, in particular heritage resources.	DCHG / Heritage Council	Q2 2017	In progress	The surveying of vacancy levels and compilation of reliable baseline data is an important action to support reusing empty buildings in Irish Town Centres. Seven Town Centres and associated County Councils, working alongside Ireland’s major 3rd level Education Institutes, e.g. UCD and QUB, took part in the Pilot Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Training (CTCHC) Programme during 2017. This programme was expanded in 2018 and supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework, various Government public policies and strategies, e.g. Rebuilding Ireland, and Ireland’s international obligations in relation to meeting climate change targets. The CTCHC Training Programme has continued to expand, e.g. in 2018 the focus was on Border Towns and Towns along the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC).
4	Finalise and implement the recommendations of the Framework for Town Centre Revival to assist with the regeneration of rural towns.	DBEI	2017-2019	Completed	The Framework, launched in April 2017, is available as a reference document for stakeholders and town groups across the country.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update	
5	As part of Rebuilding Ireland, the Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness, support all local authorities to respond to the needs of their communities and deliver 47,000 new social homes which should also stimulate construction and other economic activities on a local and regional basis.	DHPLG	2017-2021	In progress	As part of Budget 2018, additional capital funding was secured to increase the Social Housing Build Acquisition and Leasing targets under Rebuilding Ireland from 47,000 to 50,000 units, with a greater emphasis on accelerating new build activity. Budget 2019 has now secured further capital funding for 2019, to increase 2019 targets by a further 460 homes, or 10,000 units overall. Strong progress against these targets is already being made. The latest quarterly Construction Status Report (Q2 2018) includes 1,067 schemes (or phases), delivering 16,351 homes – a very substantial increase on the 11,049 homes which were in the programme at the end of the same quarter last year. (Action 5, DHPLG)
6	Review planning legislation to allow the change of use of vacant commercial properties in cities, towns and villages, including vacant or under-utilised areas over ground floor premises, into residential units without having to go through the planning process.	DHPLG	2017	Completed	Draft Planning and Development (Amendment) No. 2 Regulations 2018, were laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas on 13 December 2017 and referred by both Houses to the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Housing, Planning and Local Government for its consideration in early 2018. The Minister signed the regulations on 8 February 2018, to bring them into operation with effect from that date.
7	Increase delivery of small housing schemes in towns and villages as an alternative to one-off housing.	DHPLG	2017	Delayed	While this action is behind the schedule originally envisaged, the National Planning Framework, published with the National Development Plan under Project Ireland 2040, sets out a National Policy Objective (No 18(b)) in Chapter 5 on rural development, which states: “Develop a programme for ‘new homes in small towns and villages’ with local authorities, public infrastructure agencies such as Irish Water and local communities to provide serviced sites with appropriate infrastructure to attract people to build their own homes and live in small towns and villages”.
8	Based on an examination by the Working Group on Urban Renewal, review the Derelict Sites Legislation with a view to assisting in the revitalisation of towns and villages.	DHPLG	Q4 2017	Completed	In July the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 was signed by the President with section 59, regarding the derelict sites levy, commenced upon enactment. Section 59 amends the 1990 Derelict Sites Act to provide for an increase in the derelict sites levy from 3% to 7% (of the market valuation of relevant sites with effect from January 2020 in respect of sites included on local authority derelict sites registers in 2019). This provision will strengthen the powers of local authorities to tackle dereliction and facilitate urban regeneration.
9	Consider the relative requirements and identify appropriate targets for an additional Rural Resettlement Initiative as a measure to facilitate wider re-utilisation of existing housing stock.	DHPLG	2017	Delayed	Rural Resettlement Initiative had not been progressed. In relation to social housing, it is possible already for people to move between LAs under the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme. DHPLG is also examining other possible additional ways to facilitate households,

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update	
				who are qualified for social housing, and who may wish to relocate to rural areas.	
10	Launch a new phase of the CLÁR Programme in 2017, with funding of €5m, to support small infrastructural projects in rural areas experiencing depopulations.	DRCD	2017	Completed	310 projects have been funded to a value of €8.7m so far in the 2018 CLÁR programme under Measures 1 – 3 (Schools/Community Safety, Play Areas/First Response). Further funding has been announced under Measure 4 (Mobility and Cancer Care Transport) to the value of €1.5m in August 2018.
11	Expand the Tidy Towns Competition with a view to increasing the level of support available to applicants and the addition of a number of new categories and/or elements to the competition.	DRCD	2017-2019	Completed	A consultation process was conducted in Q4 2017 and Q1 2018 to review the competition. On foot of this some changes were made to the application process for 2018. A €1.4 million grant scheme was announced in December 2017 to mark the 60th anniversary of the SuperValu Tidy Towns competition, which enabled each local committee to apply for a grant of between €1,000 and €4,000 to support their work. Over 900 Tidy Towns committees availed of the grant. 884 committees applied to enter the 2018 competition, up from 871 in 2017. A further grant of €1.4 million was announced for Tidy Towns committees in September 2018.
12	Provide support for An Taisce National Spring Clean to heighten awareness of litter and waste issues and recycle and reuse where possible.	DCCAÉ	Ongoing	In progress	The 2018 National Spring Clean took place in April 2018. Preparations for the 2019 National Spring Clean will commence in due course.
13	Support a built heritage investment scheme of an estimated €6m between 2017 and 2019, which supports employment of skilled and experienced craft workers, tradespeople and conservation professionals to invest in and assist in the conservation and re-use of heritage	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	Following on the investment of €3.2m in under the scheme in 2017, the 2018 scheme was launched in December 2017 and €2 million was allocated to 370 projects. Over €11.5 million of private funding was leveraged. Local Authorities will submit details of total days of employment created by these projects in November.
14	Implement the GLAS Traditional Farm buildings grant scheme to help in the conservation of traditional farm outbuildings as a support to rural communities.	Heritage Council	2017-2019	In progress	Following on from the 2017 scheme which supported 63 projects, in 2018 it is anticipated that up to 59 projects, comprising 97 buildings will be supported under the scheme.
15	Make use of the new RAPID programme to provide small scale seed financing for capital and small scale infrastructure projects of a regenerative nature in disadvantaged areas, including provincial towns.	DRCD	2017	Completed	Following a review of RAPID and the Communities Facilities Scheme, the schemes were amalgamated to create the Community Enhancement Programme (CEP). The programme launched in May 2018 and is being administered by Local Community Development Committees under the remit of the Local Authorities (LAs). Each LA receives a baseline amount of €125k from the €4.5m allocation, with the remaining monies allocated proportionate to the disadvantage levels (60%) and population (40%), in each LA area.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update	
				Funding applications were reviewed by the LCDs to ensure eligibility and complementarity with the relevant Local Economic and Community Plan.	
16	Implement the Health & Safety Authority's Farm Safety Action Plan 2016–2018, with a focus on high risk activities such as tractor and machinery use, livestock handling, and forestry and timber work on farms, as well as the development of new ways of improving farmer skill levels, particularly around risk identification and management. Measures will include the promotion of farm safety through targeted awareness campaigns, farm inspections and training courses.	HSA	2017-2018	In progress	Significant engagement has been undertaken in relation to this measure, including TV/Radio/Press ads, targeted safety awareness campaigns on Forestry, animal handling and tractor skills, Farm inspections, dedicated Farm Safety Executive, training days on the Farm Safety Code, a dedicated online e-learning environment and demonstrations at industry events such as the Tullamore show and National Ploughing Championships. Over 1,200 farm safety visits have been carried out to date in 2018.
17	Prioritise farm safety through knowledge transfer and inclusion of farm safety measures through knowledge transfer schemes.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	The Knowledge Transfer (KT) initiative launched in summer 2016 and over 19,000 farmer participants have now been approved to participate in some 1200 KT Groups across six farming sectors. Farmers are required to attend Group meetings which enable them to interact with and learn from each other. Farmers also have to complete a Farm Improvement Plan, covering a range of issues from farm safety to grassland management.
18	Provide support for an estimated 1,700 small-scale environmental projects under the Local Agenda 21 Environmental Partnership Fund to promote sustainable development at local level.	DCCA	2017-2019	In progress	The 2017 scheme supported over 750 small scale local environmental project. The 2018 Scheme has been finalised. Some 880 local projects will be supported in 2018. The 2019 Scheme will launch in April/May 2019.
19	Provide funding for Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Information Services, as well as national organisations such as Volunteer Ireland, which aims to strengthen those organisations and foster a culture of volunteering in Ireland, including to the benefit of rural communities and community-based organisations.	DRCD	Ongoing	In progress	The Department is on course to provide €3.47 million funding by the end of 2018. This is up on 2017 levels, when the Department provided €3.41 million to these bodies.
20	Oversee and monitor the implementation of actions to support the Post Office Network, arising out of the report of the Post Office Renewal Board and the Post Office Hub Working Group.	DCCA	Ongoing	In progress	An Post is continuing to implement a comprehensive strategic plan which has seen the company split into two distinct business units, An Post Mails and Parcels and An Post Retail. Enhanced banking services are also now available through the post office network with the smart bank account. A new pilot initiative called "Digital Assist" which will seek to use the local post office as a digital gateway for Government business, was launched in September. The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				Environment unveiled the first “Digital Assist” unit in Ballymore Eustace on 28 September 2018.
21	Continue to support the use of rural post offices for the delivery of payment services such as social welfare payments.	DEASP	Ongoing	In progress DEASP has given effect to this commitment by renewing its cash services contract with An Post for another year. This contract specifies that outlets providing welfare payments must be available within 15 km of 95% of customers in a rural area.
22	Develop a strategy for the growth and development of the credit union sector, which is an important resource in rural Ireland, and ensure that credit unions benefit from regulatory support, in order to respond to the needs of a changing economy.	DoF	Ongoing	In progress Credit Unions have a key role to play in providing access to credit and other important services in local communities throughout the country. Credit unions are developing a wider range of lending initiatives aimed at the diverse needs of their members. The Government has a clear policy to support the strategic growth and development of credit unions delivering the comprehensive recommendations set out in the Commission on Credit Unions Report of 2012 and the Credit Union Advisory Committee (CUAC) report of 2016. An implementation group is overseeing and monitoring implementation of the recommendations. The term of the Group has been extended to end 2018 to allow sufficient time for the current work programme to be completed in full.
23	Investigate the potential of the German Sparkassen model and the Kiwibank model for the development of local public banks that operate in defined regions.	DRCD	2017	Completed A report on the assessment of the public banking model in an Irish context was published in July 2018. On foot of the conclusions of the report, the Department of Finance has committed to commissioning an independent external evaluation of other possible ways in which the public banking concept could be promoted in Ireland.
24	Increase the number of GPs in rural areas by 2019 through the implementation of the agreement reached with the IMO on rural GP practices, which covers changes in the qualifying criteria for rural support, an increase in the rural practice allowance and an amendment of the special items of service covered.	HSE	Ongoing	In progress 257 GP practice units are in receipt of supports under the Rural Practice Support Framework, which relates to 347 individual GPs benefitting under the new scheme. This is a significant increase in the number of GPs benefitting from rural supports, which stood at 167 prior to the introduction of the new scheme in May 2016.
25	In line with the Connecting for Life Programme, provide support for local strategies across rural Ireland to address suicide and improve mental wellbeing.	HSE	2017-2019	In progress Connecting for Life is Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020. Goal 2 aims to support local communities' capacity to prevent and respond to suicidal behaviour. The work of and partnership formed amongst HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention and non-statutory organisations is crucial in ensuring this goal is met. To date, 15 of 17 Local Connecting for Life Plans have been launched around the country. The recent joint report by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland and the HSE entitled "Middle-Aged Men and Suicide" places a spotlight on middle aged

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				men who are rurally isolated. Among the recommendations, particularly around connections and building and strengthening relationships with friends, family and service providers, is for pilot initiatives to test the efficacy of approaches and resources which seek to combat isolation and build connection.	
26	Consider the treatment of family farms and small businesses in relation to the 'Fair Deal' Nursing Homes Support Scheme.	DoH	2017	In progress	A Memo was approved by Government in July 2018 to bring an Amendment to the NHSS Act that will extend the 3 year cap to productive assets such as farms and businesses. Work is ongoing on the development of draft Heads of Bill, taking into consideration a number of ancillary policy and operational matters which may need to be addressed in the proposed legislation.
27	Continue the rollout of a multi-year programme of investment worth €435m for circa 90 projects in public nursing home facilities and district and community hospitals in rural areas which could provide up to 5,000 construction-related jobs during their delivery.	HSE	Ongoing up to 2021	In progress	As of May 2018, a total of 22 projects have either construction completed or are operational. Phase 1 of construction has been completed for a further 3 projects.
28	Deliver 18 new primary care centres in rural Ireland and support the establishment of primary care teams to allow people to avail of a comprehensive range of health and social care services in their local areas, including access to ultrasound services.	HSE	2018	In progress	From January to end June 2018, 9 Primary Care Centres have become operational in Ballymote, Ballinrobe, Claremorris, Westport, Boyle, Wexford Town, Kilcock, Carrick-on-Suir, and Drogheda North. A further two, in Dungarvan and Tullamore, will also become operational in 2018 and will complete the delivery of the 18 Primary Care Centres. The HSE is progressing measures to support the development and enhancement of diagnostic service in the primary care sector across the country.
29	Plan and resource the Primary Care workforce, including GPs, community nursing and allied health professionals, to address the health and social care needs of the population in rural communities, in conjunction with a wider range of network services.	HSE	Ongoing	In progress	Between end 2014 and end May 2018 the number of primary care therapy grades has increased by 126.80 whole time equivalents (WTEs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiotherapists—increase of 19.48 WTEs (end 2014: 527.59 to end May 2018: 547.07) • Occupational Therapists—increase of 28.41WTEs (end 2014: 490.3 to end May 2018 : 518.71) • Speech & Language Therapists—increase of 78.91 WTEs (end 2014: 462.76 to end May 2018: 541.67). • Recruitment is nearing completion for 83 additional posts in Speech and Language Therapy provision, f 114 assistant psychologist posts and 20 staff grade psychology posts, focussing on children.

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				Funding was provided under Budget 2018 for the recruitment of additional occupational therapy posts. It is anticipated that the posts will be in place by end 2018. The number of GP training places has increased from 170 places filled in 2017 to 198 places to be offered in 2018. Over 400 applications for the 2018 GP Training Programme were received by the application deadline of 16 November 2017. This represents a significant increase of almost 50% in the number of applications for the 2017 programme.	
30	Building on the current number of 14 Community Intervention Teams (CITs), support the full nationwide access to CIT services to facilitate the treatment of patients in their own local community, whether in the patient's home, primary care centres or public or private nursing homes.	HSE	Ongoing	In progress	Total CIT referrals of 17,258 to end May 2018 exceeded expected activity year to date by almost 24%. This is an increase of over 16% compared to the same period last year. Funding provided under Budget 2018 is supporting the filled in 2017 to 193 places filled in 2018.
31	Enhance supports for older people in rural areas through the network of Day Care Centres, continued provision of grant aid to the voluntary sector and through the implementation of the National Positive Ageing Strategy to support older people in staying healthy and involved in their local communities.	HSE	2017-2019	In progress	The HSE has carried out a mapping of existing day care centres nationally, and a report is being finalised. The HSE provides funding to many organisations that work with older people to further the objectives of the National Positive Ageing Strategy. This funding is ongoing by its nature, as the strategy and the goals therein are intended as direction for future engagement for the continued promotion of older people's health and wellbeing. Engagement with older persons' interest groups is ongoing through arenas such as an annual stakeholder forum.
32	Maintain the network of senior helplines in operation throughout the country, which offer a listening service for older people provided by trained older volunteers, and help address issues such as loneliness and isolation in rural areas.	HSE	Ongoing	In progress	Provision of this measure is ongoing.
33	Support the role of schools in communities across the country by revising protocols to ensure that no small school closes against the wishes of parents and facilitate amalgamations where desirable.	DES	2017 onwards	Completed	Action Completed. The revised protocol is available on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

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34	Engage with relevant education stakeholders and school property owners to develop guidelines for schools to facilitate, where feasible, the use of school buildings out-of-hours.	DES	2017	Completed	In October 2017 the Department of Education and Skills published guidelines to provide guidance to schools in relation to their current arrangements for the use of school buildings outside of school hours or for those schools who are considering putting such arrangements in place.
35	Develop a new funding scheme for youth services in line with the recommendations of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes, which will help support the provision of such services across the country.	DCYA	2017	In progress	Sample projects are currently running as part of the new Targeted Youth Funding Scheme, in rural areas such as West Cavan, Carrigaline, Mitchelstown, Gort, Tullow, Ballyhaunis and Longford. Five Rural ETB areas without a sample project are involved in the trialling of an area profile and needs assessment tool to assess needs for young people in communities.
36	Expand provision of affordable childcare through the implementation of the Affordable Childcare Scheme, which will assist in delivering greater accessibility to childcare services across the country.	DCYA	Q4 2017	Delayed	Good progress is being made by DCYA officials in developing the various elements of the scheme in preparation for its launch. This involves intensive work across legislative, ICT, administrative, governance and communications areas. With regard to the ICT system to underpin the scheme, DCYA has concluded a full open tender public procurement process and a contract has been awarded for the development of the system.
37	Develop the Public Participation Networks (PPNs) to ensure all local groups can input to local decision making processes by: Providing funding for a Resource Worker for each PPN; Providing a database for each PPN's registered local community organisations; Rolling out local training and capacity building; Developing and improving a practical PPN User Guide; and Establishing a National PPN Advisory Group, fully representative of all PPN stakeholders.	DRCD	2017-2019	In progress	Since 2015, annual funding of up to €50,000 has been provided by the Department in respect of each PPN, supplemented by at least €30,000 from the relevant local authority. Funding is used for the purposes of developing the PPN including the cost of employing a Resource Worker, renting office space and other ancillary expenses incurred in carrying out activities. Training to meet the specific requirements of PPNs was funded by the Department in both 2017 and 2018. A PPN National Advisory Group has been set up, and a subgroup of this working group has been charged with reviewing the PPN User Guide in consultation with stakeholders.
38	Consult extensively with the PPN Network and sectoral interests in developing Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.	Regional Assemblies	Ongoing	In progress	All three Regional Assemblies (NWRRA, SRA & EMRA) consulted with an extensive range of stakeholders including the PPNs during the consultation stage of developing their Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) which are currently being finalised.
39	Implement the Framework Policy on Local & Community Development to ensure greater participation of rural communities in the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of policies, strategies and interventions.	DRCD	Q2 2017 to end 2019	In progress	A Cross Sectoral Group (CSG) was established in 2017 to assist in the development of an Implementation Plan for the Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland (2015). The CSG, with the assistance of a specific sub-group established to be representative of all sectors and work specifically on the implementation

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				plan, has now agreed a set of draft actions which reflect what the sectors believe needs to be delivered to support local and community development into the future. The set of actions will be brought to the CSG for consideration. The Group's work will culminate in a five-year multi-annual implementation plan for the Framework Policy on Local and Community Development. It is anticipated that a draft implementation plan will be agreed by the Group in Q4 2018.
40	Engage with local communities on water quality projects through the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office.	DHPLG	Ongoing	Completed Based on a business case submitted by the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has decided to finance a Community Water Development Fund, to be accessible to community groups who wish to engage in water quality projects to further the achievement of the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.
41	Through the National Dialogue for Climate Change, ensure that rural communities have a key role in contributing to our transition to an environmentally sustainable, climate resilient, low carbon economy.	DCCA	Ongoing	In progress The work of the Dialogue is continuing and will do so into 2019. The first Regional Gathering was held in Athlone on the 23 June, hosted as part of the National Dialogue on Climate Action. The second Regional Gathering is due to take place in Tralee on 10 November. The aims of these gatherings are to build awareness, engagement and motivation to act in relation to the challenges presented by climate change. Workshops at these aim to engage people in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring a shared purpose: Through better understanding of the big issues and identifying some key principles on what a better future could look like. • Exchanging ideas: Harnessing what exists and connecting the dots to unlock opportunities for action that individuals, public, private and community sectors can collaborate upon. • Shaping the process: For future regional and local events under the National Dialogue on Climate Action, exploring how to engage and mobilise people in the process. Further Regional Gatherings will be held in Q1 2019. More information is available at www.dccae.gov.ie/climatedialogue
42	As part of the Energy White Paper, roll out a range of actions to increase the engagement with and participation of citizens and communities in rural areas, to allow for greater involvement in the planning of energy infrastructure in their local areas.	DCCA	Ongoing	In progress The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment received Government approval for the new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) on 24th July 2018. Micro Generation (including an element of self-consumption) was assessed as part of the RESS design and in consultation with the microgeneration sector, a pilot support scheme for

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				domestic rooftop solar PV, targeted at self-consumption was launched in July 2018. The “Preferred Draft Approach” to the review of the Wind Energy Guidelines has been published for consultation and will be finalised in 2019.	
43	As part of the National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making 2015-2020, support Government Departments and State agencies to involve children and young people appropriately in policies relating to the planning and development of rural communities.	DCYA	Ongoing	In progress	A five year development plan for Comhairle na nÓg will be commissioned in 2018 and will set out strategic objectives over a five year period. The website Hub na nÓg, launched in November 2017, provides information, guidance, training and practical support to Government Departments and agencies and conducts consultations with young people on a variety of topics.
44	Develop a new and effective rural proofing model which will ensure that rural development issues are considered in the decision-making processes of all Government Departments, State bodies and agencies.	DRCD	Q4 2017	In progress	DRCD is establishing a working group to progress this action and bring forward recommendations on an effective rural-proofing model. The Department will seek the views of a range of stakeholders in the preparation of the draft model.
45	Ensure that, in developing the new National Planning Framework, the long-term needs of rural Ireland are taken into account.	DHPLG	2017	Completed	The National Planning Framework (NPF) was published in February 2018. The Framework places a strong emphasis on protecting our rural fabric.
46	Work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and other relevant stakeholders to identify research needs in relation to rural and regional development to inform policy formulation and implementation.	DRCD	2017-2019	In progress	DRCD continues to engage on an ongoing basis with rural development research experts in order to understand priority research needs.
47	Deliver the LEADER measure of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, with funding of €250m to support economic development and job creation, social inclusion and the environment in rural areas.	DRCD	2017-2020	In progress	Over 1,300 projects have now been approved for LEADER funding representing a value of over €39 million, with further projects at various stages of the approval process. In this year alone, over €20m in funding has been approved for a myriad of projects across all programme themes, demonstrating the increased level of engagement with rural communities by the Local Action Groups. The LEADER Food initiative was launched in May. An overall budget of €15m is being made available for the artisan/small food and beverage businesses, with an initial tranche of at least €5 million in 2018.
48	Invest €12m in 7 Fisheries Local Action Groups in coastal communities to support a wide range of initiatives targeting job creation, social inclusion, tourism, community regeneration and market development around our coastline.	DAFM	2017-2020	In progress	To date in 2018, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine has announced the award of €3.1 million in EMFF FLAG grants to 247 beneficiaries. These investments will add to the €1.8 million paid out in 2017 by the 7 FLAGs. Successful projects included investments in micro seafood enterprises, marine tourism and marine leisure projects, heritage projects, small harbour facilities, and environmental and training projects.

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49	Invest €37.5m to implement the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, SICAP, as the main social inclusion programme of Government to support 2,800 local community groups, including low income workers and young people not in education, employment or training, and support lifelong and community education opportunities for disadvantaged communities and individuals.	DRCD	Ongoing to end 2017	Completed	The new SICAP commenced on 1 January 2018 and will run until the end of 2022. It replaces SICAP 2015-2017. SICAP 2018 – 2022 has supported a total of 1,386 local community groups with over 5,000 interventions recorded for mid-year 2018. SICAP 2018-22 has supported 14,155 clients from target groups such as low income workers, disadvantaged young people, disadvantaged women, lone parents, the unemployed. In doing so the programme has supported lifelong learning and community education opportunities for disadvantaged communities and individuals. Over 42,000 interventions were recorded to date for mid-year 2018. The average number of interventions per Individual was 3.
50	Provide 500 additional places on the Rural Social Scheme which employs the skills of farmers and fishermen to provide services which benefit rural communities.	DEASP	2017	In progress	There has been an increase of approx. 30% in the places available under the RSS in the past two years – from 2,600 to 3,350 (250 of these places were approved as part of the DEASP Budget package for 2018).
51	Continue the implementation of supports for Social Farming which offers, on a voluntary basis, farming and horticultural participation to people who avail of a range of therapeutic day support services.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Kerry Social Farming Project offers an opportunity to people with disabilities to engage with the farming community within a rural community setting. ▪ In February 2017, Down Syndrome Cork transformed a three acre rural space in Curraheen, Co Cork into a horticultural-based training facility, the Field of Dreams, built to meet the specific needs of adults with Down Syndrome. It opened with 8 participants in September 2017, a further 5 adults were involved in a pilot activation programme in March 2018. ▪ Social Farming Network Project - At the end of 2017 Leitrim Development Company had achieved placements on 28 farms across 15 counties. In 2018 to date they have trained farmers from 25 counties. ▪ Leitrim Development Company - the Model project of 2017-18 is providing critical evidence and research on Social Farming. In 2018 a National Conference was held outlining the benefits for participants of Social Farming and highlighting two new participant groups, The Youth sector and Long term unemployed. <p>DAFM have extended contracts to the above projects for 2018/2019.</p>
52	Through the Better Energy Homes Scheme, provide over €300m in grants to householders to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, while supporting over 2,000	DCCA	2017-2019	In progress	In 2017, the Better Energy Homes Scheme provided €16.3m in grants towards the cost of installing energy efficiency measures in 14,619 homes, of which 9,828 were outside Dublin. To end September 2018, 10,285 homes have carried out energy efficiency improvements with grant

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jobs and helping make approximately 46,500 rural homes more environmentally sustainable.				assistance from the scheme. Over two thirds of these homes are located outside Co Dublin.
53 Through the Better Energy Warmer Homes scheme, deliver approximately 15,500 energy efficiency upgrades to people living in energy poverty in rural areas, while also boosting regional employment and helping make rural homes more environmentally sustainable.	DCCAE	2017-2019	In progress	In 2017, 6,554 homes were upgraded through the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme, with funding of €22,620,901. Of these, 4,956 of these homes were outside the Dublin area. To end September 2018, 4,306 homes have received free upgrades through the scheme, with 80% of these homes located outside Co. Dublin.
54 Through the Sustainable Energy Communities Network, deliver approximately 700 rural community and premises upgrades.	DCCAE	2017-2019	In progress	In 2017, 134 communities across Ireland were part of the network, with approximately 85 of these rural. There are now over 160 communities in the SEC Network with over 100 of these in rural areas. In 2018, 17 Sustainable Energy Community projects have been offered grants totalling €2.44million to allow these community groups to carry out some of the projects identified through working with SEAL on their Energy Master plans.
55 Continue to implement the Better Energy Communities scheme which provides competitive funding to community energy projects all over Ireland.	DCCAE	Ongoing	In progress	In 2017, 44 projects received funding under the Better Energy Communities Scheme, amounting to €22.7million. In 2018, €23 million has been offered in grant funding to 37 community energy projects across Ireland under the scheme. These projects represent over 1200 homes and over 400 other commercial and public buildings.
56 Recruit 800 Gardai per year, achieving an overall Garda workforce of 21,000 personnel by 2021 comprising 15,000 Garda members, 2,000 Reserve members and 4,000 civilians.	DJE	2017-2021	In progress	There was an intake of more than 800 trainees to the Garda college in 2017. During 2018, 800 Garda trainees will enter the Garda College. It is anticipated that the overall number of Gardaí will stand at approximately 14,000 by the end of 2018. As at 31 May 2018 there were approximately 2,300 civilians employed in An Garda Síochána. Work is continuing on the development of a strategic review of the Garda reserve and it is anticipated that a Garda reserve class will enter training in the second half of 2018.
57 The Garda Inspectorate, on behalf of the Policing Authority, will examine the dispersement and use of resources available to the Garda Síochána in the delivery of policing services to local communities and make recommendations to provide a more effective, visible and responsive policing service.	Policing Authority	2017-2018	In progress	The Inspectorate has completed its fieldwork and consultations with members of the Garda Síochána and stakeholders, including LAs, farming organisations, voluntary sector and community groups. Data analysis has also been completed and it is intended to submit the report to the Policing Authority in Q4 2018.
58 Launch a pilot scheme to reopen six Garda stations both urban and rural, to determine possible positive impacts that such openings will have on criminal activity, with special emphasis on burglaries, theft and public order.	An Garda Síochána	2017	In progress	The Garda Commissioner's final report on pilot reopenings recommends that the former Garda stations at Bawnboy, Co. Cavan, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow, Ballinspittle, Co. Cork, Donard, Co. Wicklow, and Rush and Stepside, Co. Dublin be reopened. The Garda authorities and the OPW are

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The results of this pilot will feed into the wider review of resources being overseen by the Policing Authority.				engaging in relation to the necessary works to enable the stations concerned to be reopened. The OPW has informed that all necessary works will be completed in 2019.
59 Continue to support and prioritise community crime prevention schemes including Neighbourhood Watch and the Text Alert Scheme.	DJE	Ongoing	In progress	In January 2018, the Minister for DJE announced an additional €50,000 in financial support to Community Text Alert Groups. This is in addition to the €100,000 announced at the National Ploughing Championships in September 2017. The Rebate Scheme allows Text Alert Groups registered with An Garda Síochána to apply for funding to contribute towards their yearly running costs.
60 Introduce a new Community CCTV Grant Aid Scheme which will benefit both urban and rural communities.	DJE	2017	In progress	The Grant-Aid Scheme was launched in April 2017. 27 applications have been received to date. 20 applications have been approved, with approved funding of over €480,000. A further 4 applications are under active consideration. The remaining 3 applications have been returned to the applicants concerned to enable them to provide the information necessary to qualify for grant-aid.
61 Significantly invest in the Seniors Alert Scheme, which facilitates valuable community based support for vulnerable older people living alone, particularly those in isolated rural communities, by providing grant assistance towards the purchase and installation of personal monitored alarms to enable them to live securely in their own homes.	DRCD	Ongoing	In progress	The Department invested €2.68 million in the Seniors Alert Scheme in 2017. The 2018 spend is estimated to be in the region of €6 million, subject to some change as this is a demand-led scheme. The Scheme had a total of 33,217 participants as of 31 July 2018. This represents an increase of 100% (16,290 new participants) since 31 October 2017, following the relaunch of the scheme.
62 As part of the Government's Capital Investment Plan 2016-2021, invest €46m in a modern, effective and fit-for-purpose Garda fleet over the lifetime of the Plan, to provide the Gardaí with additional high-powered vehicles to ensure that Gardaí are mobile, visible and responsive on the roads and in the community to prevent and tackle crime.	An Garda Síochána	2017-2021	In progress	Investment is continuing in a planned manner over the lifetime of the Plan. The Government's Capital Plan 2016 – 2021 provides €46million for investment in the Garda Fleet to ensure that An Garda Síochána has a modern, effective and fit for purpose fleet and this is in addition to the investment of almost €30 million in the period 2013 to 2015. Of that allocation, as confirmed in Budget 2019, €10 million will be available to An Garda Síochána for purchases for the fleet in 2019.
63 As part of An Garda Síochána Modernisation and Renewal Programme, a new computer-aided dispatch will be developed to ensure responsive and co-ordinated deployment of Gardaí in the community.	An Garda Síochána	2017-2021	In progress	The deployment of National CAD is commencing roll out for Quarter 4 2018. It will commence with bringing the Eastern Region into the Dublin Control Room. The western Division will also go live, managing the Northern Region.
64 Rollout the new Community Facilities Fund, announced in Budget 2017, which will invest over €2m in rural and	DRCD	2017	Completed	Following a review of RAPID and the Communities Facilities Scheme the schemes were amalgamated to create the Community Enhancement Programme. The programme launched in May 2018 and is being

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urban areas, to enhance communities, address disadvantage and improve social cohesion at local level.				administered by Local Community Development Committees under the remit of the Local Authorities (LAs). Each LA receives a baseline amount of €125k from the €4.5m allocation, the remaining monies allocated proportionate to the disadvantage levels (60%) and population (40%), in each LA. Funding applications received are reviewed by the LCDs to ensure eligibility and complementarity with the relevant Local Economic and Community Plan.
65 Invest €30m in sports and community facilities around the country through the Sports Capital Programme.	DTTAS	2017	Completed	€62m was allocated under the 2017 Sports Capital Programme. Details of the 2018 Sports Capital Programme were announced on 30 August 2018, with a budget of €40m available..
66 Support the sustainability of 450 Men's Sheds across rural Ireland which provide a safe space where men can gather and participate in their communities, develop social networks and potentially gain new skills and access information.	Irish Men's Shed Association	2017-2019	In progress	The 450 th shed is expected to open in the second half of 2019. So far in 2018, new sheds have opened in Counties Galway, Kildare, Cork, Cavan, Longford, Clare, Kerry, Limerick, Donegal, Roscommon, Laois, Wicklow, Westmeath and Tipperary.
67 Promote the health, wellbeing and skills of up to 15,000 men through the 'Sheds for Life' programme.	Irish Men's Shed Association	2017-2019	In progress	The reach, scale and ambition of Sheds for Life has continued to expand in 2018. As well as the expanded offering to shed members, such as the large-scale Health Expo being arranged for the IMSA's annual conference in Cork, a major research project, run in conjunction with the Irish Research Council and the Waterford and Carlow Institutes of Technology, will commence in October 2018.
Pillar 2 - Supporting Enterprise and Employment				
68 Implement eight regional Action Plans for Jobs to facilitate each region to achieve its economic potential and raise its employment levels and monitor the impact of these Plans on rural Ireland.	DBEI	2017-2018	In progress	In 2015 the Regional Action Plan for Jobs initiative was launched, supporting a key Government ambition to create 200,000 new jobs by 2020, 135,000 of which would be outside of Dublin. Progress across the eight regions has been very positive since the launch of this initiative, with an increase in numbers employed of 146,400 from Q1 2015 to Q2 2018 in regions outside of Dublin and 240,600 additional jobs nationwide. In April, Minister Humphreys requested that the RAPJ Implementation Committees in each region lead a process to 'Refresh and Refocus' their Plans to ensure their relevance out to 2020.
69 Provide investment of up to €50m over the period to 2020 to support collaborative approaches to boost enterprise and job creation across the regions. This competitive funding is aimed at accelerating economic	Enterprise Ireland	2017-2020	In progress	In May 2017 Enterprise Ireland launched the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) with funding of up to €60m, designed to support the ambition, goals, and implementation of the Regional Action Plans for Jobs. The first call under this Fund concluded in August 2017 and 21

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	recovery in every part of the country by delivering on the potential of local and regional strengths.			projects were successful, totalling €30.5m in aggregate grant support. The second call for projects from the remaining balance (approximately €30m) of the €60m budget available opened for applications on Monday 16th April and closed on Thursday 28th June 2018. The results of the second call will be announced during Q3/Q4 2018.
70	Increase FDI in each of the 8 NUTS III regional areas by 30-40% in the period to 2019.	IDA	Ongoing to Q4 2019	In progress Significant progress is being made towards the goal set out in the Action Plan. The regions saw increases in IDA employment in 2017, with over 50% of the 19,851 new jobs created being located outside of Dublin. The current strategy places a large focus on winning investments for the regions. This task remains very challenging, however, IDA had some significant announcements in regional locations across the country in 2018 which include 600 jobs in the Mid-West at Edwards Life Sciences, and 400 new jobs promised for Dundalk by Chinese life sciences company Wuxi Biologics. There were also two significant announcements in Longford in Avery Dennison and Red Seal Sups, bringing 300 jobs to the Midlands region. IDA will finish its current programme of regional property investment with new Advanced Buildings in Limerick, Dundalk and Waterford. There have been 344 investments approved for the regions in the three and a half years of the IDA's current five year Winning strategy.
71	As part of the IDA's €150m property investment programme, complete the construction of three new advance buildings in Tralee, Castlebar and Sligo and accelerate the development of six new advance buildings in Limerick, Dundalk, Galway, Athlone, Carlow and Waterford.	IDA	2017-2019	In progress To date IDA Ireland has directly completed the construction of five new Advance Building Solutions (ABS's) under the current building programme and has successfully secured investments for three of the buildings at Waterford, Athlone and Sligo. The two remaining buildings, Castlebar and Tralee, are being actively and extensively marketed by IDA. In 2018 IDA Ireland is continuing with the building programme with three buildings currently under construction in Limerick (AOB), Waterford (ABS) and Dundalk (AOB) and tenders recently received for the planned Galway (ABS). There are also buildings planned for Athlone and Carlow.
72	Support the creation of 500 new jobs per annum and continue to maintain existing jobs in Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in the Gaeltacht, including through supports for post-research and pre-commercialisation units in the life sciences, food and business support services and creative enterprise sectors, as well as for community development initiatives.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	2017-2019	In progress 630 new full time jobs were created un Údarás na Gaeltachta client companies in 2017. Údarás is continuing to evaluate and approve projects with a view to further job creation.

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73	Through the LEOs, strengthen local enterprise development and job creation with the following supports, which include indicative projections, on an annual basis, for outside Dublin: 1,400 jobs through Measure 1 approvals, 2,800 Start Your Own Business (SYOB) participants, 23,000 participants on LEO training courses, 2,100 mentoring participants, 18,500 Student Enterprise Awards participants, – 350 MicroFinance Ireland (MFI) loan applications.	LEOs	2017-2019	In progress	Targets have been set for two years and the results for H.1 of 2018 excluding Dublin are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,392 jobs through Measure 1 approvals. This is significantly ahead of target. • Start Your Own Business Programme participants – 1,707. • Training courses/programme participants – 13,985. • Total number of mentoring participants – 3,123 which is significantly ahead of target. • Student Enterprises Awards participants – 2018 figures currently being finalised. • Micro Finance Ireland Applications – 142 which is behind target which according to the LEOs reflects weak market demand for this product.
74	Continue to build on the LEO Communications Strategy to communicate the range of supports and services available at local level.	LEOs	Ongoing	In progress	In Q1 2018, LEOs organised over 300 events during ‘Local Enterprise Week’ across every local authority area. These events included one-to-one business clinics, start your own business boot camps, finance workshops, trading on-line seminars, data protection briefings and Brexit-themed workshops. The newly appointed LEO Communications and Marketing team will develop a new co-ordinated communications strategy to promote LEO supports and services, building on the LEO brand and utilising all relevant communication channels.
75	Determine the feasibility of enabling Local Authorities to introduce rates alleviation schemes to support rural development policy objectives.	DHPLG	Ongoing	In progress	The Local Government (Rates) Bill 2018 has very recently been published. It provides that LAs can introduce rates waiver (alleviation) schemes which support national planning policies (and de facto regional spatial and economic strategies) and policies set out in local development plans, local area plans and local economic and community plans. Any rural development policy objectives would sit within these national and local frameworks.
76	Conduct a revaluation of commercial properties in nine rural counties to ensure fairness and equity in the levying of commercial rates on business with a view to rolling out to further counties in 2017.	DHPLG	2017	In progress	Certificates of Final Valuation issued in September 2017 to all commercial ratepayers in the 9 local authorities of Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Offaly, Leitrim, Longford, Roscommon, Sligo and Westmeath. The next phase of the National Revaluation Programme (known as REVAL 2019) was commenced in October 2017 by the Commissioner of Valuation making Valuation Orders for the 7 counties of Cavan, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Tipperary, Wexford and Wicklow. A Valuation Order for Laois was made in December 2017.

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77	As part of the National Planning Framework, develop planning guidance for a positive approach to enterprise development in rural areas, where appropriate.	DHPLG	2017	In progress	The Department is finalising a guidance leaflet on Enterprise Development in Rural Areas. It considers how and to what extent enterprise development in rural areas should be accommodated in the context of the Planning and Development legislation, with the aim of providing clear guidance for those engaging in rural enterprise to support the development of sustainable rural communities. The guidance will be published shortly.
78	Progress the proposal for an Atlantic Economic Corridor to attract Irish and multinational investment, and grow jobs and economic opportunities in the western regions in the context of the new National Planning Framework.	DRCD	2017-2018	In progress	The Atlantic Economic Corridor Taskforce was established in 2017, and meets on a regular basis. A number of sub-groups are working to progress specific aspects, such as examining infrastructure needs and enterprise property assets, and developing a communications strategy. DRCD is providing funding of €30,000 to each of the 10 LAs along the AEC to support the designation of an AEC Officer in their authority who will help to develop and promote the initiative and ensure a cohesive approach is taken across the corridor. A dedicated AEC website was launched in June 2018.
79	Implement Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth which aims to double the value of the blue economy and deliver 29,000 additional jobs across the various maritime sectors.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	Economic statistics published in June 2018 indicate the direct economic value of Ireland's ocean economy at €2billion or approximately 1% of GDP. This represents a 21% increase on 2015 figures. The blue economy continues to grow at a faster pace than the general economy. Growth in 2017 was primarily driven by strong performances in aquaculture, sea fisheries, shipping & marine tourism as well as continued growth in emerging ocean industries. Employment in the sector rose from 27,888 (FTEs) in 2015 to an estimated 32,509 (FTEs) in 2017, an increase of 16.6%.
80	Introduce a Marine Development and Investment Strategy for the Gaeltacht in line with Harnessing our Ocean Wealth.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	2017	In progress	Plans are being prepared for 'Páirc na Mara' in Cill Chiaráin. Consultants have been employed to undertake an Environmental impact statement.
81	Invest €21m over five years to provide new and upgraded property solutions to attract FDI and indigenous Irish industries to locate in the Mid-West region.	Shannon Group	Ongoing	In progress	Projects completed in the six months to June 2018 include a 33,000 ft ² Grade A advance technology manufacturing unit. Construction is continuing on a 56,000 ft ² Grade A office block office, due for completion in October 2018. These two facilities will have the capacity to cater for in the region of 500 people. Work has started on an extension to a 100,000 ft ² advanced technology manufacturing unit and the refurbishment of a 35,000 ft ² office block for existing tenants.
82	Provide a new incubation space in Shannon to encourage start-up businesses and rural entrepreneurs.	Shannon Group	Q4 2017	Completed	The Gateway Hub, Shannon Commercial Properties' new co-working and service office facility, was completed in 2017 and formally opened in November 2017.

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83	Develop advanced property solutions for innovative companies seeking to move from the incubator phase to market-led and competitive commercialisation in the Gaeltacht area.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	2017	In progress	Progress on this measure is ongoing.
84	Create appropriate incentives and attract further businesses to join the existing aviation industry cluster in the International Aviation Services Centre in Shannon.	Shannon Group	Ongoing	In progress	Shannon Group's International Aviation Services Centre (IASC), in partnership with DCU Ryan Academy, Boeing, Datalex, the Irish Aviation Authority and Enterprise Ireland has successfully launched 'Propeller Shannon' an aviation/aerospace start-up accelerator programme. The programme will drive the development of innovative Irish and international start-up companies in the aviation sector, providing them with the opportunity to tap into the unique aerospace ecosystem that has seen over 60 companies employ over 2,600 people in Shannon Free Zone, reaffirming its position as the largest Aviation/Aerospace cluster in Ireland. In July 2018 IASC was accepted as the first and only Irish member of the 43-strong European Aerospace Cluster Partnership, a recognition of the scale and pan-European significance of the Shannon cluster.
85	Develop four Innovation Hubs in Donegal, Mayo, Galway and Kerry to support entrepreneurship and start-up companies in the Gaeltacht Regions.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	2017	In progress	Hubs are up and running in Gaoth Dobhair, Béal an Mhuirthead, An Cheathrú Rua and in An Daingean. Further hubs are currently at planning/development stage.
86	Review the recommendations of the CEDRA Report and the Charter for Rural Ireland and identify how best to progress any recommendations that have not yet been implemented.	DRCD	Q1-Q3 2017	Completed	DRCD has undertaken a review of the recommendations in the CEDRA Report and the Charter for Rural Ireland. The review finds that the recommendations have either been implemented where feasible, or are being addressed through the Action Plan for Rural Development or other Government initiatives.
87	Develop a strategy for the growth and development of the credit union sector, which is an important resource in rural Ireland, and ensure that credit unions benefit from regulatory support, in order to respond to the needs of a changing economy.	DBEI & SME State Bodies Group	2017	In progress	The SME Communications Group met in October to discuss a draft revised integrated communications strategy, and again in December to discuss the promotion of Online Tool in 2018. The Group is currently exploring new types of marketing materials and advertisement.
88	Conduct a review of the credit application process with a focus on the administrative burden for SMEs and the time costs to them.	DOF	2017	Completed	The Credit Review Office with support of the SME Representative bodies conducted a review and has met with Banking and Payments Federation (BPF) in relation to the review. Further in depth research is planned via the DoF Credit Demand Survey.
89	Deliver, through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland, effective financial supports to SMEs that address failures in the Irish credit market by sourcing additional	SBCI	2017	Completed	To the end of March 2018, there has been €972 million of SBCI supported lending, supporting over 24,000 SMEs and 129,300 jobs. The SMEs who received SBCI finance are from all sectors of the Irish economy and have a

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	funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders.			wide geographical spread, with approximately 85% of loans going outside Dublin and 26% of loans going to the Agriculture sector. The SCBI currently has 7 on-lenders; 3 bank and 3 non-bank lenders. The Brexit Loan Scheme, which was announced by the Minister for Finance in Budget 2018 and launched on 28 March 2018, is offered by the SBCI, through their partner financial institutions (Ulster Bank, AIB and Bank of Ireland). This is a €300 million scheme offering loans from €25,000 to €1.5 million to eligible SMEs and small mid-caps of up to 499 employees. As at 2 October 2018, a total of 240 applications for scheme eligibility had been received by the SBCI. As at 30th September, 34 loans have progressed to sanction at bank level to a value of €6.5m.
90	Examine procurement policies with a view to enhancing measures to support SMEs to access public procurement markets, including through training and information events and the development of guidance and information notes.	DPER	2017	In progress Meetings of the SME Advisory Group take place on a quarterly basis to address industry concerns. A cross body communications strategy subgroup of the SME Advisory Group has been formed and led to the introduction of industry targeted and regional informative breakfast briefing events, which have taken place in Dublin, Waterford, Limerick and Mayo with further events planned throughout the year. The Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services were published in 2017, these guidelines will help deliver a more consistent approach to procurement throughout the State making it easier for SMEs to deal with procurers. The Tender Advisory Service (TAS) was recently relaunched. TAS was established by the OGP in consultation with SME stakeholders to address concerns in relation to perceived barriers for SMEs in competing for tender opportunities.
91	Agree and finalise a protocol between DJEI and DAHRRGA in relation to the Local Enterprise Offices and LEADER to ensure a collaborative approach to supporting enterprise at a local level.	DBEI	Q1 2017	Completed Action Completed. The protocol is in place between the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Rural and Community Development.
92	As part of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme under the National Digital Strategy, approve a minimum of 1,000 vouchers per annum to micro businesses across the country of which approximately 60% will be from rural Ireland.	DCCAIE	2017-2019	In progress Trading online Voucher Scheme is on target to meet objectives. In 2017, almost 1,200 vouchers were approved and distribution was in line with the target of approximately 60% of businesses in rural Ireland.
93	As part of the EU Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020, roll out the women's entrepreneurship initiative to promote female	DJE	2017	Completed Two rural projects are funded under the ESF funded PEIL 2.9 Gender Equality, Women's Entrepreneurship strand and contracts agreed in 2017 are in place until 2019. These projects are GMIT in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon and SECAD CLG in rural catchment areas in Cork and Limerick.

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	entrepreneurship and develop their entrepreneurial capabilities.			The two projects will receive a total allocation of €611,515 over three years. Each year participants in these projects will also receive a qualification upon completion.
94	Continue the implementation of supports for the Rural Female Entrepreneurs Initiative (Acorns programme).	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress Programme completed in April 2018, Over 150 female entrepreneurs have taken part in ACORNS to date. Many report increased sales, exports and job creation. Progress made by participants on most recent programme, demonstrates these encouraging outcomes: Participants reported an increase in annualised sales of 97% over the six months of the cycle. There were nine participants that became exporters for the first time, representing an increase of 112%. There were 13 additional fulltime employees and 19 additional part-time employees hired during the period. A new cycle of the ACORNS programme was launched in August 2018 by the Minister for Agriculture, Farming and Marine.
95	Create an industry-wide, long-term plan, for Ireland as a global hub for the production of Film, TV Drama, and Animation.	DCHG	2017	Completed The Audiovisual Action Plan was launched in June 2018 and is an industry-wide, long-term plan, under the Creative Ireland Programme, which will support the Government's ambition to enable Ireland to become a global hub for the production of Film, TV drama and animation.
96	Develop and launch a new www.ruralireland.ie website which will act as a central portal to provide information on relevant supports, and showcase best practice examples of rural development.	DRCD	2017	Completed Action Completed.
97	Conduct a review of the REDZ initiative to measure its impact on rural communities, and to support the development of future calls for projects under the scheme.	DRCD	2017	Delayed A pilot Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) initiative was run in 2015 and a further round of the programmes was delivered through Local Authorities in 2016. REDZ is a model which seeks to support economic activity between defined functional, rather than geographic, areas in rural Ireland. While there are some good examples of successful REDZ projects throughout the country, a formal review of the programme as a whole has not yet been conducted. However, the concept of towns and villages working across administrative boundaries was incorporated into the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2017 and 2018.
98	Through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), support the establishment and development of social enterprises in rural areas.	DRCD	Q4 2017	Completed SICAP 2018 has supported the establishment and development of 138 social enterprises. 58% of social enterprises have been operating for at least 3 years. Supports provided include provision of training, volunteering and employment opportunities; business planning and development services; and development of new services to improve the sustainability of the enterprise.

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99	Develop and publish a National Policy on Social Enterprise which will encompass the full range of activity in this sector.	DRCD	Q3 2017	In progress	A Steering Group, which includes practitioners from the social enterprise sector, was established in the middle of 2017 to oversee the research. As part of this project, a number of consultation workshops were carried out in 2017 to obtain the views of the sector on key elements of the policy development, and an on-line survey was also conducted with sectoral interests. The Social Enterprise Policy is now being finalised, informed by the joint research, the consultative aspects of that work, and other recent papers on the sector. To ensure engagement with all stakeholders, and that their views inform the policy, a public consultation on the policy will commence in Q4, with a view to a final policy document being published early 2019.
100	Commission a specific piece of research in relation to the impact of Brexit on rural areas, particularly rural areas in the Border region.	DRCD	Q1 2017	Closed	Action Closed - In light of the body of work already carried out (and continuing) in relation to the impact of Brexit, it was decided not to proceed with the specific measure in the Action Plan.
101	Fund the development of a programme of initiatives to increase the awareness and capacity of SMEs to deal with the practical consequences of Brexit for cross border trade.	Inter Trade Ireland	2017	In progress	ITI has launched a Brexit Advisory Service to assist SME's which includes the provision of factual advice, information materials and supports for capability building and the provision of other specialist expertise for companies. The Service has dealt with 718 enquiries to date. A key part of InterTrade Ireland's Brexit work is the provision for SMEs of a Brexit 'Start to Plan' readiness voucher scheme, which enables companies to purchase specialist advice in areas such as customs, tax, tariff and non-tariff barriers, legal and labour mobility issues. So far 394 vouchers have been approved (worth €2,000/£2000). ITI hosted major flagship awareness events last year in both Belfast and Dublin, attracting several hundred companies each. In addition, an extensive series of information events were held on both sides of the border in partnership with the local Chambers of Commerce and/or the Local Enterprise Offices. Research is being undertaken for ITI by the ESRI examining the impact of trade and tariff regimes which might be imposed following Brexit, cross-border trade on the island of Ireland, and the role of supply chain links. The next phase of ITI's research examines cross-border trade in services and the capacity of businesses to absorb the costs of Brexit.
102	Complete the planned programme of courthouse refurbishment works in seven locations with an investment of €135m over two years and estimated employment of 700 over the construction period.	DJE	2017	Completed	During 2017 and 2018 work progressed on all seven sites. Limerick Courthouse was completed in February 2018 and Waterford Courthouse in March 2018. Cork Courthouse was completed in May 2018 and Mullingar

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				Courthouse in July 2018. The official opening of the Mullingar Courthouse is due at the end of November 2018	
103	Continue to deliver the National Waste Prevention Programme on behalf of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, including country-wide programmes such as Green Enterprise, Green Business, Green Hospitality, Green Healthcare, Smarter Farming and 'Stop Food Waste'.	EPA	Ongoing	In progress	The EPA continues to implement the National Waste Prevention Programme through working with businesses, householders and public bodies. The programme was reviewed in 2018 to ensure a strong fit to policy priorities on the emerging circular economy concept, and to reflect the increased national focus on food waste prevention.
104	Continue to provide SEAI supports for small businesses across the country, including provision of advice through www.seai.ie , to help them to be more energy efficient and therefore more competitive and environmentally sustainable.	SEAI	Ongoing	In progress	In 2017, payments amounting to €188,000 of grant support were made to 47 successful grantees. In 2018, there was €500,000 made available for the Dairy Farm support scheme. At the end of September 2018, there were grant offers of €333,000 to 80 grantees. The SME Smart Lighting programme is continuing in 2018, having been launched by DCCA & SEAI in March 2018. This programme, which is aimed at all SMEs with fewer than 250 employees and a turnover under 50 million, encourages businesses to change their lights to more energy efficient lights. A total of 55 SMEs benefitted from the scheme across 62 sites in 2017. At the end of September 2018, there were grant offers of €1,600,000 to 141 grantees.
105	Through Food Wise 2025, support the creation of additional jobs along the supply chain from producer level to high-end value-added product development (target to 2025 is 23,000 jobs).	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	Food Wise 2025 implementation and monitoring are ongoing via the High Level Implementation Committee, which is chaired by the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine. It has met five times in 2018. Further information is available at https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/foodwise2025/
106	As part of Food Wise 2025, increase the value of food exports, which will support rural and coastal economies (target to 2025 is 85% increase in exports to €19bn).	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	See update under Action 105.
107	Develop, enhance and promote the effectiveness of the Origin Green Programme as a key marketing tool for the Irish agri- food sector.	Bord Bia	2017-2020	In progress	Origin Green the country's national sustainability programme with 340 plus verified members, now accounts for over 90% of Ireland's total food and drink exports. The entire base of over 500 Origin Green participating companies accounts for 95% of total food and drink exports. Origin Green provides the platform to build the reputation of Irish food and drink products in the regions and help grow the value of exports.
108	Support a further cohort of new food entrepreneurs under Food Works and develop the Food Works Plus supports for those entrepreneurs continuing to pursue their ventures.	Bord Bia	2017	Completed	This action has been delivered and a full report was provided in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.

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109	Support food start-ups through initiatives with retailers including the Food Academy Advance with Musgraves SuperValu and the Taste Buds Programme with Tesco.	Bord Bia	2017	Completed	This action has been delivered and a full report was provided in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
110	Support the agri-food sector through the financial services industry to ensure that financial products are developed for all sectors of farming across the industry.	DAFM	2017	Completed	The Agriculture Cashflow Support Loan Scheme was developed by DAFM in co-operation with the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI), and made €150 million available to farmers throughout Ireland at low-cost interest rates of 2.95% in 2017. Based on this model, the Brexit Loan Scheme was launched in March 2018. MilkFlex was launched nationally in May 2018. DAFM liaises with the banks, SBCI and ISIF on an ongoing basis.
111	Implement the Seafood Development Programme (2014-2020) through a range of supports for fishermen to adapt to the new Common Fisheries Policy, seafood processing, aquaculture, inshore fisheries and the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGS).	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	Implementation of Ireland's Seafood Development Programme is funded under the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Operational Programme 2014-20 which is in its third full year of operation with 19 support schemes currently operational. Investment to end 2017 was €58 million, with expected investment of €40 million forecast for 2018. Areas being funded include Fisheries, Aquaculture, Data Collection, Control & Enforcement, Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGS), Seafood Processing and Integrated Maritime Policy.
112	Implement supports for the fishing, aquaculture and seafood processing sectors under: the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme to achieve sales of seafood worth €1 billion by 2020; the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development; and Harnessing our Ocean Wealth.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	The measure is in operation.
113	Finalise the Draft Bioenergy Plan, which will capture the potential of the bioenergy sector and help generate employment opportunities.	DCCA	Q1 2017	Delayed	The Draft Bioenergy Plan established the policy context for the development of Ireland's bioenergy sector and set out the actions to be undertaken to further the demand for and supply of bioenergy. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of these actions. As part of the EU's Clean Energy Package, the recently agreed Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action stipulates that all Member States must develop a draft National Energy and Climate Plan and submit it to the European Commission by the end of 2018. The scope of the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) covers the full energy system and requires a high level of detail on all sectors, fuels, policies and support measures. Having examined the crossover in scope and timeframe of the NECP and the Bioenergy Plan, it has been decided that, in place of publishing an update to the Draft Bioenergy Plan, the relevant policies and

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				measures will be consolidated into the NECP. The initial public consultation on the NECP was launched on 9 October with a closing date of 12 November.
114	Create a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) designed to encourage investment in renewable electricity generation in a cost effective manner and help support economic growth and job creation in rural Ireland.	DCCAЕ	Q3 2019	In progress The final reports to underpin the new RESS (Economic report and Community report) were published in Q3 2017 as part of the public consultation on the RESS, to which 1,250 submissions were received. These have now been assessed and a final scheme design was approved by Government in July 2018. The RESS is now the subject to an EU State Aid approval process and it is expected that the first auction will take place in 2019. RESS will provide a framework for renewable electricity technologies to deliver renewable generation in a cost effective manner.
115	Create a Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH) which will help stimulate demand for biomass and support economic growth and jobs in rural Ireland.	DCCAЕ	Q4 2018	In progress The first phase of the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH), an installation grant for heat pumps, opened for applications on 12 September 2018. This phase of the scheme will support ground, air and water source electric heat pump installations, providing grant aid of up to 30% of the installation cost. The second phase of the scheme, an operational support for biomass boilers and anaerobic digestion heating systems, is expected to open for applications later this year, subject to State aid approval from the European Commission. The National Development Plan sets out an indicative funding allocation of €300 million for the rollout of the scheme for the period 2018-2027. The scheme is administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). To facilitate stakeholders in preparing for the introduction of the second phase of the scheme (the operational support for biomass and anaerobic digestion heating systems) SEAI has published the draft Terms & Conditions on its website.
116	Establish a baseline assessment of the current level of Bioeconomy activity and opportunities across the various sectors in Ireland.	Dept. of An Taoiseach	Q1 2017	Completed Action Completed. Further information available in Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
117	Hold a consultative seminar on the Bioeconomy with key stakeholders, including the development agencies and the private sector.	Dept. of An Taoiseach	Q1 2017	Completed A seminar on Bioeconomy was held in Feb 2017, and a National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy published in March 2018.
118	Publish a high-level Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy in Ireland.	Dept. of An Taoiseach (Update by DCCAЕ)	Q2 2017	Completed Following the publication of the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy in March 2018 an Implementation Group consisting of representatives from key Government Departments and State Agencies has been established to address a number of key actions for the future success of the Bioeconomy in Ireland. Two meetings have been convened to date in

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				2018. The Bioeconomy Policy Statement promotes more efficient use of renewable resources supporting economic development and employment in rural Ireland. The 3rd meeting of the Implementation Group took place on October 19 prior the inaugural 'Bioeconomy Ireland Day ' which marked the opening of the National Bioeconomy Campus, in Lisheen, Co Tipperary.
119	As part of the International Financial Services (IFS) Strategy 2020, showcase the competitive and operational advantages of regional locations for new and existing international financial services activities.	IDA	Ongoing	In progress IDA Ireland does its utmost to encourage clients to locate in areas that are most in need of investment. The Agency continues to actively engage with its existing client base to support them in growing their business to retain jobs and expand their existing footprint in the different regions. The Funds Working Group is an important component of IFS2020. The Group includes participation from Industry, IDA Ireland, Trade Associations and Government Departments.
120	Through the Regional Action Plans for Jobs process, identify, in consultation with EI, IDA and other stakeholders, areas for further IFS-related actions at regional level.	DBEI	Ongoing	In progress Each RAPJ 2015-2017 was developed, in consultation with local stakeholders from the public and private sectors, with a view to building on each region's own particular areas of strength and opportunity. In 5 regions (Mid-West, South West, North East/North West, South East, and Dublin) Financial Services was identified as a sector of strength or opportunity, and related actions included. Actions are implemented and monitored at a regional level by Implementation Committees, made up of local representatives from the public and private sector in each region. To drive this process key industry figures have been appointed to act as Enterprise Champions within each Region.
121	Through the Regional Skills Fora, facilitate close co-operation between education and training providers and enterprise in addressing identified skills needs in the regions and a local link with the implementation of other strategies including the Regional Action Plans for Jobs and Pathways to Work.	DES	Ongoing	In progress The Fora were established to align with Government policy and initiatives on regional economic development, including the Regional Action Plans for Jobs. Since their establishment there is a greater focus on strengthening and establishing positive relationships between employers and the education and training system in the different regions. The Fora are engaging with a broad range of sectors, particularly high skilled manufacturing and ICT. Over 60% of engagement to date in 2017 is with SMEs, with an increasing level of engagement with micro enterprises. A key emerging strategy for industry both nationally and in the regions is the upskilling of the existing workforce at all levels. The three main areas of engagement in 2017 were Manufacturing (43%), ICT (14%) and Construction (11%) and these continue to be the three main sectors engaged with. A survey was carried out of enterprises that have engaged with the Fora to establish satisfaction levels and results will be published in

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				Q4. A new Skills for Growth initiative has been launched, new partners identified, and protocols agreed to enable increased capacity to carry out nationwide skills audits. Audits of skills needs within individual enterprises continue to be carried out by the Regional Skills Forum Managers in each of the nine regions as part of the Skills for Growth project.	
122	Increase the number of young people accessing employment in their communities through: strengthening the apprenticeship and traineeship systems, enhancing the range of courses and increasing student, places, achieving Government targets of over 100 apprenticeship schemes, and a cumulative target of 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship registrations to 2020	DES	2017-2020	In progress	To date eleven new apprenticeships (2 in 2018) are operational. A further 10 programmes are scheduled to get underway during 2018. As of 30 June 2,280 new apprentices registered on apprenticeship programmes in 2018. A total of 14 new traineeships (4 in 2018) have now been developed with 1,184 enrolments to-date in 2018. Apprenticeships and traineeships are regionally dispersed and offer good opportunities for training and employment in the regions.
123	Increase options for post-secondary school leavers in rural Ireland through agreeing Annual Service Plans between SOLAS and Education Training Boards (ETBs), and monitoring progress against agreed quality and performance targets.	SOLAS	Ongoing	In progress	SOLAS is in the process of agreeing a 3 year Strategic Performance Agreements, for the period 2018 – 2020 with all 16 ETBs. Post-secondary school leavers can avail of a host of FET options including; Apprenticeships, Traineeships, PLC courses. Information is available through www.fetchcourses.ie or local Education Training Boards.
124	Enact the Technological Universities Bill to underpin the development of a new model of higher education in Ireland, so that these regional institutions will have greater industry links, support enterprise, underpin diversity and promote access and participation on a regional basis with a view to significantly boosting our capacity to create and retain jobs in regions.	DES	2017	Completed	The Technological Universities Act 2018 was enacted in March 2018. It provides the legislative framework for consortia of Institutes of Technology to make an application for TU designation to the Minister for Education and Skills. The Minister for Education and Skills announced in July 2018 that the application for Technological University status from the TU4Dublin consortium would be granted. The new Technological University will be named Technological University Dublin (known as TU Dublin) and it will be the first Technological University (TU) in Ireland established under the Technological Universities Act.
125	Increase the participation of young people in rural Ireland in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths through the SFI Smart Futures Programme, public engagement activities and through the support of regional science festivals in rural Ireland.	SFI	Ongoing from Q2 2018	In progress	SFI engagement with rural communities through Science Week has increased year on year. In total, over 1000 events took place as part of Science Week 2017, covering all 26 counties. The SFI Smart Futures initiative directly engaged with an estimated 120,000 students up until September of 2017 with talks delivered through Industry partners and Discover funded events like Scifest and I Wish in Cork by trained STEM volunteers representing industry sectors such as computing, financial services and pharma chemical. In January 2018 I Wish again took place in Cork. In March-May of 2018, SciFest took place around the country. In April 2018, Tech Week, Ireland's national festival of technology aimed at

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				students, parents and the public, took place all over Ireland. Over 120,000 students took part in a range of fun activities, including the finals of several national Tech Week events.
126	Fund research proposals in Smart Agriculture/ Precision Agriculture to improve farm management and increase quality of life for farmers in rural Ireland.	SFI	Ongoing	In progress In the first half of 2018, SFI funded five awards in these and related areas. The combined value of these five awards was greater than €5 million. For example, one award will study parasitic worm infections, such as liver fluke, which cause major livestock diseases and cost Ireland's agricultural community more than €90 million each year. The project will also develop new simple diagnostics tools for the surveillance and management of disease on farms.
127	Strengthen links between Údarás and Institutes of Technology and Universities to build capacity in the Gaeltacht region and promote research and innovation.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Ongoing	In progress In partnership with Gaoth Dobhair, Letterkenny I.T. has established a base in Páirc Ghnó Gaoth Dobhair to support local businesses to establish themselves. LYIT is liaising with business on the estate and surrounding areas to establish their needs, which require research, skills and product development. An tÚdarás has also approved funding for I.T. Tralee to undertake research on a tourism project examining the potential of developing local projects within the Wild Atlantic Way routes and communities.
128	Develop stronger links with the diaspora to access investment, establish networks and source skills and experience for the Gaeltacht area.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Ongoing	In progress <i>Diaspora na Gaeltachta</i> project has been established and is funded by Údarás na Gaeltachta and is working at the initial stage with Gaeltacht companies to identify the skills and services required so that people with suitable skills and qualifications can return home to the Gaeltacht to take up key positions in these industries. The Diaspora project also supports new start-ups and remote working opportunities.
129	Work with public and private sector stakeholders to identify and address skills training needs in traditional building skills and architectural conservation through the development and implementation of a Traditional Building Skills and Conservation Education Action Plan to assist the regeneration of our historic cities, towns and villages.	DCHG	2017-2018	In progress A number of key steps have been drafted in a consultation report which will be circulated to stakeholders in Q4 2018. When finalised, the actions will provide a national framework for architectural conservation curriculum development and the design and delivery of training provision for traditional skills.
130	Improve knowledge transfer and exchange to farmers by developing a network across all State agencies and relevant advisory bodies to deliver clear advice on how farmers can adopt sustainable practices that deliver both environmental and economic benefits.	Teagasc	2017-2020	In progress During Q1 2018, 1,103 training places were provided to industry professionals through the ConnectEd Programme. 11 regional economic briefings were delivered across the country during February/March. During Q2 Teagasc ConnectEd delivered two training programmes to financial sector (42 participants). Three Certificate for European Consultation in

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				Rural Areas (CECRA) skills training courses were delivered to advisers/agri-consultants (45 participants). The autumn programme of CECRA training has been announced and published. A series of training events provided to agri-contractors on precision application of fertiliser (150 participants). A new grassland pesticides course commenced for 75 participants. Teagasc ConnectEd has 451 clients at end of Q2.
131	Develop and deliver training and education programmes for farmers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) ensure that the appropriate skillsets and knowledge are applied at each stage of development of the primary producer's business; and (b) Up-skill farmers as employers, in areas such as improving farm practices, employing staff and responsibilities as an employer 	Teagasc	Ongoing	In progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Teagasc is liaising with DBEI in relation to work permits. Teagasc is progressing apprenticeship proposals on agriculture, horticulture and equine. Teagasc has initiated and advertised a new series of new entrant training programmes which consist of training and discussion group participation, there were 60 applicants up to the middle of July. (b) The People in Dairy Action Plan was launched in June 2018 which has identified a number of actions to be progressed in the short and medium term. Teagasc has commenced two new research project in the area of labour use on dairy farms: (i) Maximizing labour productivity and minimizing labour demand on Irish dairy farms and (ii) Examining labour input and the uptake of on-farm technologies using the Teagasc National Farm Survey.
132	Continue to develop and implement the 'Options Plus' programme for improving off-farm income generation of farmers and to link farm families with a variety of learning opportunities provided by other agencies including the ETBs, LEOs, LDCs , third level institutions and the Department of Social Protection.	Teagasc	Ongoing	In progress Options Plus programmes were run in eight of the Teagasc regions between January and February 2018. These courses included engagement with other agencies such as ETBs, LEOs, Fáilte Ireland, Bord na Mona, SEAI. Champion farmers who developed projects in relation to food, energy, forestry, tourism, inventions and new product development spoke to Options groups about challenges they faced and how they dealt with such challenges. There will be further Options Plus courses run in October and November 2018. A series of Options Courses will be held in all Teagasc regions during Q4.
133	Continue the rollout and promotion of www.opt-in.ie (a website aimed at helping rural dwellers find the means and skills necessary to increase their income generating options), currently piloted in Limerick and Tipperary.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress The Opt-In portal is now live and has over 300 people registered to receive information on courses. The ETBs and LEOs have agreed automated update of the Opt-in Website from their respective websites. The portal is also being used by LEADER, Skillnets and Teagasc to promote their respective courses. There will be further promotion of Opt-in during Quarter 3 2018.
134	Provide in the region of €1m per annum for the Advanced Irish Language Skills Initiative, aimed at training Irish speakers for employment in the EU institutions and at	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress Funding for this programme was again made available in the 2017/18 academic year and the first translation increment aimed at ending the derogation on the use of the Irish language in the EU was achieved.

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	developing the freelance Irish language translation sector at home.				
135	Continue to support jobseekers through the network of local Intreo offices and DSP case workers.	DEASP	Ongoing	In progress	The Department's case officers continue to support and meet the needs of jobseekers through the network of Intreo Offices spread throughout the country.
136	Through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), increase work-readiness and support individuals in accessing employment and self-employment.	DRCD	Q4 2017	Completed	The 2015 – 2017 SICAP ran to 31 December 2017. The follow-on programme 2018 – 2022 was launched in April 2018. SICAP 2018 - 2022 is providing opportunities for people to engage in a range of employment supports including the development of personal skills, lifelong learning, labour market training and one to one employment supports. To mid-2018, 60% of the people supported were unemployed and if combined with Economically Inactive (17%) the total is 77%. The supports provided to mid-2018 have resulted in 8,643 people receiving employment supports with 398 people supported into employment and 1,168 supported into self-employment.
137	Review impact of SICAP in rural areas and consider this review in the development of a re-designed SICAP for 2018.	DRCD	2017-2019	Completed	The 2018 – 2022 SICAP was launched in April 2018. The redesign of SICAP will have a positive impact on rural areas as it provides more flexibility in addressing the needs of local communities. The programme has reduced the number of goals from three to two: Goal 1 - Community Engagement and Goal 2 - Individual Engagement. This reflects the need to engage and support the most disadvantaged individuals. SICAP 2018 – 2022 has a redesigned client management designed to help LDCs in entering relevant data and data on rural focused issues captured, such as whether individual clients are facing a transport barrier and experiencing rural isolation where someone is retired. A new grants programme for Local Community Groups and education grants for individuals has been introduced, this will help communities and individuals with limited resources in rural areas to engage with the programme supports. The overall reduction in targets for the programme will ensure the LCDCs can provide intensive and targeted supports to more isolated communities.
138	Through the Dormant Account Funds, support disadvantaged groups in rural and urban communities through measures that assist their access to employment.	DRCD	2017	In progress	In July 2018, the Dormant Account Action Plan 2018 was launched. Funding of almost €40 million was announced for 45 measures across 10 Departments and State Agencies. The measures provide supports for economically, educationally and socially disadvantaged people and people with disabilities in communities across the country. In July 2018, a Review of the Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursement Schemes 2013-2016 and

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				2017-2019 was completed which sets out 15 recommendations to be implemented to improve administration of the fund. Social Enterprises play an important role in addressing social exclusion and unemployment in Ireland. In July 2018, Pobal, who administer the Social Enterprise measure of the Dormant Accounts Fund, invited applications for funding and held an information day for interested groups. Applications received are currently being assessed.	
139	Implement changes to the Farm Assist Scheme, as announced in Budget 2017, which will increase the value of the weekly Farm Assist payments for low income farmers, in particular for those with children, which will ensure that farm families are supported in actively farming their land.	DEASP	2018	Completed	Action Completed. Farm Assist payments have been increased by €5 per week in Budget 2019.
140	Develop and conduct an awareness campaign in rural communities to highlight the Farm Assist and Fish Assist schemes.	DEASP	2018	2018	Communication Unit ran an awareness campaign earlier in the year and again in August highlighting the Farm Assist and Fish Assist schemes.
141	Review the impact of the changes made to the Farm Assist Scheme, as announced in Budget 2017, in early 2018 to ensure that it is addressing the challenges facing farmers on low income.	DEASP	Ongoing	2018	DEASP are looking at the number of recipients on the Farm Assist Scheme on a monthly basis to see if the changes announced in Budget 2017 are having an impact on the numbers in recipient of a payment. The number of recipients continues to fall, reflecting the age profile of the recipients as many progress to a State pension. The numbers applying for the Farm Assist scheme are lower than those progressing to a State pension.
142	Maintain the provision of schemes such as the Rural Social Scheme, Community Employment, Back To Education Allowance and Tús in rural communities and the Gaeltacht, having regard to the declining numbers on the Live Register and the need to ensure that these schemes are targeted to the needs of jobseekers and others.	DEASP	Ongoing	In progress	DEASP acknowledges the valuable contribution these schemes make in communities. Given the reduction in numbers on the Live Register the Department needs to ensure that the best use is being made of funding in this area and that these schemes continue to meet the needs of customers. The RSS numbers have increased by 30% over the last 2 years.
143	As part of the EU Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020, roll out training under the “women returning to the workforce” strand, targeting women who are currently detached from the labour market and who are interested in entering/re-entering employment.	DJE	2017	Completed	Ten of the projects funded under the ESF funded PEIL 2.7 Women Returning to the Workforce strand, have a focus in rural areas and contracts agreed in 2017 are in place until 2019. These ten projects will receive just under €3 million in total over three years. All of the projects are up and running and engaging with women who are detached from the labour force.
144	Continue to support farm incomes through the roll-out of CAP payments of over €1.2 billion annually.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	The 2017 Basic Payments Scheme (BPS) payments are ongoing. As of the start of August 2018, over €1.176 billion has been paid to over 124,000

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				farmers. A series of one-to-one BPS Clinics were held throughout the country where farmers were able to drop in and receive assistance from Department staff in submitting their BPS applications, as well as submitting requests to transfer entitlements via the new online transfer of entitlement facility. In all, clinics were held in 46 locations throughout the country with over 2,500 farmers attending the clinics. Almost 130,200 applications were submitted via the online applications facility in 2018. Applications for the 2018 scheme are currently being processed. Between January and March, a series of public consultations were held regionally throughout the country in relation to the CAP post 2020. Views expressed at these meetings, along with submissions received, are being considered as part of the Department's overall consideration of the proposed CAP 2020 changes.	
145	Support on-farm investment through the Rural Development Programme (RDP) (2014-2020) and national funding to improve competitiveness and sustainability.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	The Targeted Agricultural Modernisation Scheme 2 (TAMS 2) supports on-farm investments as one of a range of measures in the current RDP. The scheme is comprised of seven separate strands of support and is open for applications in rolling three-month tranches with ten completed as of June 2018. Approvals are issuing on an ongoing basis with a total of over 15,000 applications approved to date and some 4,800 cases now paid.
146	As agreed in Budget 2017, increase the earned income tax credit to self-employed farmers.	DoF	Ongoing	Completed	The Earned Income Credit (EIC) was increased by €400 to €950 per annum in Budget 2017. The EIC tax credit is available to self-employed individuals, including farmers, who do not have access to the PAYE employee tax credit.
147	Support the Government Initiative to (a) use the taxation system strategically to encourage greater land mobility, increased productivity and greater profitability at farm level (b) Investigate taxation measures aimed at supporting farmers through periods of volatility (c) Land leasing, partnership and mobility measures will be developed further to ensure the next generation of farmers are supported and the sector is developed strategically for future growth.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	A review of progress on the implementation of the agri-taxation system is currently underway.
148	As agreed in Budget 2017, roll out new income averaging 'step out' for farmers. (The Income Averaging regime allows a farmer's taxable profit to be averaged out over a 5-year period. This is being amended to allow an "opt out" in a single year of unexpectedly poor income, which may be availed of for the 2016 tax year).	DAFM	2017	Completed	The measure is in operation. Income averaging has been extended to those with off farm income in Budget 2019.

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149	As agreed in Budget 2017, roll out new tax credits for fishers to assist the viability of the fishing sector (Fishers who have fished for wild fish or wild shellfish for at least 80 days in a tax year can claim an income tax credit of €1,270 per annum).	DAFM	2017	Completed	The measure is in operation. This credit remains at €1,270 per annum.
150	As agreed in Budget 2017, extend Farm restructuring Capital Gains Tax (CGT) relief to end 2019.	DoF	Ongoing to end 2019	Completed	Legislated for under Finance Act 2016 through amendment of section 604B of Principal Act (relief for farm restructuring)
151	As agreed in Budget 2017, provide an exemption from Capital Gains Tax (CGT) for payments made by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (on or after 1 October 2016) under the Protected Raised Bog Restoration Incentive Scheme.	DoF	Ongoing	Completed	Legislated for under Finance Act 2016 through amendment of section 613 of Principal Act (miscellaneous exemptions for certain kinds of property).
Pillar 3 - Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential					
152	Through the Tourism Action Plan 2016-2018, increase tourism volume in rural areas to 8.3 million visits by 2019 (an increase of 12%).	DTTAS	Ongoing	In progress	As part of the response to Brexit, a focus has been placed on addressing regionality and seasonality issues in rural Tourism to help counteract the decline experienced from the Great Britain market. Fáilte Ireland's preliminary Tourism Facts for 2017 indicate that tourism volumes to rural areas increased to 8.282 million in 2017. CSO data for the first half of 2018 suggest further increases this year.
153	Carry out a feasibility study in relation to the development of the 'Ireland's Lakelands' brand as a separate proposition to sit alongside the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East.	Fáilte Ireland	Q1 2017	Completed	On 12 th April Fáilte Ireland unveiled 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' as its latest new tourism brand - designed to boost tourism and drive visitor growth across the Midlands region. An initial €2m has been allocated to start the development stage of the brand, with further funding to follow. This first round of investment will help to develop visitor experiences, support industry development and develop marketing campaigns for the region.
154	Develop a Tourism Investment and Development Strategy for the Gaeltacht.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Q1 2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further details available in Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
155	Provide practical support to the local authorities in the development of comprehensive tourism strategies and support collaborative approaches at Local Authority and community levels.	DTTAS	Ongoing	In progress	The Tourism Action Plan for the period 2018-2020 will continue to drive the implementation of the Government's Tourism policies, one of which is to collaborate with and support LAs all around the country, to grow and develop regional tourism. A collaborative funding agreement between Fáilte Ireland and LAs aims to bring greater focus to the development of tourism focused festivals and will replace Fáilte Ireland's annual Regional

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				Festivals and Participative Events Programme for 2018. In addition, Fáilte Ireland and the County and City Managers Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding in March 2018 committing the organisations to work together in strategic areas including capital investment projects, training supports, information provision and joint marketing campaigns to attract domestic and overseas visitors.	
156	Ensure that supports for festivals and events are updated to reflect changing market needs – including identifying key indigenous events with the greatest potential for attracting international visitors and off-setting seasonality to be supported by a multi annual framework; and reviewing arrangements for regional and community festivals to ensure maximum value for money in terms of incremental visitors.	Fáilte Ireland	Q4 2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further information available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
157	Support direct access to the regions outside of Dublin by extending the Regional Co-operative Market Access Scheme, which promotes air and sea access to regions outside of Dublin, until 2018.	Tourism Ireland	2017	Completed	In January 2018, Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland launched a joint initiative, specially designed to boost tourist numbers from Britain to the Wild Atlantic Way. A €1.35 million marketing campaign in Britain by Tourism Ireland is being complemented by a Fáilte Ireland €500,000 programme to support businesses along the Wild Atlantic Way, as well as marketing campaigns in Northern Ireland. The next Tourism Action Plan (2018-2020) which is due to be finalised in late 2018, will set out actions aimed at further developing the regional access strategy.
158	Include Eircodes in Satnav and digital spatial mapping platforms to help simplify navigation in rural areas and enhance the tourist experience.	DCCAIE	Q2 2017	Completed	Action Completed. The Satnav providers Google Maps, Microsoft (Bing/Nokia Maps), TomTom and HERE Navigation have all integrated Eircodes within their products. Commercial negotiations are progressing with other satnav companies to integrate Eircodes into their satnav systems.
159	Develop cultural digitisation initiatives to enhance “Ireland’s Roots” tourism offering.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is working to develop cultural digitisation initiatives to enhance Ireland’s roots tourism offering. A Genealogy Policy Working Group has been established with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, National Library of Ireland and the National Archives to develop an updated National Genealogy Policy. The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is working to develop cultural digitisation initiatives to enhance Ireland’s roots tourism offering. A Genealogy Policy Working Group has been established with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht,

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				National Library of Ireland and the National Archives to develop an updated National Genealogy Policy.	
160	Work with representatives from Government agencies and voluntary action groups for the development of targeted tourist mapping to assist in the promotion of rural tourism locations.	OSI	2017	In progress	OSI continues:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to expand the range of Adventure Series maps with new maps of the Aran Islands, South Mayo and Croagh Patrick its programme of updates to a number of Rural Discovery Sheets. to sponsor rural events such as The Irish Hot Air Ballooning Championships 2018 in Birr County Offaly, The Relay in County Wicklow and The Rally of The Lakes in County Kerry.
161	Accelerate diversification of overseas tourism to Ireland to reduce the impact of possible decline in visits from Great Britain.	Tourism Ireland	Ongoing	Completed	CSO figures show that the number of visitors from America, Mainland Europe and other emerging markets, as a percentage of overall visitor numbers, increased in 2017 when compared to 2016. These figures show that the current strategy to implement market diversification and to reduce the reliance on the Great Britain market, is working well. The ambitious tourism targets included in the 'Global Ireland - Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025' initiative, aim to substantially grow revenues from New and Developing Markets and this will further supplement the current market diversification strategy.
162	Continue to develop Irish language based tourism in the Gaeltacht through the provision of Gaeltacht scholarships for Irish language learners in international 3rd level institutions.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	Funding for this programme was again made available in the 2017/18 academic year.
163	Support Agri-Food tourism initiatives by local authorities, including local markets and food and beverage trails.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	The Agri-Food Tourism measure has been advertised under the Rural Innovation and Development Fund. Following on from an assessment of the applications received, two projects have been granted assistance of over €92,000 for agri-food tourism proposals.
164	Develop cross-Border tourism initiatives to support the tourism potential of the Border region, building on projects such as the Ulster Canal Greenway from Smithboro (Co. Monaghan) to Middletown (Co. Armagh), the Carlingford Lough Greenway, and historic literary trails.	Local Authorities in collaboration with cross border counterparts and other relevant parties	Ongoing	In progress	Smithboro to Middletown greenway is at tender stage with consultant appointment envisaged during Q3. The route has been scoped with ecological surveys conducted, it is hoped to have prelim design drawings completed by end year and be out to consultation early in the New Year. The next section of the greenway, between Smithboro and Clones is also being prepared to go to tender. The ongoing Carlingford Lough Greenway plan is for an off-road trail across the border that will connect Newry to Omeath and Carlingford Marina to Carlingford Village. The Albert Basin in Newry to Victoria Lock section of the Greenway has opened and is proving

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				very popular. The overall Carlingford Lough Greenway remains on programme to be completed by 2020.	
165	Examine the potential to promote rural Ireland as the destination of choice for US colleges wishing to avail of a rural based learning or study abroad experience.	Connemara West and other relevant stakeholders	Ongoing	In progress	<p>Expanding the pilot: Discussions initiated with FORUM Connemara CLG about a LEADER Cooperation project to provide a practical mechanism to work with other rural areas to explore their potential to become destinations for U.S. colleges wishing to avail of a rural based learning or study abroad experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepening the pilot: Micro conference <i>Interchanges 2018 - The Fourth Transatlantic Conference on Education, Research and Community Engagement</i> was held in Renvyle from June 13-15 attended by 40 people with representatives from 3 U.S colleges. The primary aim of this conference is to provide a forum where intending or existing US Ireland study abroad programme directors and other faculty and students can network with each other and Irish collaborative partners, on location in rural Ireland. • Publicising and marketing the pilot: Connemara West made two promotional trips to the mid-West of the U.S in January and May 2018 to meet with new U.S. colleges who had expressed interest in establishing programmes in rural Ireland.
166	Provide assistance for the promotion of island development and island tourism, to maximise the benefit of the Wild Atlantic Way to our offshore islands.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	D/CHG is working with the island communities, LAs and other relevant stakeholders, to enhance services provided to visitors to the islands as well those living on the islands.
167	Develop a strategy to underpin the development, funding and promotion of Greenways to support activity tourism in rural areas.	DTTAS	Q2 2017	Completed	The “Strategy for the future development of National and Regional Greenways” was launched on July 20 2018. The Strategy sets out how National and Regional Greenways in Ireland should be planned and constructed and is backed by a fund of €53m for the years 2019 to 2021.
168	Develop and promote Blueways (multi-purpose activity trails on or beside water) on the Royal, Grand and Barrow Canals and on the Shannon Navigation to expand the recreational and tourism offering, with a capital investment of €6m over the period 2017-2019.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	The Royal Canal Blueway in Mullingar was officially launched in July. An activity provider now operates from the Mullingar Blueway Hub, offering paddling and cycling facilities for members of the public. Waterways Ireland will continue to build this product in Mullingar to realise its potential as a recreational and tourism base in the town.
169	Enhance infrastructure on and along the inland navigation system to support increased recreational and economic activity in rural Ireland.	Waterways Ireland	2017-2019	In progress	Work to complete navigation to Castlesaunderson is drawing to a close with final completion expected during autumn 2018.

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170	Through the Rural Recreation Scheme, provide funding for new recreation infrastructure and the maintenance of existing structures resulting in the creation and retention of jobs in rural areas.	DRCD	2017-2019	In progress	An indicative fund of €12 million is available to successful projects under the 2018 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. A total of 128 applications were approved under Measure 1 (Small Scale Maintenance/Promotion and Marketing) in September 2018 for funding of €1.8 million. Successful projects under Measures 2 and 3 will be announced later in the year.
171	Expand the National Walks Scheme with a view to doubling the number of walks in the scheme by 2019.	DRCD	2017-2020	In progress	Significant consultation will be required with both landholders and other stakeholders to increase the number of walks covered by the walks scheme. It is therefore anticipated that any increase in the number of walks will only begin to be realised from 2019. However, the preliminary work will be carried out during 2018 including a full review of the systems in place to support the Walks Scheme. This review will facilitate decisions regarding the phased expansion of the scheme, beginning in late 2018 or early 2019.
172	Ensure co-ordination of major outdoor recreation projects with all main State land owners to maximise potential for sustainable tourism in rural areas through the Inter-Agency Group on Outdoor Recreation.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	The Outdoor Recreation Group continues to meet on an on-going basis. The Group is chaired by DCHG and is comprised of representatives from DCHG, the DRCD, Fáilte Ireland and five public landowning organisations (<i>NPWS, Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Bord na Mona & Inland Fisheries Ireland</i>). Meetings are held in locations around the country and relevant local authorities are also invited to attend. [Further detail of projects is provided under Action 174 below].
173	Through the Inter-Agency Group on Outdoor Recreation, develop a Public Outdoor Recreation Amenities Plan (PORA) to transform the provision of outdoor recreation facilities and services on public-owned land and waterways over the next five years which will add a potential €142 million of economic activity per year across rural Ireland.	DCHG	2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further information available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
174	As part of the PORA, progress four flagship, co-operative projects to enhance outdoor recreational activities to drive tourism in rural Ireland, viz: Midlands Cycling Destination; Barrow Blueway Flagship Project; Connemara Cluster; and Spatial Geodatabase.	Coillte	2017 onwards	In progress	Barrow Blueway Development – the planning application for this 114km towpath development is being considered by An Bord Pleanála with a decision expected before the end of the year.
175	Progress the development of niche outdoor activities in our National Parks and Nature Reserves drawing on their	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	Experiencing the Wild heart of Ireland, a Tourism Interpretative Masterplan for all six National Parks and Coole Park was launched in July. This is a framework for investment within the Parks and Nature Reserves and

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	unique attributes which will contribute to sustainable tourism in rural areas.			identifies potential projects for investment. It provides a roadmap for improving visitor experiences and modernising the presentation of the Parks and Reserves (taking into account conservational objectives) and recommends a suite of capital projects of varying size (from smaller scale interventions such as installation of viewing platforms to larger projects such as the development of new boardwalks and trails, to the construction of new visitor centres).	
176	Agree and implement a scheme to indemnify private land owners with regard to recreational users of their lands.	DRCD	2017	Delayed	In 2017 advice was received from the Attorney General's office and this area will be progressed in 2018 on that basis. The possible amendment of the Occupiers Liability Act has been included on the legislative programme for 2018.
177	Reorganise the operation of structures such as Comhairle na Tuaithe to ensure the most appropriate/effective mechanisms are in place to progress rural recreation policy/implementation issues.	DRCD	Ongoing	In progress	A review of the role of Comhairle na Tuaithe has been completed and the Minister met with Comhairle na Tuaithe in February 2018 to hear directly from them their views on the recommendations of the independent review on the future direction of Comhairle and the development of the outdoor recreation sector in Ireland generally. The Department is currently considering the Council members' feedback, and additional feedback received through further Comhairle meetings with officials. A final decision regarding the future operation of Comhairle na Tuaithe will be announced in the near future.
178	Implement the new tourism capacity maintenance programme under the National Strategy for Angling Development to ensure that the capacity of the inland fisheries resource is maintained and continues to deliver social and economic benefits to rural communities.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	Ongoing to 2020	In progress	Work continues on this measure. Further details available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
179	Continue to deliver the annual Inland Fisheries Ireland Sponsorship Scheme to assist rural communities to engage with angling, angling tourism and environmental issues.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	2017-2019	In progress	The Sponsorship Programme was announced in January with applications invited from anglers, angling clubs and organisations nationwide. In total, there were over 100 applications to this year's programme. 19 international angling events which will be held in Ireland. 10 Irish angling teams travelling overseas to international angling events. 28 coaching/juvenile events/competitions aimed at novice and young anglers. 14 national and local angling events held in Ireland for domestic participants. 2 seminars which will help the exchange of information, ideas and practical experiences on fisheries management.

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180	Implement the Minor Capital Angling Access Scheme under the National Strategy for Angling Development to help in sustaining the capacity of the inland fisheries resource.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	Ongoing to end 2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further details available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
181	Develop and promote Ireland's angling tourism offering abroad to assist in generating tourism in rural Ireland.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	Ongoing	In progress	The 2018 Promotional Shows programme is continuing and new promotional literature has been published to support angling throughout Ireland. Specifically, material has been produced on the Wild Atlantic Way and a suite of brochures for the overseas market for pike, trout, coarse and shore angling.
182	Rollout the Capital Works Scheme under the National Strategy for Angling Development to help deliver an accessible and sustainable, world class inland fisheries resource.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	2017-2018	In progress	Work continues on the facilitation of projects with many moving to implementation phase in Q2 2018. The NSAD is on 52% accomplishment of applicant contract requirements with 33 projects in delivery at the end of Q2 and an overall value in excess of €670,300, 12 projects completed at this stage with a value of €92,165. From the allocation of €2,000,000 to 135 projects from 2016 and 2017 the remaining governance is being worked through and this should see a shift of projects move to delivery during the Autumn and a change to claim and completion by Q4.
183	Continue to deliver the annual Inland Fisheries Ireland Something Fishy National Schools Programme to inform and educate students on fish, water, angling and the environment in their local areas.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	2017-2019	In progress	The 'Something Fishy' programme for the 2017/18 academic year has been completed with adjudication taking place on project entries. Final numbers of students and schools participating are awaited but IFI expect approximately 100 schools and 3000 students will have taken part.
184	Issue of blog content on walking routes in Ireland to promote the use of the outdoors for recreation purposes.	OSI	Ongoing	In progress	OSI continues to issue blogs promoting rural locations and activities such as premier walking and hiking locations in Ireland.
185	Support the inclusion of the voices of children and young people in the development of tourism and recreation opportunities, through the Children and Young People's Participation Hub.	DCYA	Ongoing	In progress	Hub na nÓg was officially launched in November 2017. It is currently consulting with children and young people on a number of consultations, e.g. on Cruinniu the creativity festival, with the Heritage Council and has also provided training to Sports Ireland and HIQA. Hub na nÓg will support implementation of the Strategy through the provision of information, training and advice for Government departments and agencies and the non-statutory sector.
186	Develop Ireland's six National Parks and Nature Reserves through a capital programme of up to €10 million over 4 years, in partnership with other State agencies, to support marketing initiatives such as the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East, by developing the trails network	DCHG	Ongoing from Q2 2017	In progress	National Parks and Wildlife Service has launched a formal Strategic Partnership with Fáilte Ireland with the aim of enhancing the tourism offering at Ireland's National Parks. It is expected that the first two major capital project proposals arising from the partnership will be formally announced during Q3 2018. The Department's phased completion of the Killarney House & Gardens project at Killarney National Park concluded

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	and improving visitor experience to drive sustainable tourism in rural areas.			with the opening of the 18 Room Visitor Centre and Exhibition in September 2018. There have been some 375,000 visitors to the Garden since their opening in April 2016. The Department is continuing work on the expansion of Ballycroy National Park with the addition of the Wild Nephin area, expanding the total size of the National Park to over 15,000 hectares.
187	Explore the potential for the development of new tourism and recreation activities within the context of the National Peatlands Strategy, including the consideration of a National Peatlands Park and centre of excellence.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress As a starting point for the consideration for a National Peatlands Park, an examination of existing and potential visitor facilities has been undertaken. This examination has shown that there are fifteen Peatlands sites, mainly in public ownership with visitor facilities.
188	Develop and publish an updated National Heritage Plan to protect, manage and promote our built and natural heritage.	DCHG	2017	In progress Consultation with key stakeholders concluded in Q2 2018 and work is underway to prepare public consultation paper and preparations for national heritage forum Q4.
189	Co-ordinate a programme for the management of Ireland's uplands areas, expanding on the pilot already carried out in Wicklow.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress The Uplands Partnership Management Board (a partnership between the Irish Uplands Forum and the Heritage Council) has the objective of assisting community based groups carry out projects concerned with sustainable development in the Uplands. Financial support is now available to upland groups to carry out facilitated study visits to improve their capacity to support sustainable development in their upland areas. The Heritage Council has allocated in the region of €46,000 to this scheme in 2018. Following a competitive grant process grants were awarded to 14 groups.
190	Progress the designation of additional sites to UNESCO for inclusion in Ireland's World Heritage list which will assist in the development of sustainable tourism and also preservation of our natural and built heritage.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress Stakeholder engagement continues with regard to the sites included on Ireland's current World Heritage Tentative List. A call for applications for inclusion on the 2020 World Heritage Site Tentative List is imminent. The Department is also working with expert stakeholders to inform the process of establishing its renewed Tentative List.
191	Continue the rollout of the programme of investment in State heritage sites with a view to developing the tourism potential of our heritage sites and assisting in the creation of local employment opportunities in tourism-related industries.	OPW	Ongoing	In progress Work continues to progress in relation to investment in sites within Ireland's Ancient East including UNESCO World Heritage Site at Brú na Bóinne. Interpretation contract has been awarded for Ormond Castle. Construction is underway at King John's Castle in Carlingford. A major investment of €4.3m has been announced in four key heritage sites along the Wild Atlantic Way - Blasket Island Visitor Centre, Céide Fields, Inis Mór and Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery. Tenders have been received in relation to Céide Fields and Carrownore. Tenders due to issue for the Blasket Island Visitor Centre and Inis Mór in Q3/Q4 2018.

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192	As part of the implementation of Fáilte Ireland's Tourism Investment Plan 2016-2021, work to enhance the presentation of key State Heritage Sites to help encourage greater employment in the tourism sector including the rural areas covered by the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East.	DCHG	2017-2021	In progress	DCHG National Monuments Service and Built Heritage Policy units continuing to work in strategic partnership with OPW and Fáilte Ireland, on Phase 2 investment sites. In addition, work is ongoing to identify heritage sites for investment under 'Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage'.
193	Through the Structures at Risk Fund, with an estimated €2.4m of matched funding available between 2017-2019, encourage investment of private capital in labour-intensive projects to conserve historic structures in public/ private ownership.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	Funding in the sum of €1.3 million is being provided in 2018 in respect of 76 projects. Local authorities will submit details of days of employment created by these projects with their final progress report in November 2018.
194	Support the development of conservation and heritage tourism in rural areas through the Community Heritage Grants Scheme, with an estimated investment of €2.5m between 2017 and 2019.	Heritage Council	2017-2019	In progress	As part of European Year of Cultural Heritage: Make a Connection, and its core emphasis of sharing heritage, the 2018 community grant scheme was focused on promoting a community based or participative approach to heritage. Funding has been offered to approximately 158 groups under this scheme.
195	Raise the profile of, and access to, our built, natural and cultural heritage nationwide, through the roll out of Heritage Week, thus helping to preserve our unique heritage assets.	Heritage Council	2017-2019	In progress	National Heritage Week 2018 was launched by Minister Madigan in the National Museum of Ireland on 19 July. The number of events registered for 2018 was 2,190 with the majority of events being organised by community or voluntary groups across the country.
196	Through the Historic Towns Initiative, invest in our historic towns to encourage tourism, foster traditional building skills and regenerate historic towns.	Heritage Council	Ongoing	In progress	The Historic Towns Initiative was launched in early 2018 and capital funding totalling €1m has been made available under this Initiative. Projects in Youghal, Carrick on Suir, Kells, Ballinrobe, Portlaoise and Kilmallock have been offered a total of €1 million in capital funding. Works have commenced in each of these towns. Works include conservation, public realm improvements and street scape conservation.
197	Encourage the conservation and reuse of historic properties and lettings to tourists in rural communities.	Irish Landmark Trust	Ongoing	In progress	The Irish Landmark Trust operates 32 properties north and south of the border. Most are located in rural areas. In partnership with Cork City Council, the ILT is currently undertaking conservation work at two properties in Elizabeth Fort in the heart of Cork City. They are now available to rent short term as self-catering accommodation.
198	Implement the Action Plan for Irish Historic Houses to assist in the promotion and development of Historic Irish Houses as centres for employment, tourism and innovation.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	An allocation of €45,000 a year for three years (2016 – 2018) is being provided to the Association to assist in achieving the objectives set out in the 2016 Action Plan for the Sustainable Future of the Irish Historic House in Private Ownership. Provision is also made within the Structures at Risk Fund for a dedicated portion of the Fund to be reserved for the type of

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				Historic House covered by the Action Plan. Section 482 of the Taxes (Consolidation) Act aims to help with the preservation of our built heritage by giving tax relief to the owners or occupiers of significant buildings or gardens to repair, maintain and restore such properties. A review of the operation of Section 482 is currently being concluded.
199	Support the Irish Walled Towns Network to ensure that these heritage assets are appropriately managed and conserved as a tourism asset to their areas.	Heritage Council	Ongoing	In progress There were several events during Q1 & Q2 2018 in the Irish Walled Towns Network including an arts and heritage seminar in Kildare in February, the opening of an archaeology pocket park in Kilkenny City in May, and a two day conference on adaptive towns in June. An allocation was made of capital grants amounting to €130,000 between seven conservation projects, and net grants of €90,000 for twenty heritage festivals and events, in April.
200	Enhance animation and interpretation at key heritage sites and augment existing networks and trails with additional sites and materials to create new visitor experiences.	DCHG	2017-2020	In progress 'Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage' was launched in April 2018 and details increased investment in enhancing our key heritage sites as a focus over the next 10 years. DCHG is working with stakeholders to identify sites for investment, including signage at sites in the ownership of LAs. A Working Group will meet in Q4 to monitor progress.
201	Seek to forge links internationally to key monastic and historic sites to draw more international visitors as part of pan European heritage, cultural and ecclesiastical networks.	DCHG	2017-2020	In progress The National Monuments Service has inputted into the assessment of a LEADER Programme feasibility study proposal to develop a cross-border linked monastic network along the entire river Shannon-Erne waterway. NMS is also in contact with Pilgrim paths Ireland to assess opportunities for future support, in addition to continuing to work with OPW and Fáilte Ireland on Phase 2 investment sites, to potentially include significant ecclesiastical sites e.g. Clonmacnoise.
202	In the context of the National Landscape Strategy, develop dedicated actions that assist in the promotion and development of Ireland's national landscape characteristics with regard to management, employment, tourism and innovation pilots.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress DCHG's primary focus in 2017 was to prepare the documentation for a National Landscape Character Assessment (NCLA) which is on-going during 2018. A National Landscape Strategy Steering Group has been assembled in order to inform the process. The Steering Group includes relevant Government Departments and associated Agencies and relevant professional institutes. A specification document is being considered by the Steering Group. A contract document will be prepared and sources of funding explored.
Pillar 4 - Fostering Culture and Creativity in Rural Communities				

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203	Roll out a new small grants scheme which will provide essential upgrades to existing regional arts and culture centres to support the revival of the cultural sector in rural Ireland.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	An announcement of the roll out of a new scheme is planned for end of 2018 following analysis of existing scheme and other capital priorities.
204	Increase funding supports to regional museums across the country ensuring access to our cultural heritage for rural dwellers.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	The Regional Museum Exhibition Scheme is closed for 2018. A total of €138,950 has been awarded to 15 projects in regional museums across the country ensuring access to our cultural heritage for rural communities.
205	Facilitate access by rural communities to our National Collections through increased loans of art works between our National Cultural Institutions and regional museums.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	A total of €9,122 has been awarded to 3 projects under the 2018 Mobility of Collections Scheme which facilitates the loan of items from the National Collection to rural & regional museums. This scheme is demand driven.
206	Through the Arts Council's Touring and Dissemination of Work Scheme, increase investment in 2017 to €1.4m and annually thereafter to support quality professional productions to tour venues across Ireland, increasing access to the arts for rural communities.	Arts Council	2017-2019	In progress	Applications were invited in January under the Scheme for productions to be carried out between January and December 2019.
207	Introduce a new programme as part of the Framework for Collaboration with Local Government in 2018, specifically advancing children and young people's provision, cultural diversity and arts and disability.	Arts Council	2018	2018	To be undertaken during 2018.
208	Increase our investment in small festivals from 2017 to support greater participation in the arts throughout the country.	Arts Council	2017 onwards	In progress	The Arts Council will deliver a revised and refreshed Festivals Investment Scheme for 2018.
209	Provide grant assistance of €0.48m to refurbish and develop a theatre in Gaoth Dobhair, Co. Donegal, in order to provide a suitable space to develop Irish language theatre in the North West.	DCHG	2017-2018	Completed	Action Completed. Further details available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
210	As part of the Creative Ireland Programme, develop a nationwide network of culture teams and creativity hubs which will co-ordinate cultural activities in each local authority area. This will have a particular benefit for rural communities who will be encouraged to participate and engage with culture in their communities.	DCHG	2017 onwards	Completed	Culture Teams have been set up in all 31 LAs to coordinate the delivery of the Creative Ireland Programme at local level.
211	Develop a Culture and Creativity Plan in every county as part of the Creative Ireland programme.	LAs	End 2017	Completed	Launched on 12 th September 2018.

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212 Allocate a dedicated budget to each local authority with the primary objective of citizen engagement with their Culture and Creativity Plans.	DCHG	2018	Completed	D/CHG doubled funding to this element in 2018 with a further €1m from D/Housing (total of €3m across 31 local authorities). This has enabled a significant amount of extra activity in rural areas – i.e. Kerry has more than doubled activity as a result of this investment.
213 Develop a new Creative Place Programme in partnership with Local Government which draws on the work of artists and arts organisations to animate local communities, particularly in rural areas.	Arts Council	Q4 2017	In progress	The <i>Invitation to Collaboration</i> programme supports regional and national initiatives in the field of local-authority-led arts development. Six projects were funded in 2017.
214 As part of the Creative Ireland Programme develop and implement Cruinniú na Cásca, an annual programme of arts activities and cultural reflection over Easter weekend which will take place all over Ireland and will have a positive effect on culture and arts activities in rural Ireland.	DCHG	2017 onwards	In progress	D/CHG amended this event to “Cruinniú na nÓg” a day of creativity for children and young people to ensure a more even spread across the country and to rural areas. Funding of approx. €10,000 was allocated to each LA and additional allowed for ambitious projects.
215 As part of the Creative Ireland Programme, establish and support an annual County of Culture award, allowing individual counties to showcase their cultural creativity over a 12-month period.	DCHG	2018 onwards	Closed	Following discussions with the Creative Ireland Co-ordinators and Culture Teams at local level across the country, most felt that the idea of awarding a single county as annual county of culture, could potentially detract from the wealth of activity at local level right across the country and particularly in rural areas. It was felt that all counties have a unique take on culture and creativity and this should be celebrated and more importantly supported rather than subjected to a competitive process. In this context, the Minister decided to double the funding for LAs from €1m to €2m to enable all LAs to develop more ambitious plans and initiatives in their communities. This was considered a more appropriate allocation of effort and resources.
216 Review the requirements of rural Ireland in the context of the development of the five year capital investment programme for the culture and heritage sector.	DCHG	End 2017	In progress	DCHG are encouraging and enabling collaboration and co-operation at Culture team level to access the available funding across Government.
217 Develop a national plan to enable every child in Ireland to access tuition in music, drama, art and coding.	DES	End 2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further details available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
218 Increase funding to Local Authorities across the country to roll out an enhanced culture night experience which will be of particular benefit to rural communities.	DCHG	2017	Completed	A total of €225,000 (60% of the overall budget) was allocated to local authorities to help them stage events for Culture Night 2018 which took place on 21 September.
219 Implement the Arts in Education Charter, a joint initiative between D/AHRRGA and D/ES to ensure that arts and	Arts Council	Ongoing	In progress	The Arts in Education Charter was launched in December 2012 and contains a range of measures and commitments which are being incorporated as part of Creative Youth. Other actions proposed under the Arts in Education

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	cultural engagement in schools at all levels will be attained across the country.			Charter include fashion and Local Arts in Education Partnerships. Music Generation; a non-mainstream music programme reaching 41,000 children and young people annually through its programme. Arts Rich Schools (ARÍS); is now taking place as a pilot in 150 schools, rebranded as Creative Schools, starting in September 2018, meaning more rural schools engaging with creativity in their school life and in the community. A National Research Repository is being developed for arts education in conjunction with Digital Repository Ireland. Local Creative Youth Partnerships are to be piloted in 3 ETB areas starting Q4 2018 which will encourage collaboration and innovation at local and regional level. The teacher-Artist Partnership, a CPD course for primary teachers where teachers work with artists was a pilot initiative that ran in 20 education centres across Ireland as part of Creative Ireland in 2017, and is running in 15 education centres in 2018
220	Introduce formal agreements with individual Local Authorities from 2017 to assist in clarifying shared and individual responsibilities in the context of regional and local planning and the national perspective of the Arts Council.	Arts Council	2017 onwards	In progress The Arts Council is developing formal agreements with the Local Authorities in association with the City and County Management Association. By end 2017, five agreements were in place, in Fingal, Kildare, Leitrim, Kerry and Offaly.
221	Develop an integrated Arts Strategy for the Gaeltacht and Irish Language Arts in conjunction with Foras na Gaeilge, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Arts Council.	DCHG	2017	In progress Work on the Strategy commenced with the establishment of a working group consisting of members from DCHG, ÚnaG, Foras na Gaeilge, TG4, the Arts Council and Creative Ireland. DCHG is currently finalising the terms of reference for the working group.
222	As part of the Town & Village Renewal scheme, provide competitive funding for public art works which contribute to public spaces and reflect the culture and characteristics of the town or region.	DRCD	2017-2020	In progress It was originally envisaged that a number of public Art Works would be supported as part of the 2017 Town and Village Renewal Scheme however, given the limited resources available, all funding was allocated to projects directly supporting the regeneration of rural towns and villages. Some of the projects in question included elements of public art works. A further round of funding (€15 million) under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme was announced in April 2018.
223	Advance the implementation of the Language Planning Process through the provision of funding, advice and technical support in order to foster the Irish language as a key resource in Gaeltacht areas.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress The Taskforce Implementation Group, established in March 2017, meets and reports on a quarterly basis. The latest report was published in July. Published in February 2018, an Implementation Review presented progress made by the group over the preceding twelve months and identified 34 measures to be progressed during 2018.

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224 Continue to support and invest in the language and community infrastructure of the Gaeltacht by way of a wide range of schemes, measures and initiatives (capital and current) currently administered by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. These Schemes include: Capital Programme to develop community facilities, Irish Language Assistance Scheme, An Clár Tacaíochta Teaghlaigh, Scéim Seirbhísí Réamhscoile agus Iarscoile, Summer camps in the Gaeltacht, Assistance for Gaeltacht Organisations.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	The allocation for the Irish-Language Assistants Scheme has increased by €230,000 to €1.02m in relation to the 2018/19 school year to facilitate the provision of language assistants in up to 136 schools throughout the Gaeltacht. The allocation for the Summer Camps Scheme has increased by €30,000 in 2018 to €330,000 which will facilitate over 200 summer camps for young people throughout the Gaeltacht in summer 2018. Funding continues to be provided to a range of organisations including Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, NUIG, towards the provision of third-level education opportunities through the medium of Irish in each of the University's three Gaeltacht-based campuses; Oideas Gael who provide Irish-language courses for students from Ireland and abroad; and Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne who provide language support measures that benefit the community and families in the Gaeltacht area of Corca Dhuibhne, Co. Kerry.
225 Roll out the Techspace as Gaeilge Initiative, currently operating in the Connacht region, to all other regions.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	The Department funded the inaugural TechFéile event in Limerick School of Art and Design in April and the feedback from participants was very positive. Capital funding is provided by the Department to schools and youth groups to facilitate the purchase of equipment. STEM training will be provided by Camara Ireland in September/October in Kerry and Cork to teachers / youth club leaders.
226 Roll out An Dioplóma sa Chultúr Dúchais to assist community capacity building through tourism development and professional development for Heritage Officers in the Gaeltacht.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Ongoing	In progress	Progress on this measure is ongoing.
227 Continue to provide funding for Ealaíon na Gaeltachta Teo to foster creativity and the arts in the Gaeltacht.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	2017-2019	In progress	Progress on this measure is ongoing. The initiative 'Aisling' funded through this programme has recently embarked on a national tour.
228 Continue to support the development of cultural tourism in the Gaeltacht by administering the Irish Language Learners scheme.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	Students attended various Gaeltacht Irish Colleges during August.
229 Implement Foras na Gaeilge schemes such as the Festival scheme and Drama scheme to foster culture and creativity.	Foras na Gaeilge	Ongoing	In progress	The Festivals Scheme has a maximum grant available of €5,000/£3,500. Applications for festivals in 2018 were sanctioned by the Board in May 2018. 46 Festivals were funded and a budget of €116,379 was approved. The Drama Companies Scheme offers a maximum grant available of €50,000/£30,000. Applications for Drama Companies' Scheme in 2018 were

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				approved by the Bord in May 2018. 18 Companies were funded and a budget of €208,896 was approved.	
230	Implement Foras na Gaeilge Schemes which create capacity building for young people in the Irish language community such as summer camps and special youth events.	Foras na Gaeilge	Ongoing	In progress	86 Summer Camps were completed during Summer 2018. 85 Youth Event Schemes have been approved for 2018/2019 (September to June).
231	Continue to support three NUIG Outreach Centres in Gaeltacht areas (Gaoth Dobhair, Carna and An Cheathrú Rua) in order to maintain Irish-medium educational opportunities at local level.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	Funding continues to be provided to Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, NUIG, towards the provision of third-level education opportunities through the medium of Irish in each of the University's three Gaeltacht-based campuses.
Pillar 5 - Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity					
232	Implement the National Broadband Plan to provide high speed broadband to every premises in Ireland.	DCCAE	Ongoing	In progress	As of Q2 2018, this has risen to over 7 out of 10 of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland have access to high speed broadband. This includes 175,000 premises passed as of Q2 2018 as part of in the eir rollout of high speed broadband to 300,000 rural premises. In the first half of 2018 DCCAE continued into the final stages of the procurement process to engage a company to build and maintain a future proofed high speed broadband network to 542,000 premises in Ireland, mainly in rural areas. On 18 September 2018 DCCAE received the Final Tender submission in respect of the NBP.
233	Establish an Implementation Group to drive and monitor the recommendations in the report of the Taskforce on Mobile Phone and Broadband Access to accelerate the rollout of broadband infrastructure and mobile phone access in rural Ireland.	DCCAE & DRCD	Q1 2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further information is available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
234	Work with local authorities to plan for and facilitate early access to high-speed broadband to rural communities in Ireland by identifying and addressing barriers and through the rollout of Strategic Community Access Hubs across Ireland.	DRCD	Ongoing	In progress	238 potential Strategic Community Access Hub (SCAH) sites have been identified by LA Broadband Officers. These sites are publically accessible and will offer local residents in rural areas the opportunity to connect to high-speed broadband ahead of delivery of nationwide coverage. These access hubs will be prioritised by the successful NBP bidder for early access to high speed broadband. SCAH sites include community centres, schools and sports clubs. Services will range from 'drive-in' wifi connectivity to hot desk facilities.

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235	Assign an officer with responsibility for broadband in each Local Authority area who will act as a single point of contact for telecommunications operators who are building out broadband infrastructure.	LAs & DRCD	Q1 2017	Completed	30 of 31 local authorities have appointed Broadband Officers. The Broadband Officers have proven to be an invaluable resource, providing a much needed single point of contact for telecommunication operators and department officials. So far this year, DRCD have hosted five Regional Action Group (RAG) meetings. These meetings allow DRCD, DCCAE and other stakeholders to meet with Broadband Officers and other LA personnel. The RAGs also provide a networking opportunity for Broadband Officers leading to the sharing of experiences, innovation, planning and co-ordination.
236	Develop Local Digital Strategies in each Local Authority area to ensure that businesses and communities are in a position to realise the full benefit of the National Broadband Plan once it is rolled out.	DRCD	2017	In progress	DRCD have engaged the services of Indecon Economic Consultants to produce local Digital Readiness Assessments. Each Assessment measures digital maturity against a seven pillar framework and compares each local authority's progress to their peers. These Assessments provide local authorities with the quantitative data needed to identify where their digital strengths and weaknesses are when preparing their Digital Strategies. Indecon are currently in the process of preparing a suite of guidelines that will assist local authorities to produce comprehensive, appropriate and effective Digital Strategies. Indecon will also provide workshops and other supports to local authorities as they research and prepare their Strategies, which are scheduled for completion at the end of this year.
237	Implement a new Digital Skills Training Programme under the National Digital Strategy, to support 25,000-30,000 citizens who have never used the internet, thereby assisting in upskilling rural communities ahead of the rollout of broadband across the country.	DCCAE	2017-2019	In progress	Between January 2017 and June 2018 over 29,000 citizens received training across all Counties including 3,500 unemployed people. 28% of participants have stated that the skills learned will improve their job prospects. Over 49% of trainees have reported that they feel less isolated. 64% will use their skills to stay in touch with family/friends. 60% of all trainees now feel competent to use online Government services
238	Remove development contribution charges for the placement of telecommunications infrastructure across all Local Authorities as a matter of priority.	Local Authorities	Q1 2017	In progress	DHPLG has prepared an update to the 2013 Development Contribution Guidelines to extend the current exemptions for broadband infrastructure to incorporate mobile phone infrastructure, by way of a Circular letter issued to planning authorities under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Planning authorities must have regard to guidelines issued under Section 28 in the performance of their functions generally under the Planning Acts. The Circular letter issued on 3 July 2018 and DHPLG will be engaging with planning authorities in relation to its implementation.

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239	Complete the duct installation on 95km of roadway on the M7/M8 corridor to enable operators to deploy end-to-end telecommunications infrastructure between Dublin and Cork.	TII	Q2 2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further information is available in the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.
240	Explore whether take up of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) can be improved, including through a review of the pricing and other arrangements relating to connections.	DCCA	Q2 2017	Delayed	The review of the pricing and other arrangements relating to access to the Metropolitan Area Networks is in progress. The review has taken longer than expected because of the complexity of the MANs and their unique position as wholesale open access fibre networks in 94 regional towns and cities. Following finalisation of the review, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment will be engaging in discussions with enet, which manages and operates the MANs on behalf of the State, about recommendations arising from the review. It is hoped that the outcome of this process will facilitate improved access to the MANs by retail service providers.
241	Review the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book) on an ongoing basis and, building on existing arrangements, establish an appropriate Stakeholder Forum to provide for a clear and transparent engagement process for formal dialogue between the relevant stakeholders in relation to road openings.	DTTAS	Ongoing	In progress	Following extensive consultation over some three years, the latest version of the <i>Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads</i> (Purple Book) was published in April 2017. Training to support implementation is being rolled out. The Stakeholder (User) Forum has also been established. Among other things, this Forum will seek to address ongoing operational issues relating to the Purple Book.
242	Optimise State assets to facilitate the roll out of strategically-paced telecommunications infrastructure, leading to improved broadband and mobile phone coverage.	DRCD & DCCA	Ongoing	In progress	A Working Group on State and Publically-owned Assets was established in July 2018, and the two Departments will shortly be jointly submitting to Government a Policy Paper in respect of leveraging State and publically owned assets suitable for the siting and deployment of telecommunications infrastructure.
243	Develop revised 'Exempted Development Regulations' to allow industry to accelerate the rollout of 4G services by exempting 4G antennae from requiring planning permission.	DHPLG	2017	Completed	Action Completed. Further information is available in the Action Plan for Rural Development 2 nd Progress Report.
244	Develop a licensing scheme allowing for the use of mobile phone repeaters to improve the quality of indoor mobile coverage, particularly in rural areas.	COMREG	2017	Completed	Following a consultation process ComReg has developed a licensing scheme which will enable householders and businesses to use mobile phone repeaters to boost signals into their premises and bring immediate improvements in mobile coverage.

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245	Generate and publish online a composite national mobile phone coverage map (similar to the map produced by the UK regulator (Ofcom)), which will help consumer - particularly in rural areas - choose the network provider that best meets their needs depending on where they live and work.	COMREG	2018	In progress	ComReg is in the process of developing a national 'coverage map' to help mobile phone users understand the quality and extent of coverage across Ireland. This map will show coverage across 2G, 3G and 4G platforms for all networks.
246	Assess the extent of mobile phone reception blackspots being experienced across the country, which affects rural areas in particular, and identify actions to rectify this. This could include consideration of how spectrum in the 700MHz band is allocated.	DCCAE	Q2 2017	In progress	DRCD and DCCAE are actively engaged with local authorities and mobile phone operators to address the issue of mobile phone blackspots. Specific measures in progress include: a mapping exercise to identify priority mobile phone blackspots and identify any infrastructure that could potentially be used to improve mobile coverage in these blackspot areas. A focus group to identify specific categories of locations where high quality mobile coverage should be available has been established and its work will inform future policy development and initiatives.
247	Convene a forum of all stakeholders annually to discuss issues impacting on the rollout of telecoms infrastructure across the country.	DRCD	2017	Completed	The second annual Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce: National Stakeholder Forum was held on 12 October 2018 in Ballinasloe. The event brought together key stakeholders to engage in open dialogue, to discuss issues impacting on broadband and mobile phone coverage and to identify solutions to those challenges in order to enhance and improve services.
248	Progress the major roads projects detailed in the 7 year transport element of the Capital Investment Plan which will help deliver economic and business benefits across rural areas and regions.	DTTAS	Ongoing	In progress	Major road projects in the CIP are being progressed.
249	Improve transport services for the off-shore islands to support the sustainable and inclusive development of island communities and to encourage tourism and other economic benefits, including improved co-ordination with relevant Local Authorities and DTTAS as appropriate.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	D/CHG is continuing to subsidise transport services, renewing contracts as they arise, and is working with the island communities and ferry operators to enhance the services being provided.
250	Continue capital investment in island piers and harbours.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	A programme of island infrastructure works, totalling over €1 million has been agreed between the Department and relevant local authorities for 2018. Project Ireland 2040 specifically refers to capital investment for marine infrastructure at Inis Oírr and Inis Meáin, County Galway and for Toraigh, County Donegal. This will greatly benefit those islands.
251	Conduct a full review of public transport policy, including the rural transport dimension, to ensure that it meets the needs of rural communities.	DTTAS	2017	Delayed	In recognition of the value and benefit of rural transport to many communities, the Programme for a Partnership Government undertakes to examine how best to improve integration of services in the rural bus

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				<p>network within regions, and proposed that a report about this should be provided to the relevant Oireachtas Committee. This matter is being examined and developed by DTTAS in the context of the wider work on which it has embarked around a review of public transport policy. Work on this policy review is at an early stage. DTTAS is currently drawing together data and information from many sources, which will inform its work. As part of the review process, Minister Shane Ross hosted a Round Table Discussion on Public Transport Policy in May of this year. This event included a broad range of organisations and individuals who are closely connected with the public transport sector. Both Irish Rural Link and the Rural Transport Network were represented at this event. A public consultation will take place over the coming months on the papers and presentations from that Round Table Discussion. This consultation will further inform the ongoing review.</p>
252	Work with rural communities to assess and implement improvements to existing rural transport routes and develop new rural transport routes as necessary.	NTA	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>The new Evening and Night Time Local Link Services were officially launched in Tipperary and Kerry in June 2018. Following a funding call, all 17 Local Link companies have been awarded funding to deliver a total of 64 new evening services nationally. These services will run on average from 6pm to 11pm typically on Friday and Saturday evenings, running until December 2018 on a pilot basis. The following launches of new Local Link services took place in Q2 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 982 Wild Atlantic Way-Sligo to Rossnowlough – LL Sligo/Leitrim/Roscommon • Route 977 Gurteen to Sligo via Ballymote- LL Sligo/Leitrim/Roscommon • Route 547 Portumna to Ballinasloe – LL Galway • Route 361-Ardmore to Dungarven via Helvick – LL Waterford • Route 955 Wild Atlantic Way – Bunrana to Carndonagh & Malin Head –LL Donegal
253	Rollout a programme of awareness of the Rural Transport Programme amongst rural communities.	NTA	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>The Local Link website – www.locallink.ie has been refreshed and upgraded to enhance user experience including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The launch of a national media campaign promoting the new Local Link evening and night time services. • The forging of a strategic alliance with Fáilte Ireland to promote Local Link services that connect with the Wild Atlantic Way thereby further promoting the Local Link brand.

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254	Ensure that Rural Transport Programme vehicles are accessible, having regard to all passenger needs.	NTA	Ongoing from 2017	In progress The Rural Transport Programme aims to provide fully accessible transport services on all routes with a target of 95% fully accessible trips by 2020. The procurement process for rural transport services requires that 'buses used for the provision of the Services are to be Wheelchair Accessible within two (2) years of the date of this Contract (save where...(it is provided)...that buses must be accessible from the outset of the Contract).’ As more services are procured, there is a significant uplift in the numbers of accessible vehicles in use nationally to deliver rural transport services.
255	Examine the potential for, and where possible, integrate Health Service Executive non-emergency transport services with rural transport services.	NTA	Ongoing	In progress It remains the intention of the Rural Transport Programme to pilot a national integrated transport project in partnership with the HSE in 2018.
256	Support rural communities by bringing eligible children to their local school through the provision of safe, efficient and cost effective school transport services.	DES	Ongoing	Completed In the 2017/2018 school year over 116,000 children, including over 12,000 children with special educational needs, are being transported in over 4,500 vehicles on a daily basis to primary and post-primary schools throughout the country covering over 100 million kilometres annually at a total cost of almost €190 million.
257	Conduct a review of the small public service vehicle driver licensing framework to ensure, amongst other things, the availability of taxi/ hackney services including in rural areas.	NTA	2017	Delayed Following changes to small public service vehicle (SPSV) driver entry testing resulting in 53% increase in candidates completing the test with 63% of these achieving a pass, there was an increase of 47% in the average number of new SPSV Driver Licences issued per month during the first 6 months of 2018. Following the 2012 SPSV Industry Review, the Local Area Hackney licence was introduced in 2013 and continues to be offered by NTA as another path to address local transport deficits in certain more isolated rural areas. This not a popular licence thus far, particularly as the economy improves, with drivers preferring to become fully licensed drivers permitted to operate outside of the 5-7km pick up zone of the Local Area Hackney licence. The number of active licences remains low overall, with a stable 10-11 licences active nationwide. A review of the position on Local Area Hackneys is being undertaken at present as part of the development of a strategic framework for the SPSV industry. It is expected that this will be completed by end 2018.
258	Examine the scope for increased investment in regional roads in the context of the review of the Capital Investment Plan 2016- 2021.	DTTAS	2017	Completed Action Completed. For further information see the Action Plan for Rural Development Second Progress Report.

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259	Promote increased funding for Local Improvement Schemes (for non-public roads and laneways) and Community Involvement schemes (for regional and local roads), on an annual basis, as resources permit.	DRCD	Ongoing	In progress	The 2018 Local Improvement Scheme was launched in February this year, with an indicative allocation of €10.8 million. In total, since the Scheme was re-launched in 2017 over €28 million has been allocated to the Local Authorities, and over 1,100 individual roads will benefit.
260	Implement the capital and operational support schemes, as appropriate, under the Regional Airports Programme 2015-2019 at the regional airports in Donegal, Kerry, Waterford and Ireland West Airport Knock, utilising the additional €10m of support provided for under the Programme for a Partnership Government.	DTTAS	Ongoing	In progress	DTTAS secured over €17m in additional capital funding for the Regional Airports Programme (RAP) as part of last year's Review of the Capital Plan (€7m more than envisaged in the PPG), which will be available in the period 2019 to 2021. €21.7million is being provided to the RAP in 2019, an increase of €8 million over 2018. Funding under the Regional Airports Programme helps to support capital investments and operational aid in the areas of safety and security at the airports, as well as PSO air services between Dublin/Donegal and Dublin/Kerry.
261	Arrest and reverse the decline in passenger numbers at Cork Airport and increase connectivity by air into and out of Cork.	daa	2017-2019	In progress	Passenger numbers for the first half of the year were up 4% over the same period in 2017 to 1.097m. Cork Airport secured a number of new routes this year with Air France now flying daily from Cork to Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Aer Lingus flying year-round to Lisbon Portela Airport, commencing in October. Ryanair also extended its twice weekly service from Cork to Faro into the winter season. The Norwegian service to Boston Providence has seen over 31,000 passengers travel between Cork and the US since July last year.
262	Grow existing routes and services at Shannon Airport which will benefit the region.	Shannon Group	Ongoing	In progress	In the first 6 months of 2018, new services were introduced to Toronto, Bristol, Liverpool and Barcelona-Reus. Existing services were expanded with American Airlines to Philadelphia and increased frequencies with Norwegian Airlines to both New York Stewart and Boston Providence, in addition to increased frequencies to Manchester with Ryanair.
263	Agree and implement a Code of Practice with relevant infrastructural providers to ensure timely and efficient transport links and other key infrastructure are maintained across rural Ireland whilst safeguarding Ireland's archaeological heritage.	DCHG	2017-2020	In progress	TII and DCHG are continuing to work together to ensure that archaeological and architectural heritage impacts are managed throughout project design, planning and construction phases and that key transport projects are delivered on time and effectively. DCHG continues to liaise with OPW to address impacts of extensive flood relief programme and ensure systems are in place to manage mitigation.
264	Increase Capital funding for flood risk management schemes up to €80m per annum by 2019 and increasing to €100m per annum by 2021, as provided for under the Capital Plan 2016- 2021, to accelerate delivery of flood	OPW	2017-2021	In progress	The Government's National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 – 2027 includes a total funding allocation of €940m over the lifetime of the Plan to underpin the delivery of the existing flood relief capital works programme and the additional prioritised flood relief. The NDP allocation taken with the funding allocations already made in 2016 and 2017 under the capital

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	defence schemes around the country that will provide protection for properties at risk of flooding.			investment plan <i>Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016 - 2021</i> represents total investment of over €1 billion in flood defence schemes. The annual allocation for flood defence measures will increase to €100m by 2021 demonstrating the priority placed by the Government on addressing Ireland's flood risk.
265	Approve and implement Flood Risk Management Plans setting out flood risk management measures identified for areas of significant risk around the country, including over 100 further proposed measures for rural communities in addition to 28 flood relief schemes for rural communities already in progress.	OPW	2017-2027	In progress Following an extensive response to the public consultation, the Flood Risk Management Plans were approved by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in April 2018. A €1bn investment in an additional 118 flood relief schemes over the coming decade was launched in May 2018. The OPW and the Local Authorities are pro-actively engaging on the arrangements and structures to be put in place to advance the implementation of the first tranche of projects announced in May.
266	Introduce a prioritised and targeted voluntary homeowners relocation scheme for those again affected by the flooding of December 2015-January 2016.	OPW	2017	Completed In April 2017 the Government agreed arrangements for a Voluntary Homeowners Relocation Scheme for those primary residential properties that flooded between December 4th 2015 and January 13th 2016. This is a once-off national scheme of humanitarian assistance, targeting aid at those worst affected properties, for which there are no alternative feasible measures. The scheme was established immediately after approval and the OPW commenced the identification of properties in consultation with local authorities. The OPW and Local Authorities are working to identify engineering solutions for affected homes and information meetings with other homeowners have been conducted. In June some homeowners were invited to apply for this voluntary relocation scheme.
267	Establish a Working Group comprising representatives from Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, OPW and Local Authorities to examine in the first instance the feasibility of a targeted and prioritised voluntary farm building relocation scheme for those farm buildings again affected by floods in Winter 2015/2016 and where alternative flood alleviation remedial works and measures are not feasible.	DAFM	2017	In progress The study to determine the feasibility of any future once-off targeted scheme for Voluntary Farm Building Relocation has been commenced. DAFM is using its own records of applicants who sought aid under the emergency relief package, to identify potential candidates for any Voluntary Farm Building Relocation scheme. In addition, DAFM will use details supplied to the OPW, as part of the Voluntary Homeowners Relocation Scheme, to identify further potential applicants. DAFM will contact and work with these individual farmers to determine if there are any alternative remedial works to protect those farmyard buildings at risk and develop recommendations in relation to the feasibility of a scheme. A review of the OPW Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection funding scheme was conducted in 2017 and a number of improvements to the scheme were announced.

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268 Implement Stage 1 of a National Flood Forecasting and Warning Service/Flood Forecasting Service to be established within Met Éireann within 5 years.	Met Éireann	2017-2021	In progress	The Chief Hydrometeorologist was appointed in February 2018. Competitions for hydrometeorologists took place in the summer and a panel is formed, which candidates will be drawn from. Contract hydrologists have been seconded to provide support and increase knowledge of flood forecasting to Met Éireann. A project in collaboration with the OPW is in progress to select fluvial flood models for the operational flood forecast centre.
269 Assess rural and dispersed flood risk, and where possible develop strategies and actions to manage the assessed risk, under the second cycle of the EU Floods Directive.	OPW	2017 onwards	In progress	The second cycle of the EU Floods Directive requires that Ireland reviews its assessment of flood risk and the flood maps and Plans prepared. Following the launch of the Flood Risk Management Plans in May 2018 work to assess the flood risk in some of those areas not addressed in the current Flood Risk Management Plans is commencing.
270 Strengthen the engagement with the insurance industry to improve the availability of flood insurance cover, given the State's ongoing investment in flood defence schemes.	OPW	2017	In progress	The OPW is undertaking quarterly meetings with the insurance industry and additional meetings of a technical working group. The OPW has also provided comprehensive detail on its demountable defences which is being reviewed by the industry. The OPW, DoF and Insurance Ireland meet quarterly and discuss means of sharing of data in a timely manner to enable flood risk cover to be provided where the OPW have provided flood defences. These discussions include providing data prior to the scheme's completion and flood insurance in areas protected by demountable defences.
271 Review Minor Flood Mitigation Works & Coastal Protection Schemes to support Local Authorities in their work to address localised flooding problems in their areas.	OPW	2017-2021	Completed	The review of the Scheme has been completed. It examined all the existing criteria with a view to strengthening and improving the operability of the Scheme. As a result, the upper financial threshold has now been increased significantly from €500,000 to €750,000 per project and for the first time, farm yards/buildings will be included as commercial premises in all categories. Other improvements include lowering the benefit to costs ratio for smaller projects, improved benefit allowances for different property types and updated methodology for diverted journeys due to flooding.
272 Introduce a trial to lower the water level on Lough Allen in specific conditions in order to help to mitigate potential flood risk.	OPW	2017	Completed	A trial was introduced in October 2016 to lower the levels on Lough Allen by 0.7 metres during the Winter season. The Year 1 trial concluded in March 2017 at the start of navigation season. A decision was then taken to continue with the trial for a second year to incorporate any lessons from Year 1 implementation. The Year 2 trial was commenced in October 2017 to run until March 2018. At its meeting in May 2018, the Shannon Working

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				Group agreed to continue to trial the lowering of the lake levels for the coming Winter.
273	Evaluate the benefits from any short and medium term programme of localised dredging and any future piloting to remove some pinch points along the Shannon.	OPW	2017	In progress The Shannon Working Group has established a sub-committee through which progress is being made in developing proposals for both short and long term maintenance activities. The OPW and Waterways Ireland are currently examining the potential for lowering the navigational channel upstream of Meelick Weir, which may achieve some potential benefits during summer floods, subject to more detailed analysis.
274	Assess the use of cutaway peatlands and pumping and peat stock management regimes to assist in flood risk management.	Bord na Móna	2017	In progress Bord na Móna is continuing to manage peat stocks on bogs that are prone to flooding in the Shannon catchment. This is to operate sales schedules to minimise peat stocks in these bogs during winter months in order to maximise water retention in extreme river flood conditions. Bord na Móna continues to monitor river water levels and weather forecasts on a daily basis in these areas.
275	Identify potential solutions to address the risk of flooding from turloughs.	GSI	2017-2019	In progress Telemetric stations have been installed at 10 turlough sites with a further 2 scheduled for completion during 2018. Monitoring is also continuing at a further 40 turlough sites. An airborne LiDAR topographic survey has been completed over South Galway to complement existing OPW LiDAR data. The hydrological model for the South Galway catchment has been calibrated and is scheduled to deliver flood maps by the end of the year. Historic and predictive flood maps are currently being generated for the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) phase of the 2nd cycle of implementation of the EU Floods Directive. Collaborative work is continuing with Local Authorities in Counties Roscommon, Galway, Longford and Mayo.
276	Continue implementation of the Forestry Programme (2014- 2020) by increasing annual planting, carbon sequestration and more effective land management.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress Measures introduced under the midterm review of the forestry programme in February 2018 were targeted primarily at increasing broadleaf planting as a % of total annual planting. These measures appear to be having the desired effect in that broadleaf planting up to the end of July 2018 has increased from 21% to 24% compare to 2017 levels. Despite this increase in broadleaf planting, the year on year trend for both conifer and broadleaf planting combined is down. Planting up until the end of July 2018 is 22% less than total planting at the same time in 2017.

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277	Establish an interagency taskforce to develop and publish a cross-sectoral action plan to address the significant decline in the population of Gaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh (Inveragh, Co. Kerry) and to revitalise the area in order to attract enterprise and investment.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Q3 2017 - 2018	In progress	The Taskforce was established in September 2017 and meets on a regular bases. A number public consultations have taken place and a survey of those who have left the South Kerry area in the last 10 years has been completed. The consultations have fed into a draft action plan for the area, which is now being finalising. The Taskforce is exploring funding options to resource the implementation of the action plan.

Glossary of Abbreviations

BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
CIF	Construction Industry Federation
CSO	Central Statistics Office
daa	Company formerly known as the Dublin Airport Authority
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DBEI	Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation
DCHG	Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DCCAE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DEASP	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
DJE	Department of Justice and Equality
DoF	Department of Finance
DoH	Department of Health
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
DTTAS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
EI	Enterprise Ireland
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
ETBs	Education and Training Boards
FLAGs	Fisheries Local Area Action Groups
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HSE	Health Service Executive
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
ILCU	Irish League of Credit Unions
ISIF	Ireland Strategic Investment Fund
LAs	Local Authorities
LAGs	LEADER Local Action Groups
LDCs	Local Development Companies
LCDCs	Local Community Development Committees
LEOs	Local Enterprise Offices
NTA	National Transport Authority
NUIG	National University of Ireland Galway
OPW	Office of Public Works
OSI	Ordnance Survey Ireland
PPNs	Public Participation Networks
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development
RGDATA	Retail Grocery Dairy & Allied Trades Association
SBCI	Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
WDC	Western Development Commission