

1 Education & Skills

1.1 Encourage Entrepreneurship from a Young Age

1.2 Promoting Entrepreneurship at primary and secondary levels

The Department is currently in the process of consulting with all interested parties on how entrepreneurship can be built into the curriculum in Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Our aim would be to devise an approach which does not add to the burden of schools nor create additional work for teachers.

Entrepreneurship, as a transversal skill, can be made integral across all aspects of high quality Primary and Post Primary education. It already features strongly in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015. The Junior Cycle Statements of Learning and Key skills cover many aspect of entrepreneurship such as communication, innovation and creative thinking.

This approach does not involve developing entrepreneurship as a new or stand-alone programme. Rather it aims to include it as part and parcel of all existing curriculum areas (Primary and Post Primary) as they are reviewed and updated normally. Teachers would receive guidance and training on entrepreneurship as part of their normal continuous professional development.

With this approach, there should be no significant cost associated with development of entrepreneurship education as an integral part of the curriculum for Primary and Post Primary level.

1.3 Development of skill focused framework

Developing a skills focussed framework

The Department of Education and Skills has a number of strategies and initiatives in place to ensure that education and training meets the skills requirements of the workplace. SOLAS, with the assistance of relevant experts such as the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), employers and local and national organisations, have published a five year strategy for the further education and training sector which provides us with a strategic roadmap for this crucial element of the education and training system. The strategy includes a vision of a flexible, quality-driven, labour market-relevant, integrated and responsive sector that supports learner progression, transitions into employment and personal development. The higher education system is also going through a process of transformation through structural change arising from the Higher Education Strategy.

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), which is funded by the Department of Education and Skills, advises the Government on current and future skills needs of the economy. It has a central role in ensuring that labour market needs for skilled workers are anticipated and met. The expert group's membership is broad and specifically includes representation from enterprise. Its research provides an input to the development of course curricula and informs the selection of new targeted programmes designed to tackle the skills shortages in particular elements of the economy, such as Momentum, Springboard and the ICT skills conversion programme.

As part of the Action Plan for Jobs 2015, the Department of Education and Skills has committed to review the National Skills Strategy. The review will provide an opportunity to determine the volume, type and mix of skills required to meet the Government's goal of full employment by 2018 and the challenges to be addressed to achieve this.

Direct engagement between employers and education and training providers is also critical to ensuring that programmes are aligned to changing skills needs. As well as the actions that are being implemented across the education and training system as part of the Further Education and Training and Higher Education reform programmes to enhance links with enterprise and prepare learners for the different roles they will have over their working lives work is also underway in the context of the Skills Strategy review to develop the regional and national infrastructure for engagement between education providers, employers and other enterprise stakeholders, in communicating and addressing skills needs.

Apprenticeship registrations are also rising in existing trades and progress is being made in introducing new apprenticeships, focusing initially on the 25 priority proposals identified by the Apprenticeship Council through their public call.

1.4 Enhance access to online education and training

Online educational resource scoilnet.ie for primary and post primary teachers:

Scoilnet.ie is the Department of Education's education portal and provides teachers with the option to share and upload their own teaching and learning resources. The site has is a repository, where teacher-produced resources can be added by any registered teacher in Ireland. Scoilnet also provides access to thousands of teacher reviewed resources relevant to the Irish curriculum.

2. Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation:

2.1 Providing a structured mentoring system

Through various “soft” supports offered by Enterprise Ireland and the 31 Local Enterprise Offices there are already a number of entrepreneurship development initiatives, including mentoring, operating. More detail is required as to the specifics of this proposal – e.g. scale/participation rates, sectoral focus, geographic focus etc are all relevant issues for consideration. Under the new LEO Development Plans and in conjunction with the new Action Plans for the Regions which are being developed by DJEI (in conjunction with partners nationally), mentoring is one area that is indeed of direct relevance. However without further specifics it is not possible to quantify costings at this time.

2.2 Establish a national office for young entrepreneurs.

Further details are needed on this proposal to develop absolute clarity. What is being proposed would seem not too dissimilar to the “Ireland’s Best Young Entrepreneur” (IBYE) Initiative which is run through the LEOs with assistance of Enterprise Ireland. Indicative IBYE funding in 2015 (subject to demand and quality of applications) will be in the region of €2m. see www.ibye.ie

2.3 Entrepreneur Training & Mentoring Programme (ETMP)

As mentioned in (1) above there are a range of “soft” business supports already in place through Enterprise Ireland and the Local Enterprise Offices (and indeed InterTrade Ireland for companies trading/looking to trade on an all-Island basis). To properly cost this proposal further specifics would be needed (eg. Anticipated participation rates across the various LEOs + cost of the resources needed to deliver the Programme.) It should be noted that the LEOs structure, whilst now integrated into the Local Authorities structure, typically have 3 ~ 4 people working on enterprise focused operations, so there is a capacity issue in terms of any new programme offerings.

2.4 Multinationals monitoring exchanges with SMEs.

In this proposal it is assumed that SMEs relates to Irish indigenous firms.

Again further detail is required on this proposal e.g. Some indicative participation rates, what scale of multinational are we talking about?(*a sizable proportion of the MNCs in Ireland are actually small to medium firms with a number of Irish SMEs considerably bigger*), should there be a sectoral focus or perhaps run the proposal it on a pilot basis? Answers to some of these questions would enable some indicative costings.

It should be noted that, in certain sectors and across certain enterprise agency programmes, there is already a reasonable/good interaction between multinationals and SMEs. For example specifically in the research and innovation space, there is a jointly run EI – IDA Technology Centres programme which involves significant industry involvement/partnerships spanning MNCs and SMEs. Likewise through Science Foundation Ireland’s large-scale Research Centres programme. The collaborative approach

and networking delivers mutual benefits. There are different challenges (and learnings to be had) in terms of company scale.

There are also certain programmes run, for example, in conjunction with American Chambers Ireland, which could/do involve MNCs interacting with indigenous firms and the higher education institutions for mutual benefit.

More specifics needed to cost this proposal.

2.5 Rolling out Farmleigh fellowship to other countries

DJEI drives the development and delivery of the enterprise development programmes of IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. EI are focused on helping Irish Companies achieve global success and targetting Asia as a growth market. Similarly IDAs new strategy out to 2019 is looking to increase leveraging FDI capability from across the globe, with an increasing focus on Asia.

In 2013/14 EI increased its international staffing cohort by 20 whilst IDA, through its “Winning Abroad” programme has an additional 35 staff based around the globe targetting new FDI wins for Ireland.

More specifics on this proposal would help to provide indicative costings response.

2.6 Provide business advice vouchers to help more start-ups survive

The paper is clear in terms of this proposal. At €2,500 per voucher and if, up to the 5,000 vouchers were issued under this proposal, then the cost involved is €12.5 million per annum.

Technology to enhance enterprises & learning

Proposal
Online mentoring platform for diaspora to mentor indigenous SMEs

Further specifics needed on this proposal.

Issues of scale, operational responsibility (and practicalities) would need to be teased through. Indicative costings might be modest enough in the overall scheme of things but further specifics needed to tease through this proposal.

2.7 Process for simplifying the regulatory framework

Proposal
1. Better regulation & reducing red tape for SMEs
2. Reviewing the effectiveness of existing regulations on SMEs
3. SMEs regulatory fitness & competitiveness checks
4. Introduce a "one in , two out" rule for small business regulations

For these 4 areas, there is a need for further specifics to be provided before any costings quantification can be provided. It should also be noted that DJEI has worked hard in recent years to significantly reduce the burden of “red tape” on business through a range of initiatives undertaken through the Action Plan for Jobs process. As part of the economic recovery process, D/JEI has been instrumental in helping its customer base reduce some of their costs. In terms of the Government’s drive for “Better Regulation” D/JEI achieved in excess of the 25% reduction target of administrative burdens within the areas of Company Law, Employment Law and Health & Safety Law, amounting to an annual reduction of €207 million in business costs. Specifically, Company Law savings of €82 million per annum have been realised, and more than €33 million of which are due to the work of the CRO, as companies can submit their annual returns online via the CRO website and can use digital signatures for the B1 form and accounts. *(note these are 2014 figures and it is expected that further efficiency gains/cost reductions for business will accrue with recent legislative developments such as the Companies Act 2014 (which commenced on 1st June 2015) and the soon to be established Workplace Relations Commission.)*

See www.businessregulation.ie for further information.

Forfas, which has been integrated into the Department as a new Division (Strategic Policy Division) works closely with colleagues across the Department on competitiveness and regulatory issues which may/do impact on business.