



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Action Plan for Rural Development

Fifth Progress Report

Prepared by the Department of Rural and Community Development

Realising our Rural Potential Action Plan for Rural Development



**Fifth Progress Report
November 2019**

Minister's Foreword

The Government continues its work to improve the lives of people living and working in rural Ireland. This Fifth Progress Report on the Action Plan for Rural Development reviews the status of the 277 actions in the Action Plan over the period January to June 2019.

Since the Action Plan was launched in January 2017, 268 of those actions have either been delivered or are substantially advanced. Some key milestones over the period covered by this report include:



- In May 2019, the Government approved the appointment of a 'Preferred Bidder' to the National Broadband Plan (NBP) procurement process to provide access to high speed broadband in rural Ireland. The contract for the project delivery was subsequently signed in November 2019.
- In February 2019, funding of €653,904 was awarded by the Heritage Council to 71 local projects nationally, through the County Heritage Plan programme.
- 84,000 social housing solutions had been delivered under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan by the end of June 2019.
- Between January and June 2019, the Local Enterprise Offices based outside Dublin supported 1,850 'Start Your Own Business' programme participants, 3,936 mentoring participants, 20,000 'Student Enterprises Awards' participants and 157 Micro Finance Ireland Applications.
- Statistics from June 2019 show that, in 2018, Ireland's ocean economy had a turnover of €6.2 billion and a direct economic contribution of €2.2 billion (1.1% of GDP). This level of activity is contributing to supporting jobs in our coastal communities in particular.
- In March 2019, the €300 million Future Growth Loan Scheme was launched, as a partnership between the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation and the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine, with the financial backing of the European Investment Fund. This support is available to eligible SMEs, including the primary agriculture and seafood sectors, to support strategic long-term investment in a post-Brexit environment.

As the Action Plan for Rural Development draws towards its conclusion at the end of 2019, my Department is developing the next phase of rural policy for Ireland. The new five-year policy will build on the Action Plan and take a forward-looking approach to strengthening our rural communities and economies, and transforming our rural towns and villages.

I look forward to continuing to coordinate the efforts across Government to support our rural communities through the new policy which will be published early in 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Ring'.

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 3 years to end 2019, 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, with the Second Progress Report following in May 2018, the Third Progress Report published in November 2018, and the Fourth Progress Report published in July 2019. These reports are available to download on Gov.ie <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/b13c5f-progress-reports-action-plan-for-rural-development/>

Summary of Progress

This Fifth Progress Report outlines the progress which has taken place in relation to all of the actions in the Plan, focusing on activity between January and June 2019.

Of the 277 actions reported on, 268 have been completed or are substantially advanced, and 4 actions were closed. 5 actions due for delivery are delayed. These are summarised in the following table.

Delayed Actions

The 5 actions which were not completed on schedule in the first half of 2019 were:

<i>Action No.</i>	<i>Measure to be delivered</i>	<i>Lead Body</i>
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
80	Introduce a Marine Development and Investment Strategy for the Gaeltacht in line with Harnessing our Ocean Wealth.	Údarás na Gaeltachta
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
176	Agree and implement a scheme to indemnify private land owners with regard to recreational users of their lands.	DRCD
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

This Progress Report sets out some of the key developments over the period January to June 2019 under each of the Pillars of the Action Plan. It also includes a number of case studies which illustrate the impact of the actions being delivered under the Plan. A brief progress report on each action is provided in the second part of the report.

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. Under the 2019 Town and Village Renewal Scheme, 156 rural towns and villages across the country are set to benefit from €15 million in funding, with 26 projects receiving between €100,000 and €200,000. More than 600 projects have been approved since the Action Plan for Rural Development was launched in January 2017. (Action 1, DRCD)
2. At end Q2 2019, some 84,000 social housing solutions have been delivered under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan. The number of new social homes delivered through Build, Acquisition and Leasing was 23,768 at the end of that quarter, which represents 48% of the target of 50,000. (Action 5, DHPLG)
3. The 2019 CLÁR Programme approved €5.99 million funding for 179 small infrastructure projects across the following measures: Support for Schools/Community Safety; Play Areas; First Response Support; Mobility and Cancer Care Transport and Sensory Gardens. (Action 10, DRCD)
4. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, in partnership with the Heritage Council, has committed €1,250,000 to the Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme in 2019, an annual grant scheme for the conservation and repair of traditional farm buildings and related structures, which is part of the Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS). 279 applications were received by the deadline of the 2019 scheme and 90 projects are currently in receipt of a grant offer with the first project complete. (Action 14, Heritage Council)
5. Payments of €3.2m were made to 21 Volunteer Centres, 8 Volunteering Information Services and a number of national volunteering support organisations, in 2019. (Action 19, DRCD)
6. 299 Day Care Centres provide approx. 28,000 places per week, both directly by HSE or through agencies grant-aided by HSE. On average 4,250 meals-on-wheels are delivered weekly across 345 centres. A pilot €1m Community & Voluntary Support Grant was launched in July to provide funding to improve, expand or develop community-based supports. (Action 31, HSE)

7. The National Childcare Scheme (NCS), previously known as the Affordable Childcare Scheme, is set to launch in October 2019. Progress to date includes capital funding for NCS providers, Phase 1 of nationwide training for service providers is completed and Phase 2 was due to commence in August. A dedicated NCS website (www.ncs.gov.ie) was established in March, and over 80,000 information packs for parents and providers have been circulated since then. (Action 36, DCYA)
8. Some 2,130 projects have now been approved for LEADER funding representing a value of over €75 million, with a further 370 projects seeking funding in excess of €27 million. A further €5 million in funding, which was originally earmarked for a possible REDZ/rural town initiative, will now be allocated to the Local Action Groups (LAGs) this autumn. The LAGs are due to be selected on 20 September 2019. (Action 47, DRCD)
9. To date in 2019, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine has announced details of EMFF grants of €4 million, awarded by Ireland's 7 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) to 274 coastal based projects, supporting total investment of €6.4 million. Successful projects included investments in micro seafood enterprises, marine tourism and marine leisure projects, heritage projects, small harbour facilities, and environmental and training projects. In May 'Smart coastal areas: resourcefulness and innovation in FLAG communities' seminar was organised in Bantry at the initiative of the European Commission with the support of FLAG South, Ireland's Sea Food Development Agency - BIM (Bord Iascaigh Mhara) and DAFM. (Action 48, DAFM)
10. From January to July 2019, 9,757 homes have carried out energy efficiency improvements with grant assistance from the Better Energy Homes Scheme. Approximately 70% of these homes are located outside Co Dublin. (Action 52, DCCAE)
11. In 2019, 57 Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) were established, with 49 of these outside Dublin. This brings a total of 297 community groups in the SEC network, with 268 of them outside Dublin. (Action 54, DCCAE)
12. The Department of Rural and Community Development invested €6.9 million in the Seniors Alert Scheme in 2018. The scheme had a total of 53,692 participants as of 31 August 2019. There have been 13,233 new approved participants from 1 January to 31 August 2019, which represents a 51% increase on the same period in 2017, and a 2% increase on the January to August period 2018. (Action 61, DRCD)

Case Study: Supporting Sustainable Communities

The Iveragh Taskforce

The Iveragh Gaeltacht Taskforce was established under the chairmanship of Údarás na Gaeltachta in September 2017, following strong requests from the local community in response to an ongoing fall in the population of the area from 1956, when the Gaeltacht boundary was set.

The magnitude of this population change and the consequent implications for community sustainability was identified by Dr Brendan O’Keeffe in his socio-economic study of 2017 which revealed a 41% reduction in the population of the Iveragh Gaeltacht, one third of the Gaeltacht townlands now being uninhabited, and over 1,800 unoccupied houses in the area.

Over 20 state and community organisations played an active role on the Taskforce, with the aim of identifying a comprehensive suite of realistic actions which could be implemented to help tackle the population reduction, the ageing nature of the population structure and the socio-economic decline of the area.

Following a year’s work with the support of consultant Ciarán Lynch, the Taskforce formally adopted the 3-year Action Plan containing over 100 actions, each of which is aligned to one of the 5 Pillars of the Action Plan for Rural Development, and which focus on improving both economic and quality of life matters in the area. The Action Plan was formally launched in July 2019.

Among the targets included in the plan are a 3% increase in the population, including 10 extra families coming to live in the area, as well as the creation of 145 new full-time jobs.

The Taskforce successfully applied for funding under the auspices of Údarás na Gaeltachta to the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, which was approved in February 2019. This funding is being used to further the implementation of the Action Plan through commissioning specific pieces of research and the appointment of a dedicated Project Manager to coordinate delivery of the plan.



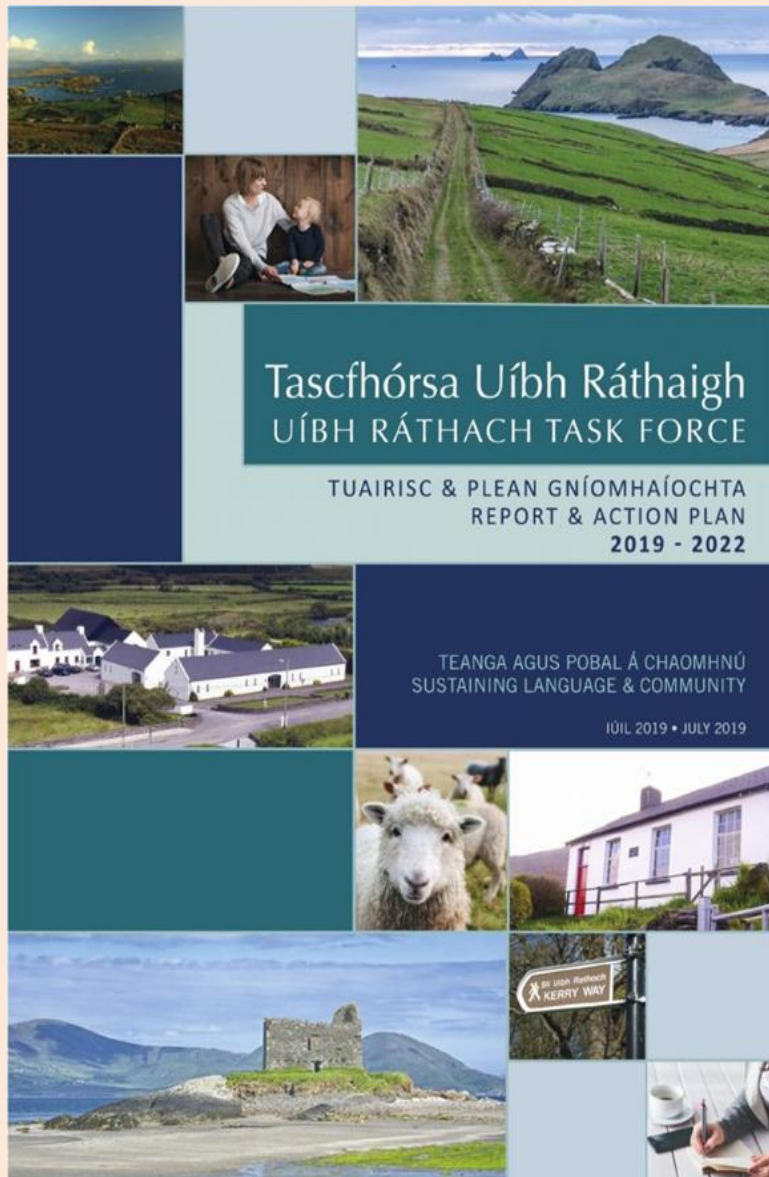
L-R: Mr Seán Kyne T.D., Minister of State for Gaeilge, Gaeltacht and the Islands, Mr. Micheál Ó hÉanaigh, Chief Executive, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Mr. Brendan Griffin, TD, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, at the launch of the Iveragh Gaeltacht Taskforce Action Plan (Photographer: Valerie O'Sullivan)

Case Study: Supporting Sustainable Communities

Tascfhórsa Uíbh Ráthaigh

Bunaíodh Tascfhórsa do Ghaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh faoi chathaoirleacht Údarás na Gaeltachta i Mí Meán Fhómhair 2017, i ndiaidh don phobal áitiúil éileamh a dhéanamh ar chabhair éigeandála ón stáit toisc an chailliúint daonra atá tarlaithe ó 1956 i leith.

Nochtaigh Dr Breandán Ó Caoimh cé chomh duairc is atá scéal inmharthanachta an phobail seo de ina chuid taighde soc-eacnamaíochta i 2017 – íslíú 41% ar dhaonra na Gaeltachta in Uíbh Ráthach, an tríú chuid des na bailte fearainn tréigthe, ós cionn 1,800 tithe folamh.



Ghlac breis is fiche eagrais, idir rannóga stáit agus grúpaí pobail páirt ar an dTascfhórsa agus í mar aidhm ag an grúpa ná beartais réadúla a aithint chun dul i ngleic leis an dtitim daonra, an dul an aois pobail, agus an mheath eacnamaíochta agus sóisialta.

Tar éis obair bliana, le cabhair an chomhairleora Ciarán Ó Loinsigh, ghlac ball-eagrais an tascfhórsa go foirmeálta leis an nGníomhphlean trí bliana, ina bhfuil ós cionn 100 gníomh luaite atá dírithe go príomha ar fhostaíocht agus ar chaighdeán saoil sa cheantar a fheabhsú, agus iad roinnte de réir na colúin atá áirithe sa Gníomhphlean um Forbairt Tuaithe.

Táthar ag súil leis go mbeidh 3% de mhéadú ar an daonra, le 10 teaghlach sa bhreis ag cónaí sa gceantar agus 145 post nua lánaimseartha a chruthú sa cheantar i measc torthaí na hoibre.

D'éirigh leis an dTascfhórsa maoiniú a ghnóthú ón gCiste um Athghiniúint agus Forbairt Tuaithe faoi scáth Údarás na Gaeltachta i Mí Feabhra 2019, chun cabhrú leo mianta an Gníomhphlean a bhrú ar aghaidh. Tá úsáid á bhaint as an mhaoiniú seo chun breis taighde a dhéanamh agus chun Bainisteoir Tionscadal a fhostú chun comhórdnú a dhéanamh ar an obair i leith an phlean.

Case Study: Supporting Sustainable Communities

Limerick City and County Council Development Contribution Scheme – Abha Bhán Park

Abha Bhán Park, located in Loughill village on the south shore of the Shannon Estuary, is a high quality amenity area for local communities and tourists. The village suffered from emigration and loss of shops and services over the period of the recession. The completion of this project creates a new centre piece or focal point for the village, serving the whole community and all age groups.

The project was officially opened in April 2019 and was funded via Town and Village Renewal Scheme, LEADER funding and local community funding. It was driven by the Abha Bhán Parish Community Group, whose membership includes local residents, local business people and other community groups in the Loughill/Ballyhahill and surrounding area.

Developed on a greenfield site, the Park is situated on the Shannon Estuary Way/Wild Atlantic Way, on the N69, running adjacent to the Abha Bhán (White River).



Before: View of works from the Abha Bhán River



After: Abha Bhán Park, fully developed

The Park was purpose-built. Designed to be suitable for all ages and fully accessible, it includes a wheelchair usable trampoline and a carefully-built sensory garden. This means no child or adult is excluded. The park includes a playground made from natural materials (natural grass surfaces), a floodlit astro-turf pitch and outer walking/running tarmac path. The space is carefully planned including benches and seated areas suitable for picnics, all located on the 2.5 acre site, surrounded by natural trees, shrubs and wild flower meadow making it a haven for biodiversity.

A carpark is integrated into the site with over 20 parking spaces and, as it is fully fenced-off from the main road and river, it is a secure and safe place.

The Park is visible to passing traffic on the N69/Wild Atlantic Way. The quality of the facility is encouraging tourists to stop and dwell in the area, adding to the tourism product base in the Shannon Estuary area of west Limerick.

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. Call Three of the DBEI Regional Enterprise Development Fund was launched by Minister Humphreys on 24 June and closed on 25 September. Assessment and evaluation of applications will take place in October and the successful projects will be put forward to Enterprise Ireland's Board on 18 December. (Action 69, DBEI)
2. The IDA is directly investing in regional Ireland through their Regional Property Programme (RPP), with Budget 2019 bringing an allocated €120 million of the €150 million funding to date. Separately, Budget 2019 provided the Agency with an additional €10 million to begin the next phase of the RPP. (Action 71, IDA)
3. The figures for all LEOs outside Dublin, from 01 January to 30 June 2019, includes 1,850 'Start Your Own Business' programme participants, 3,936 mentoring participants 20,000 'Student Enterprises Awards' participants and 157 Micro Finance Ireland Applications. (Action 73, LEOs)
4. The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) Taskforce has subgroups on Infrastructure, Enterprise Space and Communications progressing specific projects, including mapping unused/under-utilised enterprise spaces in key towns (280+ have now been mapped in 10 pilot towns), developing a branding/marketing strategy, and researching and identifying potential infrastructure developments. A project to develop a cohesive Hub Network is ongoing, to date 72 hubs have been identified, with 29 additional hubs planned. An Enterprise Hubs Programme Manager has been appointed to progress this work. The WDC has engaged as a co-ordinating body, supporting the work of the wider AEC. (Action 78, DRCD)
5. Economic statistics published in Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth in June 2019 show that in 2018 Ireland's ocean economy had a turnover of €6.2 billion and a direct economic contribution, as measured by gross value added (GVA), of €2.2 billion or 1.1% of GDP. The update shows that Ireland is on course to achieve the 2020 target set by Government, which aims to increase the turnover from Ireland's ocean economy to exceed €6.4 billion by 2020. (Action 79, DAFM)
6. Sean Kyne T.D., Minister of State for the Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands launched gteic, a new network of 31 innovation & digital hubs for Gaeltacht areas and the islands, on 25 September 2019. A total fund of €5m was provided by Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund. (Action 83, Údarás na Gaeltachta).

7. The Future Growth Loan Scheme was launched in March 2019, in partnership with the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, with the financial backing of the European Investment Fund. This is a €300 million scheme and is available to eligible SMEs including the primary agriculture and seafood sector. By 9 August 2019, 105 loans had progressed to sanction to a total of €16,227,200. (Action 89, SBCI)
8. In the first half of 2019 the Trading Online Voucher Scheme approved over 630 vouchers and distribution was in line with the target of approximately 60% of businesses in rural Ireland. (Action 92, DCCAE)
9. ACORNS has supported approximately 250 female entrepreneurs to date, which includes 50 participants in 2019. The contract has been extended for 2019/2020 and a new cycle of the ACORNS programme was launched in August 2019 by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine. (Action 94, DAFM)
10. On 18 July 2019, Michael Ring T.D., Minister for Rural and Community Development, launched Ireland's first National Policy on Social Enterprise (2019 – 2022). The Policy is focussed on 3 main objectives: Creating Awareness of Social Enterprise; Growing and Strengthening Social Enterprise and Achieving Better Policy Alignment, with 26 commitments set out under these objectives. (Action 99, DRCD)
11. In the first 6 months of 2019 over 3,184 companies engaged with InterTrade Ireland's Brexit Advisory Service including through conferences, workshops and presentations. During this period there were 737 Brexit 'Start to Plan' vouchers approved, which enable companies to obtain specialist advice. In March 2019, ITI launched a "Brexit Implementation Voucher" and 19 of these vouchers were approved in the first 6 months. In the same month they also launched their Virtual Learning Environment, which offers online learning for practical help for cross-border SMEs on how their business can prepare for Brexit. (Action 101, InterTrade Ireland)
12. The Dairy Farm Support Scheme reopened in 2019, increasing by the end of June to a total of 141 active grants. The SME Smart Lighting programme also reopened in 2019; by the end of June 2019 there were 148 applications with an estimated grant spend of €1.3 million. (Action 104, SEAI)
13. In the first half of 2019, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund grants of €4 million were awarded by BIM to 38 seafood enterprises, supporting €16 million investment in seafood processing and aquaculture businesses. An investment of €4 million was announced for 274 coastal based projects under the EMFF Fisheries Local Area Action Group Strategy for Ireland's 7 coastal regions. Action 111, DAFM)

14. Teagasc has established industry consortia to progress the development of agricultural/horticultural/equine Apprenticeship Programmes, which will be validated by QQI and the Apprenticeship Council before a rollout process can commence. They are currently developing a standardised branded format for both accredited and non-accredited CPD courses for farmers with CPD course offerings. (Action 131, Teagasc)
15. From 2018 to mid-year 2019 SICAP has assisted 43,043 individuals on a one-to-one basis. 16,502 people completed a lifelong learning course, 4,024 people set up their own business and 2,168 people got jobs. (Action 136, DRCD)

Case Study: Supporting Enterprise and Employment

AgriChemWhey

AgriChemWhey, is an EU Innovation project that is receiving funding from the Biobased Industries Joint Undertaking <https://www.bbi-europe.eu/> and is building a first-of-a-kind, industrial-scale biorefinery to valorise dairy processing by-products into several added-value bio-based materials for growing global markets, such as lactic acid (LA). The dairy processing by-products were one of the main hurdles in allowing dairy processing to consider a zero-waste and circular economy approach.



The Flagship project is examining the technical and economic viability of scaling up biorefinery technology for dairy processing. A major objective is to establish new co-operation and co-operative value chains with other local and rural stakeholders for the production of high value sustainable food, feed and biobased products from the dairy processing side streams, creating an enhanced circular bioeconomy for the agriculture and agri-food waste – tackling one of the major sustainability issues of the dairy industry. Developing biorefining technology for use in biobased industries in rural and regional areas also offers the opportunity to develop high quality, skilled green & sustainable jobs.

The project and its objectives:

The AgriChemWhey project will establish a first-of-a-kind, industrial-scale biorefinery to valorise dairy by-products from milk and cheese processing to several high added value bio-based (food, feed, fertilizer & chemicals) products for growing global markets by:

- Optimising and scaling-up the innovative fermentation processes
- Proving the technical and economic viability of the biorefinery
- Integrating co-operation of industrial and agricultural value chains

Case Study: Supporting Enterprise and Employment

Lárionad Acmhainní Nádurtha Cuideachta faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta (LAN CTR)

Na Tithe Gloine, Cill Ulta, An Fál Carrach, Co. Dhún na nGall

Lárionad Acmhainní Nádurtha CTR (LAN) is a voluntary, community-based social enterprise with charitable status, primarily resourced through the Community Services Programme. Its objectives are to support the economic, social, environmental, and cultural sustainability of this unique Gaeltacht area within the context of local, national, and global developmental and employment opportunities. It operates on a State-owned site in a Gaeltacht area on the Wild Atlantic Way which was formerly used for tomato production. The locality is categorised as disadvantaged on the Pobal Deprivation Index.

LAN's core function is the production of naturally grown, pesticide-free vegetables for the local community (box scheme), local retail outlets, and the food and cultural tourism sector. It is also a Smarter Energy Community in the process of completing an Energy Master Plan and is an active member of the SEAI Community Network. LAN is in the early stages of rolling out a European Innovation Partnership which focuses on abandoned land parcels with the view to stimulating the vitality and socio-economic renewal of Cloich Cheann Fhaola by supporting and restoring small-scale farming enterprises in the area through upskilling and experimental cultivation activities. It is an active learning centre in the areas of biodiversity, cultural and food tourism, organic growing, and healthy eating.



LAN utilised Dormant Accounts Funding to purchase a three-tonne excavator in order to: revitalise land resource capacity more efficiently and sustainably; rehabilitate and conserve land, not at the expense of the native biodiversity; upskill employees on plant usage; build upon the capacity and sustainability of this social enterprise within the wider Gaeltacht community; maximise the community-wide impact of the European Innovation Partnership.

Lárionad Acmhainní Nádurtha project

It is envisaged that this capital investment and resulting self-sufficiency will improve efficiency, pace, economy and financial sustainability over the next 5 years, by supporting activities such as clearance of site areas in accordance to National Parks and Wildlife Service standards for Special Protection Area designation; clearance and ongoing maintenance of European Innovation Partnership project land; training in mechanical operation with biodiversity awareness; development of tourism facilities, and development of a reed-bed system for waste processing.

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. The Final Tourism Facts for 2018, released by Fáilte Ireland, estimate that tourist volume in rural areas increased to 8.782 million in 2018. The APRD target of 8.3 million has been surpassed 1 year ahead of schedule. (Action 152, DTTAS)
2. In 2019, 12 projects have been approved for funding under the Rural Innovation and Development Fund for Agri-Food Tourism. (Action 163, DAFM)
3. The third phase of the Shannon Blueway was opened by Michael Ring T.D., Minister for Rural and Community Development on 28 June 2019, creating a new path along the shores of Lough Allen and increasing access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, with car parking also created. Funding of €340,000 for the project was obtained by a partnership of Waterways Ireland and Leitrim County Council under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme through the Department of Rural and Community Development. (Action 168, DCHG)
4. The 2018 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme commenced in June 2018 and will continue through to October 2019. Funding was provided to 232 projects in 2018, to the value of €20.77 million. The 2019 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure scheme was launched in March 2019 and 284 applications were received and are currently being assessed by the Department. (Action 170, DRCD)
5. On 6 June, Minister Michael Ring announced the appointment of Dr. Liam Twomey as the new Chair of Comhairle na Tuaithe and presented a new mandate to the Council which will reinforce and strengthen its advisory role in relation to the sustainable development of the outdoor recreation sector in Ireland. Comhairle will act as a forum for consultation and collaboration between stakeholders and advise on matters relating the use of the countryside for recreational purposes. It will also identify opportunities to develop rural enterprises based on outdoor recreation activity, and consider the scope for the development of a new National Strategy for Outdoor Recreation, taking account of recent developments and investments across the sector. (Action 177, DRCD)
6. In April, Inland Fisheries Ireland awarded funding to 46 organisations, for over 200 individual angling or fisheries related events, with approximately 60 of these to be held between 01 January to 30 June 2019. (Action 179, Inland Fisheries Ireland)

7. Under Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage, 2018 – 2027 capital investment of some €50 million has been earmarked for the National Parks and Nature Reserves and expenditure in the region of €3 million is anticipated to be directly invested in 2019. Under the Strategic Partnership with Fáilte, over €400k has been expended on scoping and feasibility studies with a further €4 million allocated to two large scale projects. A further €5 million in funding has been secured under the Rural Regeneration Fund for a total of 32 individual projects, targeting the upgrading and development of trails across the Parks and Reserves network. (Action 186, DCHG)
8. The Historic Structures Fund, formerly the Structures at Risk Fund is administered through the 31 local authorities. The 2019 scheme, which was launched in November 2018, has an allocation of €1.78 million. A total of 70 projects are being funded in 2019, comprising of 60 projects under Stream 1, 4 projects under Stream 2 and 6 projects funded under Partnership with State-funded organisations. (Action 193, DCHG)
9. Funding support of €653,904 was awarded by the Heritage Council in February 2019 to 71 local projects nationally, through the County Heritage Plan programme. These projects are implemented by County Heritage Officers in conjunction with local community groups and local heritage forum and support local communities to preserve and value the natural, built and cultural heritage. (Action 194, Heritage Council)
10. National Heritage Week 2019 was held from 17-25 August, with the themes Pastimes – Past Times. Co-ordinated by the Heritage Council, approximately 1,100 event organisers from the public, private and voluntary sectors organised more than 2,000 heritage events across the country, with attendance figures of approximately 400,000 people. (Action 195, Heritage Council)

Case Study: Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential

Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre Capacity Upgrade

Nestled at the foot of Kilmanagh's old Ballykeeffe Quarry, the Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre, which is a social enterprise run entirely by volunteers, brings the authentic atmosphere of an open-air Italian theatre to the rolling Kilkenny countryside.

Once a bustling slate quarry, it had lain abandoned for many years, with most indifferent to its very existence. However, in the late 1990s, a team of local volunteers recognised a unique potential which was brought to fruition through hard work and dedication, and in the year 2000 Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre proudly played host to the first of many performances.

Over the last 20 years, the Amphitheatre has grown and been developed thanks to the tireless work of volunteers and generous funding from LEADER, Kilkenny County Council, St Canice's Credit Union and many event sponsors, to name but a few.

The Amphitheatre can seat up to 800 on its tiered limestone benches, and boasts a state-of-the-art canopy which perfectly complements the astounding natural acoustics of the high quarry walls, providing an unrivalled experience for those attending the array of musical and theatrical performances hosted here. The venue is also fully wheelchair accessible.



Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre, Kilkenny

This stunning outdoor venue has become a focal point of Kilkenny's music and arts scene, and over the years has played host to many big names including Aslan, Finbar Furey, The Stunning, The Saw Doctors, Ronan Tynan, Nathan Carter, Hermitage Green and Hudson Taylor among many others.

Just minutes outside Kilkenny City, this tranquil and magical setting lends itself to reverie as performances unfold on warm summer nights under the stars.

Case Study: Maximising our Rural Tourism and Recreation Potential

Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme: Clonlarge Loop Walk, Kiltewan, Co Roscommon

The Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme is administered by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and was developed to grant funds for a broad range of projects, events, activities and works to support the conservation of raised bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other raised bog areas.

Kiltewan Tidy Towns are a voluntary community group in Co. Roscommon who are helping to increase community engagement with their local peatland habitats, to raise awareness around biodiversity and the importance of conservation of their unique and rare habitat and also to increase its value as a social, tourism and recreational area. In 2018 they were awarded funding of €17,000 under the Scheme to develop a walking trail, the Clonlarge loop, around Kiltewan bog and for trail signage and other promotional material.

In February this year they hosted a 5k walk on the Clonlarge Loop to celebrate World Wetlands Day, to help raise awareness of the important role played by wetlands in helping to mitigate the effects of climate change, and in May they held their first “School Eco Tour” for 85 pupils from Roscommon.

In 2019 the group have been awarded funding to further enhance the tourism, educational and recreational developments of the Clonlarge Loop. This will include the installation of a recycled plastic boardwalk and seating area next to a bog pool with information panels on the wildlife that inhabit the Pool.



Clonlarge Loop Walking Guide

This project is a perfect example of a local community group and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht working together to highlight the conservation benefits of our unique raised bogs while also increasing its rural tourism and recreational potential.



Trail Signage Information Panel



Walking Trail

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. €129,100 has been allocated to ongoing support of regional and specialised museums, and to 19 projects, under the Regional Museum Exhibition Scheme. (Action 204, DCHG)
2. The Arts Council's investment in small festivals increased from a total budget of €930,419 in 2016 to €1.4 million in 2019. The average festival grant has subsequently increased from €8,731 to €10,852 over this 3-year period. The increased investment has enabled arts activity to take place in local communities in every county in Ireland and increased opportunity for public engagement in the arts. (Action 208, Arts Council)
3. 2019 was the second year for Cruinniú na nÓg, with over 750 events nationwide. This event provides free activities for children, in their own locality, to explore creativity in all its forms. The 'Voice of the Child' is an integral part of this process, to ensure that this event provides the services that children and young people want. (Action 214, DCHG)
4. Culture Night 2019 took place on 20 September 2019, with an estimated 400,000+ people participating in events around the country. (Action 218, DCHG)
5. The Arts in Education Charter has now been resourced by the Creative Ireland Programme and forms part of Creative Youth, which was published jointly by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. A range of initiatives such as the development and maintenance of the Arts in Education Portal and the holding of a National Arts in Education Portal Day are ongoing. Other initiatives in the Charter include the expansion of Music Generation, and Arts Rich Schools (ARÍS), which is now being implemented as Creative Schools/Scoileanna Ildánacha. 150 schools began the initiative in September 2018 and are continuing their engagement in the new 2019/20 school year, with a further 150 schools beginning the initiative in September 2019. (Action 219, Arts Council)
6. One Language Plan relating to a Gaeltacht Language Planning Area was approved in the first half of 2019, bringing the total number of approved plans to 14. 2 further Plans were subsequently received from Údarás na Gaeltachta. (Action 223, DCHG)
7. Applications for Scéim na bhFéilte were sanctioned in January 2019. 53 festivals were funded and a budget of €115,699 was approved.

17 companies were funded for Scéim na gCompántas Drámaíochta were approved in March 2019 and a budget of €215,729 was approved. 6 festivals were funded under Scéim na Mór-Imeachtaí Ealaíon in 2019 and a budget of €48,467 was approved in April. (Action 229, Foras na Gaeilge)

8. By March 2019, 83 eligible applications for the Summer Camp Scheme were approved for funding at a total cost of €172,847 and camps ran during July and August. €278,380 was allocated to fund the Youth Events Scheme over two years (€149,502 in 2019 and €128,878 in 2020). 84 applications were eligible for funding, of which Foras na Gaeilge approved the recommendation to fund 72 of these. (Action 230, Foras na Gaeilge)

Case Study: Fostering Culture and Creativity in Rural Communities

Rindoon Abandoned Medieval Town, Co Roscommon

Rindoon in Co. Roscommon is one of the best preserved abandoned medieval towns in either Ireland or Britain. Located on a peninsula jutting out in to Lough Ree, the site contains an impressive collection of medieval remains. From the thirteenth century this site was the location of a royal castle and a town which was defended by a medieval wall and gatehouse.

The remains of a medieval parish church and hospital as well as a harbour are also present.

The local community over the past ten years have worked in partnership with the Heritage Council's Irish Walled Towns Network and Roscommon County Council to save much of what survived. The Heritage Council have provided the vast majority of funding to conserve the town wall, parish church, mill and medieval hospital. A survey of the impressive but ruinous castle was also supported and numerous public awareness events have also been held.



Rindoon Medieval Town – Church ruins with Castle in the background

To date a sum of €482,771 has been invested by the Heritage Council in this complex over the period 2010-18.



Rindoon Medieval Town – Interpretive Signage

To aid navigation and understanding a walk was developed and interpretation signage installed. From very low numbers the site now attracts approximately 8,000 visitors annually.

Leitir Corn Mill, Leitir, Cill Chártha, Co. Donegal



Leitir Corn Mill

This picturesque small-scale corn/oat mill complex is an important element of the built heritage of the Cill Chártha/Kilcar region, and of the industrial archaeology of Donegal. It has received funding under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and retains much of its early fabric including natural slate roofs, timber windows and sheet doors. The rubble limestone construction and the irregular spacing of the openings give it a distinctly vernacular appearance. Of particular importance is the survival of the iron breastshot water wheel and sluice mechanism, which provides an insight into historical industrial methods. This waterwheel was powered using water stored in an adjoining mill pond, which was filled with water diverted from the Glenaddragh River along a headrace.

Much of the original machinery apparently survives to the interior. One of the millstones is inscribed 'Kay and Hilton, Fleet Street, Liverpool, 1863'. This complex probably originally dates to the late-eighteenth or the early-nineteenth century, a period that saw a great boom in the Irish corn milling industry. The modest scale of the complex indicates that it was a vernacular corn mill, rather than a large-scale merchant corn mill as found more commonly in east Donegal. It provided a basic service to local farmers in grinding and milling their corn or oats, and was an important source of employment. This mill was in the ownership of a John Mullan or McMullan in 1881 and may have been in the ownership of a Robert Hanna in 1894, and it apparently remained in use until about 1954.

The ongoing works carried out to Leitir Corn Mill is part of an extensive project to refurbish the entire mill lead by the Kilcar Heritage Committee. The intention is to conserve Leitir Corn Mill with the ultimate aim of restoring the mill to full working order and for the redevelopment of the site as a visitor attraction. This ambitious restoration project consists of the restoration of the mill and drying kiln, mill dam, mill wheel and mill race. The renovation of the miller's house will include refreshment facilities. A new visitor's car park will also be added. The landscaping of the mill lands will include a new riverside walk.

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. In May 2019, Government approved the appointment of a "Preferred Bidder" to the National Broadband Plan procurement process to provide access to high speed broadband to remaining premises. At Q2 2019, 76% of the 2.4 million premises in Ireland had access to high speed broadband. (Action 232, DCCAE)
2. As part of the National Digital Strategy, under the Digital Skills Training Programme, 8,790 people received training during the period January-June 2019. Since training commenced in 2017 over 48,000 people have received training, including 6,666 unemployed people, 6,218 members of the farming community and some 18,284 people over the age of 65. (Action 237, DCCAE)
3. The third annual Stakeholder Forum of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce was held on 11 October 2019 and brought together representatives from local authorities, Government departments, telecommunications operators and community groups to engage in open dialogue around 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)
4. The Issues Paper for Consultation on the development of Ireland's next Regional Airports Programme was launched by the Minister on 30 August 2019, with a deadline of 30 September 2019. (Action 251, DTTAS)
5. Following the piloting of evening and late-night Local Link services, which began in Summer 2018, it was announced in May 2019 that 59 performing services will continue, with funding provided until end 2019. Under the Community Transport Service pilot scheme, it is proposed to fund a maximum of 15 Local Area Hackney pilot projects over a 12-month period, with the services becoming operational from November 2019 onwards. The Local Area Hackney Scheme (Rural) pilot was launched in Summer 2019 with a closing date of 30 September 2019 for receipt of applications; the grant is designed to provide a contribution towards the costs associated with providing this service. A total of 8 new Rural Regular services have been introduced (to September 2019) across the Local Link network. (Action 252, NTA)
6. NTA are working with Fáilte Ireland to promote Local Link services that connect with the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartland. (Action 253, NTA)

7. A research project is underway which is reviewing the possibility of the integration of Health Service Executive non-emergency transport services with rural transport services. A preliminary report is due to be completed by end of Q4 2019. (Action 255, NTA)
8. €10 million in funding was allocated under the Local Improvement Scheme in 2019. €25.3 million in funding was allocated under the Community Involvement Scheme over a two year period (2018-2019), with a total of 288 schemes were completed in 2018. 150km of road were treated in 2018 under the Community Involvement Scheme. The overall cost of the works was €12.2 million approximately, with a community contribution of 17% approx. €15.3 million has been allocated for the Community Involvement Scheme in 2019. (Action 259, DRCD)
9. €21.7 million has been allocated to the Regional Airports Programme in 2019, divided between Capital (€10.4 million) and Current (€11.3 million). The latter amount, which provides for operational support to airports, includes an annual payment for PSO air services of €7.25 million. (Action 260, DTTAS)

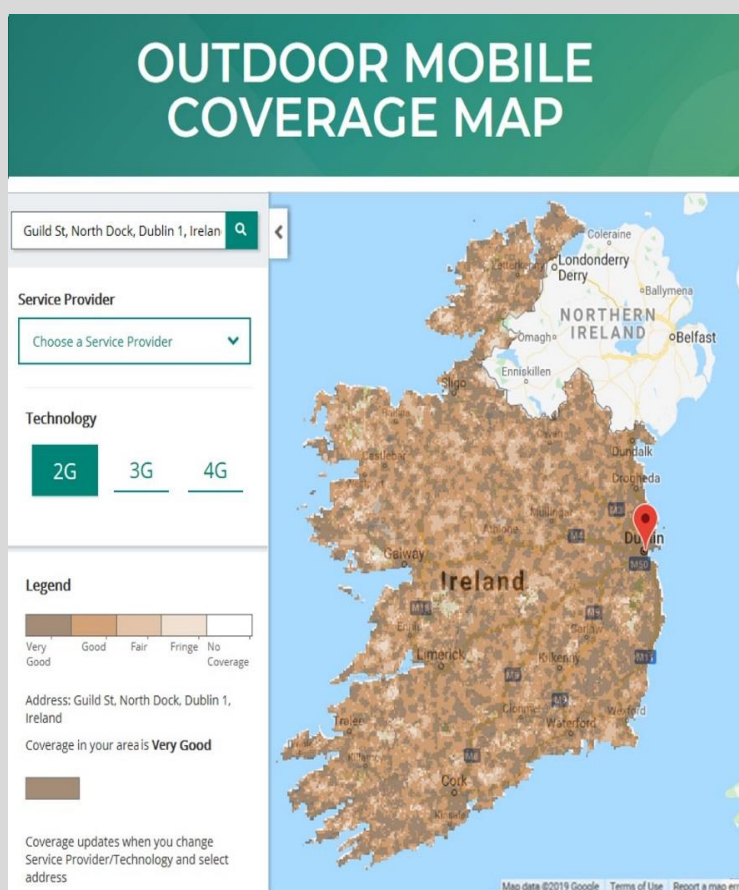
Case Study: Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity

ComReg: Development of interactive mobile network coverage map

In order to better enable consumers and businesses to choose the network provider that meets their needs for where they live and work, the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) undertook the development of a national outdoor mobile coverage map, under the Work Programme of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce.

In February 2019, ComReg's online outdoor mobile phone coverage map was published, allowing consumers to check ComReg's calculation of operators' mobile phone coverage and signal levels at locations throughout the country. The mobile coverage map can be found on the ComReg website at www.comreg.ie/coveragemap. The ComReg mobile coverage map helps consumers when making choices between operators based on predicted coverage availability in their area or chosen location.

The online tool allows consumers to search and zoom in to a particular area or address. It has been designed to use eircodes and/or local addresses for information on coverage at specific locations. Users are able to zoom into their selected location down to 10 x 10 metres.



The ComReg mobile coverage map has been generated using data provided by the Mobile Network Operators: Eir, Three Ireland and Vodafone. ComReg has applied a propagation model to generate coverage predictions. The outdoor mobile coverage map also includes data for the mobile virtual network operators MVNOs (service providers whose services are hosted by the main mobile network operators). These MVNOs include 48, Lycamobile, Postmobile, Tesco Mobile and Virgin Media.

The map is set out in a colour-coded format – dark brown shows very good coverage through to beige which shows fringe coverage. The map shows signal strength for all Mobile Service Providers ranging from very good, good, fair, fringe and no coverage. It also offers the ability to check 2G (Voice), 3G and 4G (data) coverage.

ComReg will update the map on a regular basis to reflect changes in predicted coverage as operators expand their networks. ComReg will also launch a mobile phone app for the coverage map in due course.

ComReg mobile phone coverage map

Case Study: Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity

Corrib Kids Computing and Coding Clubs, Co. Galway

Corrib Kids Coding Clubs is run by Laura and Kristian Lahdensuo, who are based in Rosscahill, Co. Galway. Laura is an instructional designer at SAP and Kristian has a background in Game Design. When researching camps and clubs for their own children, they saw there was a gap for alternative summer camp and afterschool activities for children in the Oughterard/Moycullen area and began researching technology clubs for children. After a couple of summer camps in Oughterard Youth Café, it was clear that there would be demand in the age group of 8-12 year olds, as an alternative to traditional offerings and to allow kids to learn essential skills in computing and coding, which may lead to 3rd level choices and careers in the tech sector.

The enterprise is firmly in the STEM field which is considered a growth area and one that is a key driver of innovation and change.

A successful application to FORUM Connemara CLG for a grant meant that they could purchase a set of laptops, iPads and robotic kits to provide afterschool creative technology clubs in local schools. These afterschool clubs ran for the school year 2018 in Oughterard, Moycullen, Roscahill, Mercy Primary and Educate Together in Knocknacarra. They have since branched out to provide creative technology workshops for rural libraries in Co. Galway, workshops for charities such as Down Syndrome Ireland, and engaging in partnerships with large multinationals such as SAP and EA games to provide workshops for underprivileged youth throughout Galway, including Cope Homeless Services and the Direct Provision centre in Salthill.

Future plans include more technology clubs in Gaelscoils throughout Galway, with one starting in Knocknacarra in September 2019 and more charity workshops in partnership with tech companies. Local events are another area of expansion, with workshops at Brigit's Garden this year for the launch of their new Earth Quest science garden. In-school coding lessons are also in demand, with one course already completed at Collinamuck in Moycullen and two more in planning for St Annins Roscahill and Castlehacket NS in Tuam. The number of clubs booked for 2019 has doubled and they hope to continue this trend into the future.



Corrib Kids Computing and Coding Club

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	<p>Under the 2019 Town and Village Renewal Scheme, 156 rural towns and villages across the country are set to benefit from €15 million in funding, with 26 projects receiving between €100,000 and €200,000 for more ambitious proposals.</p> <p>More than 600 projects have been approved since the Action Plan for Rural Development was launched in January 2017.</p>
2	Develop and pilot an initiative to encourage increased residential occupancy in town and village centres.	DRCD	Q3 2017	In progress	<p>The pilot scheme involving 6 rural towns was launched in October 2018. This scheme is now in progress, lessons learned through the pilot will inform future investment in rural towns and villages.</p>
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	<p>A second workshop was organised by the Heritage Council in Dundalk for Border Towns in April 2019, Dundalk, Donegal town, Ballyshannon / Bundoran, Letterkenny, Monaghan and Sligo, following on from the first training held in June 2018. 3 Government Departments gave presentations including the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p> <p>Minister English launched the Dundalk CTCHC Summary Report 2019 on 28 June. A 3-year Dundalk Town Centre Action Plan is currently being prepared by the Heritage Council and its partners and will be launched in early November 2019.</p> <p>A Dutch Delegation of Regional Provinces also attended the launch in Dundalk in June and a policy exchange session between Ireland and the Netherlands took place in the County Museum on the afternoon of the launch.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				Minister Humphreys launched Step 5 (Consumer Surveys Report) of the Monaghan Town CTCHC Project (i.e. 15-Steps) on 19 July. It is planned that CTCHC Summary Reports for Donegal Town, Ballyshannon, Bundoran and Sligo Town will be launched in September and November, respectively. QUB and IT Sligo have been assisting the Heritage Council and its partners with the CTCHC process in these towns.
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 Action Completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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 At end Q2 2019, some 84,000 social housing solutions have been delivered under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan. The number of new social homes delivered through Build, Acquisition and Leasing was 23,768 at the end of that quarter, which represents 48% of the target of 50,000 (increased from the original target of 47,000).
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 Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
7	Increase delivery of small housing schemes in towns and villages as an alternative to one-off housing.	DHPLG	2017	In progress A number of cross-Departmental initiatives are ongoing. The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out a target of 30% of all new housing to be focused outside the city regions. Further, National Policy Objective 18b of the NPF aims to 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. This collaboration piece is ongoing with a 2019-2020 timeframe. The Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development launched Tipperary County Council's Best Practice Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes on 24 April 2019 with the aim of revitalisation of villages and small towns. The implementation of such will be monitored and if proved effective other local authorities will be encouraged to use it as best practice.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	In progress	It is already possible for households in receipt of social housing support through the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme to move and relocate between local authority areas, including from an urban to a rural location. The Department is also examining how households on the social housing waiting list who may wish to relocate to rural areas might be facilitated.
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	Building on the CLÁR 2018 programme which supported 389 projects, the 2019 CLÁR Programme approved funding of €5.99 million for 179 small infrastructure projects across the following measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure 1: Support for Schools/Community Safety Measure 74 • Measure 2: Play Areas (including Multi- Use Games Areas) 30 • Measure 3a: First Response Support 30 3b: Mobility and Cancer Care Transport 20 3c: Sensory Gardens 25
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	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
12	Provide support for An Taisce National Spring Clean to heighten awareness of litter and waste issues and recycle and reuse where possible.	DCCAE	Ongoing	Completed	The 2019 National Spring Clean took place in April. For further details see www.nationalspringclean.org .
13	Support a built heritage investment scheme of an estimated €6 million 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	The Built Heritage Investment Scheme is administered through the 31 local authorities. The 2019 scheme, which was launched in November 2018, has an allocation of €2.5 million. As per the First Progress Report, which was submitted by all 31 Local Authorities in June 2019, 404 projects are currently being funded. Final figures in relation to days of employment will be available in November 2019. It is envisaged that over €10 million of private funding will be leveraged.
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	The Heritage Council runs The Traditional Farm Buildings Scheme in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine who have committed €1,250,000 to the scheme in 2019.

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
					This annual grant scheme is for the conservation and repair of traditional farm buildings and related structures for farmers and is part of the Green Low-Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS). 279 applications were received by the 19 February deadline for the 2019 scheme. Currently 90 projects are in receipt of a grant offer with the first project complete. As the majority of these buildings serve as wildlife habitats most projects will be underway during Autumn to protect wildlife.
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	Action completed. This scheme was replaced by the Community Enhancement Programme (CEP). For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	Completed	An evaluation of the Health and Safety Authority’s Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee is being completed before the development of a future action plan. Note that 2018 produced the lowest level of fatalities (15) for the farming sector in several years. This represented a reduction of 40% from 2017 figures (25).
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 some 18,600 farmer participants have now completed the 3-year programme in 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.	DCCAE	2017-2019	In progress	The Environmental Partnership Fund has been renamed the Community Environment Action Fund from 2019 onwards. 2019 applications were accepted until 27 September 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	In 2019, some €3.5 million has been allocated to support 21 Volunteer Centres, 8 Volunteering Information Services and 4 national volunteering supporting organisations.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>The Dormant Accounts Fund Action Plan 2018 included provision of €1.2 million in 2019 for the upgrading of the 8 Volunteering Information Services to full Volunteer Centres in order to provide a consistent level of volunteering infrastructure nationwide. Work on the upgrading of these new Volunteer Centres has commenced. In addition, additional funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund was provided to those Volunteer Centres receiving less than the minimum amount recommended in the 2017 McLaughlin report.</p> <p>Work is also underway on the drafting of a new national Volunteering Strategy, following an initial Call for Input exercise. A National Advisory Group on Volunteering has been established, representative of all stakeholders and chaired by Minister Canney, and has held 2 meetings to date, with a third set for 12 November. There will be a further opportunity for public consultation on the strategy before it is submitted for Governmental approval in late 2019.</p>
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.	DCCAE	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>An Post is continuing to make good progress in implementing its strategic plan which has seen a range of developments across the mails and retail businesses. A refreshed and modernised An Post brand was launched in April 2019. A new financial services proposition, An Post Money, and a new business-to-business brand, An Post Commerce have also been launched.</p> <p>The Inter-Departmental Group which was established to consider options for the delivery of services to those who do not wish to use, or are unable to use, digital services has concluded its report. The report will be brought to Government for consideration.</p>
21	Continue to support the use of rural post offices for the delivery of payment services such as social welfare payments.	DEASP	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>The Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection has given effect to this commitment through its current cash services contract with An Post. The contract specifies that outlets providing welfare payments must be available within 15 kilometres of 95% of customers in a rural area.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Since 2011 credit union loan arrears have fallen from 18% to an average of 4.95% and average reserves stood at 16.28% at 30 June 2019. Lending growth has increased to €4.9 billion in the year to June 2019, delivering approximately 34% of all unsecured consumer lending in 2018. A small group of credit unions have teamed up to market a lending product, Cultivate, to the agri-sector.</p>

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
					<p>7 recommendations were outlined as a result of the Commission on Credit Unions Report of 2012 and the Credit Union Advisory Committee (CUAC) report of 2016. An Implementation Group was established and 2 discussion papers were agreed as part of their work-plan for 2018 and 2019. A further discussion paper on Tiered Regulation was submitted to the Central Bank in December 2018. The CUAC Implementation Group Final Report was published on 7 January 2019. Revised investment and liquidity requirements regulations for credit unions on 1 March 2018 allow for greater diversification of investment income, including provision for up to €700 million investment in social housing. The Central Bank lending framework for credit unions public consultation on lending limits closed on 9 January 2019 and they will commence revised lending regulations in Q4 2019.</p> <p>In January 2019, the CUAC Report Implementation Group agreed with the CUAC recommendation to increase the interest rate cap to 2% per month. Following cabinet approval preparations have begun to introduce this legislative change.</p> <p>The Credit Union Restructuring Board (ReBo) facilitated the availability of €250 million for voluntary restructuring of credit unions. 82 restructuring projects involving 156 credit unions were overseen, an overall reduction from 406 credit unions at September 2011 to 246 active at 30 June 2019, with 54 credit unions above €100 million asset size.</p> <p>ReBo concluded in 31 March 2017 and is currently being wound down through primary legislation. Restructuring continues, facilitated by the Central Bank, albeit at a reduced rate.</p>
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	<p>A report on the assessment of the public banking model in an Irish context has been completed by the project team and was published on 4 July 2018. It is available on the websites of the Department of Finance and the Department for Rural and Community Development.</p> <p>On foot of the Report conclusions, 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.</p>
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	HSE	Ongoing	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhanced supports for rural GP practices were introduced in 2016 with improved qualifying criteria and an increased financial allowance of €20,000 per annum.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	in the qualifying criteria for rural support, an increase in the rural practice allowance and an amendment of the special items of service covered.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 256 GP practice units encompassing 352 individual GPs are now in receipt of financial supports under this framework, a significant increase on the 167 GPs who received a rural practice allowance prior to the introduction of this measure. • As part of an agreement reached with the IMO in April 2019 on a major package of GP contractual reforms, the financial allowance available to GPs under the Rural Practice Support Framework will be increased by 10% in 2020.
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide (2015-2020) was launched in 2015. The strategy is being led by DoH and includes actions assigned to the HSE and various Government departments. Responsibility for monitoring and reporting systems to support the delivery of the Strategy has been assigned to the National Office for Suicide Prevention.</p> <p>The Cross-Sectoral Steering Group, established to implement the Strategy, has held 13 meetings so far and is scheduled to meet in October and December 2019. There are 17 Connecting for Life Local Plans, all of which have been now launched.</p>
26	Consider the treatment of family farms and small businesses in relation to the 'Fair Deal' Nursing Homes Support Scheme.	DoH	2017	<p>Completed</p> <p>Draft Heads of Bill was approved by Government in July 2019. Drafting of legislation and pre-legislative scrutiny is to begin in Autumn 2019.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>At the end of Q2 2019, a total of 24 projects have been completed and a further 10 are in construction.</p>
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	<p>Complete</p> <p>1. All 18 Primary Care Centres are now operational. Ongoing funding will further enhance the development of Primary Care Centres throughout the country.</p> <p>2. The HSE continues to make progress on measures to support the development and enhancement of radiology and ultrasound services in the primary care sector.</p>
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	HSE	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>There has been continued investment in Primary Care staffing in 2019 so that there are now 1,652.91 whole time equivalent Primary Care therapy grades at the end of June 2019.</p>

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	population in rural communities, in conjunction with a wider range of network services.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physiotherapists : 557.73 • Occupational Therapists : 544.02 • Speech & Language Therapists : 551.16 <p>Funding was provided in 2019 to support the recruitment of 170 community nursing and therapy posts.</p> <p>The number of GP training places has increased from 170 places filled in 2017 to 192 places filled in 2019. 2019 saw the highest ever number of applications for the GP Training programme.</p>
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	After further development and expansion in 2018, there are now 16 CITs operating across the country.
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	<p>299 centres provide approx. 28,000 places per week, both directly by HSE or through agencies grant-aided by HSE. On average 4,250 meals-on-wheels are delivered weekly across 345 centres.</p> <p>A pilot €1 million Community & Voluntary Support Grant was launched in July to provide funding to improve, expand or develop community-based supports.</p>
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. The network is kept operational on an ongoing basis.
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 DES.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	<p>Sample and augmented projects are currently running as part of the new Targeted Youth Funding Scheme, in rural areas such as in West Cavan, Carrigaline, Mitchelstown, Gort, Tullow, Ballyhaunis and Longford. The five rural ETB areas have completed the trial of the area profile and needs assessment.</p> <p>The Government has approved the Scheme Outline for a new single targeted youth funding scheme; the target group for the scheme includes young people whose outcomes are impacted by a range of factors including rural isolation. Implementation of the scheme has begun, with ETBs completing Area Profile Needs Assessment and Service Requirements for their functional area and service level agreements between DCYA and ETBs signed.</p>
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	In progress	<p>The National Childcare Scheme (NCS), previously known as the Affordable Childcare Scheme, is set to launch in October 2019.</p> <p>Good progress is being made, but the development of the Scheme's ICT system has proved challenging. Experts overseeing the development of the Scheme have recommended a phased launch approach. The online applications system will launch on schedule in October, and the paper-based system will be available in January for those who do not wish to apply online.</p> <p>Progress to date includes:</p> <p>In April 2019 the Minister announced capital funding for providers who sign up to NCS.</p> <p>In May 2019, the NCS contracts were published.</p> <p>In June 2019 details were announced on the Transition Support Payment for services who enter into contract for the NCS.</p> <p>Draft regulations for the Scheme were published in June.</p> <p>Phase 2 of nationwide training for service providers commences in August.</p> <p>A dedicated NCS website (www.ncs.gov.ie) and mailbox was established in March, and over 80,000 information packs for parents and providers have been circulated since then.</p> <p>An NCS Parent Support Centre has been established.</p>

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	DRCD continued to support the operation of PPNs during 2018 and 2019. Funding for a Resource Worker for each PPN continued to be provided in 2018 and again in 2019. The Department also provided funding for a Support Worker for each PPN in 2019 and expects to be in a position to continue this support initiative in 2020. A Salesforce database which was rolled out to all PPNS in 2017, continues to be supported by dedicated training. The Department has committed to continue with this training up to 2021. A fully representative National Advisory Group held 4 meetings during 2018. 4 meetings have already taken place in 2019 with a fifth scheduled for 7 November. A practical PPN User Guide was developed and is currently being reviewed. This review is scheduled to be completed by year end.
38	Consult extensively with the PPN Network and sectoral interests in developing Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies.	Regional Assemblies	Ongoing	In progress	EMRA adopted their RSES Q2; The NWRA and SRA consulted extensively on their Draft RSES and proposed material amendments that shall be the subject of ongoing consultation in Q3, with final adoption anticipated in Q4.
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	Completed	The Framework Policy on Local & Community Development to ensure greater participation of rural communities has been superseded by a new strategy. This was passed by Government in July and will be implemented from 2019-2024, starting in September.
40	Engage with local communities on water quality projects through the Local Authority Waters and Communities Office.	DHPLG	Ongoing	Completed	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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.	DCCAE	Ongoing	In progress	5 roadshows completed to date Cork 21/6, Thurles 5/7, Galway 12/7, Dublin 17/7 and Donegal 23/7. Event scheduled for 06/09 in Tait House, Limerick. Future Jobs stakeholder event took place on 29/8 in Dublin Castle.
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.	DCCAE	Ongoing	In progress	The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) was approved by Government in July 2018, a cornerstone of this will be the provision of pathways for increased community ownership, participation in and benefit from renewable electricity projects. The scheme will deliver capacity building supports for community-led projects, including financial, technical and legal assistance, along with community benefit obligations, for projects looking for support under RESS.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>As part of the ongoing RESS detailed design work, which has included further engagement with community energy groups, officials are exploring a variety of options to facilitate community-led projects within the first auction.</p> <p>The implementation of RESS and the suite of measures for community participation are a key action in Climate Action Plan. The final design of the scheme will be subject to state aid clearance from the EU Commission.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Comhairle na nÓg are local councils for children and young people (aged 12-17), and is the recognised national structure for participation by children and young people in decision-making in all 31 local authorities. They are supported by the DCYA Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund and DCYA Participation Officers.</p> <p>A 5-year development plan for Comhairle na nÓg will be commissioned in Q3 2019 to set out the strategic objectives of Comhairle na nÓg over a 5-year period. The development of the plan will include consultation with stakeholders, an environment scan and a 'lessons learned' review.</p> <p>The Participation Hub 'Hub na nÓg' was officially launched in November 2017.</p> <p>A website has been developed and the database of publications is available through this website. Hub na nÓg provides information, guidance, training and practical support to Government Departments and agencies and conducts consultations with young people on a variety of topics.</p>
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	<p>Delayed</p> <p>Rural proofing will now be reflected in the next Rural Policy 2020-2025. An Inter-Departmental Working Group has been established and included in discussions is the issue of how rural communities are impacted by Government policies and programmes, and how to determine the most appropriate model to ensure an equitable outcome for rural areas.</p>
45	Ensure that, in developing the new National Planning Framework, the long-term needs of rural Ireland are taken into account.	DHPLG	2017	<p>Completed</p> <p>Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>DRCD continues to engage on an ongoing basis with rural development research experts in order to understand priority research needs and inform policy development. DRCD co-hosted a series of rural development seminars in 2018/2019, in conjunction with the Royal Irish Academy. The Rural Conversations series, which focused on the themes of economic development, social cohesion, and sustainable rural communities,</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>elicited rural stakeholder views on issues emerging in relation to rural development.</p> <p>During Q2 2019 a series of workshop events were held around the country, to engage with invited guests from key stakeholder organisations, in order to inform the development of the next phase of rural policy. These included representatives from higher education institutions, agencies, local authorities, community groups and PPNs.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Some 2,130 projects have now been approved for LEADER funding representing a value of over €75 million, with a further 370 projects at various stages of the approval process seeking funding in excess of €27 million.</p> <p>A further €5 million in funding, which was originally earmarked for a possible REDZ/rural town initiative, will now be allocated to the LAGs this autumn. The LAGs are selected based on their level of project approvals and project payments in September 2019.</p> <p>There are also close to 100 other Food and Co-operation projects approved for funding outside of the core project budget, which have a value over €2.5 million.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>To date in 2019, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine has announced details of EMFF grants of €4 million, awarded by Ireland's 7 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) to 274 coastal based projects, supporting total investment of €6.4 million. These investments will add to the €3.6 million paid out in 2017-2018 period 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.</p> <p>In May a successful transnational seminar was held in Bantry Co. Cork. The theme of this event was "Smart coastal areas: resourcefulness and innovation in FLAG communities". This seminar was organised at the initiative of the European Commission with the support of FLAG South, Ireland's Sea Food Development Agency - BIM (Bord Iascaigh Mhara) and DAFM.</p>
49	Invest €37.5m to implement the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, SICAP, as the main social inclusion programme of Government to support	DRCD	Ongoing to end 2017	<p>Completed</p> <p>Action Completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	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.				
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	<p>The Department supports some 3,350 participants and 139 supervisors who are engaged in supporting almost 2,000 community projects. An additional 500 places were announced in 2017 plus 250 places in 2018 as part of the Programme for Government commitment to Rural Ireland. Overall there has been an increase of just over 30% in the places available under the RSS since 2017 – from 2,600 to 3,350.</p> <p>There were no additional Rural Social Scheme places announced in 2019.</p>
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	Completed	DAFM are extending contracts to these projects for 2019/2020.
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 jobs and helping make approximately 46,500 rural homes more environmentally sustainable.	DCCAE	2017-2019	In progress	From January to July 2019, 9,757 homes have carried out energy efficiency improvements with grant assistance from the scheme. Approximately 70% 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	From January to July 2019, 2,029 homes have received free energy efficiency upgrades through this scheme, with over 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	To date in 2019, 57 Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) were established with 49 of these outside Dublin. This brings a total of 297 community groups in the SEC network, with 268 of them outside Dublin.
55	Continue to implement the Better Energy Communities scheme which provides competitive funding to community energy projects all over Ireland.	DCCAE	Ongoing	In progress	For 2019, €25 million has been offered in grant funding to 57 community energy projects across Ireland under the scheme. These projects represent nearly 700 homes upgraded to a B2 BER and 570 commercial and public buildings.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
56	Recruit 800 Gardaí 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	On course to meet the targets in this objective by the end of the stated timeframe (2021).
57	The Garda Inspectorate, on behalf of the Policing Authority, will examine the dispersment 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	Completed	<p>The Garda Síochána Inspectorate report entitled “Policing with Local Communities” was submitted by the Policing Authority to the Minister for Justice and Equality on 17 December 2018. The report was published on 21 December 2018.</p> <p>The report addresses a wide range of issues around how policing is delivered to local communities.</p> <p>The report suggests a number of principles and actions for An Garda Síochána to consider in order to enable demand for policing services to be better understood, to enhance service delivery and to assist in the effective allocation of resources. It also makes a number of recommendations as to how Garda visibility could be improved and in relation to other matters, including rural crime and a national approach to custody facilities.</p> <p>The report also deals with a broad range of issues relevant to the ongoing programme of Garda reform.</p>
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. The results of this pilot will feed into the wider review of resources being overseen by the Policing Authority.	An Garda Síochána	2017	In progress	One of the 6 Garda stations included in the Pilot Programme has reopened. The OPW and An Garda Síochána continue to progress the works required to allow for reopening of the remaining 5 stations.
59	Continue to support and prioritise community crime prevention schemes including Neighbourhood Watch and the Text Alert Scheme.	DJE	Ongoing	In progress	<p>The Garda Text Alert Scheme was developed with the support of Muintir na Tíre, Neighbourhood Watch and the Irish Farmers Association, and introduced in September 2013. The scheme provides an additional and effective method for Gardaí to distribute crime prevention information and advice. There are in the region of 200,000 text messages sent to Text Alert groups registered under the scheme each month and the Garda authorities indicate that Text Alert continues to be a highly effective crime prevention initiative.</p> <p>The Department continues to support community crime prevention by providing funding for the Community Alert Programme, which is operated by Muintir na Tíre in partnership with the Garda authorities.</p>

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
60	Introduce a new Community CCTV Grant Aid Scheme which will benefit both urban and rural communities.	DJE	2017	In progress	A total of 21 grants have been approved to date from the Community CCTV grant aid scheme. The scheme remains open for further applications. Applications are now also being accepted for upgrade and extension of existing Community CCTV schemes which are incomplete or obsolete.
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	Completed	<p>The Department of Rural and Community Development invested €6.9 million in the Seniors Alert Scheme in 2018 for this demand-led scheme. The scheme had a total of 53,692 participants as of 31 August 2019.</p> <p>There have been 13,233 new approved participants from 1 January to 31 August 2019, which represents a 51% increase on the same period in 2017, and a 2% increase on the January to August period 2018.</p>
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	A total of €10 million has been made available for the purchase and fit-out of Garda vehicles in 2019. This allocation will be used for purchase and fit-out of over 300 new vehicles for operational use this year.
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	<p>The Modernisation and Renewal Programme has been replaced by A Policing Service for the Future.</p> <p>An Garda Síochána is establishing regional control centres to respond to calls for service from the public. Each control centre will be supported by computer-aided dispatch technology and when complete will provide national coverage. The current status of the establishment of the control rooms is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combined control room for the Dublin Metropolitan Region and Eastern Region is complete - Combined control room for the Western Region and Northern Region is planned to be operational by Q1 2019 - Control rooms for the Southern Region and South Eastern Region are planned to be fully operational by Q3 2019
64	Rollout the new Community Facilities Fund, announced in Budget 2017, which will invest over €2m in rural and urban areas, to enhance communities, address disadvantage and improve social cohesion at local level.	DRCD	2017	Completed	Action completed. This scheme was replaced by the Community Enhancement Programme (CEP). For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
65	Invest €30m in sports and community facilities around the country through the Sports Capital Programme.	DTTAS	2017	Completed	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	As of September 2019, the Irish Men's Sheds Association has 461 registered sheds on its books, with a significant number of registrations pending for approval at a forthcoming board meeting. The number of men's sheds in Ireland is projected to reach 500 by the end of 2019. Weekly attendance throughout the island is now estimated at 12,000.
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	Sheds for Life is continuing to engage men throughout Ireland, through its ambitious and far-reaching 2019 schedule. Pilot programmes in four counties (Limerick, Kildare, Waterford and Louth) are progressing to the satisfaction of all involved. These pilots are being continually assessed and evaluated in conjunction with the Irish Research Council, Waterford IT and Carlow IT. Sheds for Life has also been named as one of the projects to be funded under the Sláintecare Integration Fund.
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	Completed	The Regional Action Plan for Jobs and the Progress Reports were complete in 2018. During 2018, Minister Humphreys decided to refresh and refocus the RAPJ. The new plans are called "Regional Enterprise Plans" and all 9 Plans launched in Q1 2019. The focus for the Regional Enterprise Plans over the period to 2020 is to sustain the momentum of employment growth achieved since 2015 and to reduce unemployment levels further to more closely match the national average to at least within one percentage point.
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 recovery in every part of the country by delivering on the potential of local and regional strengths.	Enterprise Ireland	2017-2020	In progress	DBEI provided a €60 million competitive fund through the Regional Enterprise Development Fund in 2017 over 2 calls to support step change Enterprise Development projects in each region with funding of between €250k and €5 million/project. The first call was launched in April 2017 and the second call in May 2018. A total of 75 projects were submitted in Call One, 64 were eligible for evaluation and 21 projects were approved funding of €30.5 million with a further 38 Feasibility Projects supported.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>In Call Two 77 projects applied, 66 were eligible for evaluation and a further 21 projects were approved funding of €29 million approximately in November 2018.</p> <p>These 42 successful projects are at various stages of implementation and execution of their plans at present, the approved funding will be drawn down over the next 3 to 4 years as the promoters deliver against agreed project metrics and KPI's.</p> <p>Call Three of the Regional Enterprise Development Fund was launched by Minister Humphreys on 24 June and closed on 25 September. A Feasibility Scheme was also launched on 24 June. Assessment and evaluation of applications will take place in October and the successful projects will be put forward to Enterprise Ireland's Board on 18 December.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Since the beginning of IDA Ireland's 'Winning' Strategy, 407 Investments have been won for the regions and almost 27,000 net jobs have been added on the ground in locations outside Dublin. An average of 102 investments were won annually by locations beyond Dublin, compared to an annual average of 69 under the previous strategy. There are now over 132,000 people employed across 681 firms in IDA client companies outside the capital.</p> <p>This is the highest number of people employed by IDA clients outside of Dublin in the history of the organisation. Every region posted net employment gains in 2018 with 56% of all net new IDA client company jobs created last year outside of Dublin.</p> <p>IDA Ireland is now in the final year of its strategy 'Winning: Foreign Direct Investment 2015-2019.' The Agency's 5-year targets around job creation and investments have been surpassed and their key priority will be on meeting their 5-year investment targets which they are on track to deliver on by the end of their current strategy in 2019.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>The IDA is directly investing in regional Ireland through their €150 million Regional Property Programme. The funding announced as part of Budget 2019 means that the Agency has been allocated €120 million of the €150 million funding to date.</p> <p>Buildings have been completed in Athlone and Waterford in 2015 and in Sligo, Tralee and Castlebar in 2017. All of these buildings are now occupied.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>This year (2019), the IDA has so far successfully completed a building in Limerick and secured a tenant. A second building in Waterford was also completed in May of this year and the Agency are marketing this building to potential investors.</p> <p>For the remainder of 2019, IDA Ireland is continuing this building programme with construction underway of advance buildings in Dundalk and Galway. The construction of a building in Carlow will begin in 2020. The construction of a further building in Athlone is expected to begin late this year or in 2020.</p> <p>Separately, Budget 2019 provided the Agency with an additional €10 million to begin the next phase of the RPP.</p> <p>Under the second phase of the RPP, construction will also begin on advanced buildings in Monaghan, Dundalk and Sligo later this year. In 2020 the IDA also expects to start construction on buildings in Athlone, Limerick, Sligo, Waterford and Galway.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Údarás created 589 new jobs in Gaeltacht areas in 2018 across a wide range of sectors. Údarás na Gaeltachta are confident that they are on target to achieve the full year target of 500 for 2019.</p> <p>Údarás na Gaeltachta are also confident that they are on target to maintain 7,800 jobs in client companies in 2019. However, annual employment survey results will not be available until later this year.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>LEO Performance for the first half of the year to 30 June 2019 for all LEOs excluding Dublin LEOs is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,124 jobs through Measure 1 approvals. • Start Your Own Business Programme participants – 1,850. • Training courses/programme participants – 14,164. • Total number of mentoring participants – 3,936. • Student Enterprises Awards participants – 20,000 <p>Micro Finance Ireland Applications –157</p>
74	Continue to build on the LEO Communications Strategy to communicate the range of supports and services available at local level.	LEOs	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>The new co-ordinated communications strategy, ‘Making It Happen’, was further developed in 2019 to promote LEO supports and services. In March 2019, LEOs organised over 370 events during ‘Local Enterprise Week’ across every local authority area. These events included one-to-one Brexit advice clinics, start your own business boot camps,</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>workshops on remote working and seminars around ‘lean’ principles for small businesses. In April 2019, the LEO Impact Report for 2018 was published to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the LEOs.</p> <p>This report was circulated to key stakeholders across every LEO area and highlighted supports available at local level.</p> <p>The inaugural ‘Making It Happen’ communications training day for LEO staff took place in Offaly in May 2019, featuring presentations and interactive workshops for all LEOs to reinforce the new communications strategy.</p> <p>Enterprise Ireland will continue to work with the Local Government Management Agency and LEO committees to drive communication activities and strategy.</p>
75	Determine the feasibility of enabling Local Authorities to introduce rates alleviation schemes to support rural development policy objectives.	DHPLG	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>The <i>Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019</i> was enacted in July 2019. The Act contains provisions to enable local authorities to introduce rates waiver (alleviation) schemes to support the implementation of policy objectives, including: local economic and community plans; objectives contained in Development Plans and Local Area Plans; and national planning policies. Further legislation, in the form of supporting regulations, is required to set out the general parameters and other details in respect of such alleviation schemes.</p> <p>These regulations are currently under consideration with a view to commencement of the relevant provisions as soon as possible.</p>
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	<p>Completed</p> <p>Revaluation of commercial properties in nine rural counties was completed in 2017. Revaluation commenced in a further seven rural counties in 2017 and is due for completion in September 2019.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>A guidance note on Enterprise Development in Rural Areas is currently being drafted. The guidance is intended to address the relevant planning and development consent considerations and requirements in respect of the promotion and accommodation of enterprise development in rural areas, with the aim of providing clear guidance and ensuring sustainable rural communities. Work on the Guidance Note is progressing, with publication envisaged shortly.</p>
78	Progress the proposal for an Atlantic Economic Corridor to attract Irish and multinational investment, and grow jobs	DRCD	2017-2018	<p>In progress</p> <p>The Atlantic Economic Corridor Taskforce has established subgroups on Infrastructure, Enterprise Space and Communications to work to identify barriers to development in the region</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	and economic opportunities in the western regions in the context of the new National Planning Framework.			<p>and to devise innovative and collaborative projects to overcome them. The 10 Local Authorities in the AEC have each now appointed an Atlantic Economic Corridor officer, a post that is part-funded by the DRCD. This AEC Officer Network is a project resource and a contact point for the AEC within the Local Authority framework. The Western Development Commission (WDC) has engaged as a co-ordinating body, supporting the work of the wider AEC.</p> <p>Current ongoing projects being overseen by the AEC Taskforce include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Enterprise Space Subgroup, supported by the AEC Officer Network are currently mapping unused and under-utilised enterprise spaces in key towns within the AEC, with the aim of creating a comprehensive data-set to support planning at a local and regional Government level, and to facilitate investment private sector investment decisions in the region. 280+ Enterprise Spaces have now been mapped in 10 pilot towns and work is ongoing. • The Communications Subgroup is currently developing a branding and marketing strategy for the AEC with a focus on showcasing the region as an excellent place to live, work and invest. The WDC has appointed a Head of Communication and AEC Development to support the progress of this work. • The Infrastructure Subgroup is currently researching and identifying potential infrastructure developments that would support the long-term economic development of the region and support the wider goals of the National Planning Framework. <p>The Western Development Commission is leading a project to engage and organise the numerous working hubs and enterprise spaces in the AEC region into a cohesive Hub Network. Seventy-two hubs have been identified in the AEC (with 29 additional hubs planned). A survey of hubs has been completed and a profile of the hub network is being developed. The WDC has appointed an Enterprise Hubs Programme Manager to progress this work.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Economic Statistics published in June 2019 provide information on the most recent trends towards achieving the Government's economic targets set out in Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth.</p>

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
					<p>The Data shows that in 2018 Ireland’s ocean economy had a turnover of €6.2 billion and a direct economic contribution, as measured by gross value added (GVA), of €2.2 billion or 1.1% of GDP. The update shows that Ireland is on course to achieve the 2020 target set by Government and the gap towards the 2030 target is narrowing (see detail on the key targets below). Compared to 2016, there has been a 13% increase in turnover in 2018, an 11% increase in GVA and a 13% increase in employment.</p> <p>The indirect GVA that is generated from ocean related activity in Ireland amounts to €1.96 billion, with a total GVA (direct and indirect) of €4.19 billion (representing 2% of GDP). Further detail on the above including all established and emerging marine sectors in the Irish economy, is provided in the full report which is available online.</p> <p><u>Note on ‘Harnessing our Ocean Wealth’ Targets:</u> Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth (HOOW) – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland, published in July 2012, sets out two key economic targets. The first (2020 target) aims to increase the turnover from Ireland’s ocean economy to exceed €6.4 billion by 2020. The second (2030 target) aims to double its value to 2.4% of GDP by 2030. This ambitious target was based on a total estimate (both direct and indirect Gross Value Added) in 2007 for the Irish Ocean economy that amounted to 1.2% of GDP at that time.</p>
80	Introduce a Marine Development and Investment Strategy for the Gaeltacht in line with Harnessing our Ocean Wealth.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	2017	Delayed	While Páirc na Mara has been the key element of the marine strategy, Údarás has a dedicated person on marine projects and companies and several new marine companies have opened as result. In parallel the Plan for Páirc na Mara has been progressing well, including the funding under REDF of the Marine Innovation and Development Centre, and a full Application for planning permission will be submitted before the end of the year.
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 year to December 2018 include a 33,000 ft2 Grade A advance technology manufacturing unit, a 56,000 ft2 Grade A office block. Both are to be leased by Jaguar Land Rover. These two facilities will have the capacity to cater for in the region of 500 people. Other projects completed include an extended 110,000 ft2 advanced technology manufacturing unit for GE Sensing.

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
					In Q1 2019, the Group completed the major refurbishment of a 20 year old 35,000 ft2 office block. Engine Leases Finance signed a new long term lease on this building. In Q2 2019, they commenced the construction of three new ATMU/Industrial units in SFZ generating 150,000 ft2 of space for new FDI companies.
82	Provide a new incubation space in Shannon to encourage start-up businesses and rural entrepreneurs.	Shannon Group	Q4 2017	Completed	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of The Action Plan for Rural Development.
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 and ongoing	In progress	The development of the gteic network of Digital hubs, is continuing in all the Gaeltacht areas and on the offshore islands. Údarás has secured small capital budget increases to upgrade some facilities to be suitable for ‘Future Jobs’ type companies and in addition Údarás is working on additional funding models to secure private sector investment in providing built infrastructure in the Gaeltacht.
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 conjunction with Shannon Commercial Properties, continues to work successfully to attract further aviation and aerospace companies to establish operations in Shannon. Over 65 aviation and aerospace companies are now established in and around Shannon and the number continues to grow. IASC has provided extensive input to the consultancy study commissioned by DTTAS and DBEI to examine the potential for growing the Irish aircraft MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) industry and the necessary policy initiatives and incentives to enable such growth.
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	Completed	Building on the 4 initial gteic innovation hubs, Údarás will aim to have over 10 gteic hubs in place by the end of 2019, providing innovation growth spaces in rural Gaeltacht areas.
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	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of The Action Plan for Rural Development.
87	Enhance awareness amongst SMEs and entrepreneurs of State business supports to raise their financial capacity in either starting a business, or in growing and expanding an established business.	DBEI & SME State Bodies Group	2017 and ongoing	Completed	The lead on this has changed to DBEI. The SME Communications Group met on 18 October 2017 to discuss the draft of the revised integrated communications strategy. The Group met again on 6 December 2017 to discuss the progress made in 2017 and the promotion of Online Tool in 2018. The Group is currently exploring new types of marketing materials and advertisement.

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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	<p>Completed</p> <p>The Credit Review Office (CRO) with support of the SME Representative Bodies conducted a review.</p> <p>The Credit Review Office has met with Banking and Payments Federation Ireland (BPFI) about the review. Now more in-depth research is planned via the DoF Credit Demand Survey.</p>
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 funding from international organisations and securing new on-lenders.	SBCI	2017	<p>In Progress</p> <p>To the end of December 2018, there has been €1052 million of SBCI supported lending, supporting over 26,061 SMEs and 141,658 jobs. The SMEs who received SBCI finance are from all sectors of the Irish economy and have a wide geographical spread, with approximately 91% of loans going outside Dublin and 29% of loans going to the Agriculture sector.</p> <p>The SCBI currently has 6 on-lenders; 3 bank and 3 non-bank lenders. These are AIB, Bank of Ireland, Ulster Bank, Finance Ireland, Bibby Financial Services and FEXCO Asset Finance.</p> <p>The Brexit Loan Scheme, a €300 million scheme, launched in March 2018, is offered by the SBCI, through their partner financial institutions (Ulster Bank, AIB and Bank of Ireland).</p> <p>Loans from €25,000 to €1.5 million are available under the Scheme to eligible SMEs and small mid-caps of up to 499 employees. As at 9 August 2019, a total of 718 applications have been received for scheme eligibility by the SBCI and 171 loans have progressed to sanction at bank level to a total of €38,218,800.</p> <p>Following on from the launch of the Brexit Loan Scheme, a Future Growth Loan Scheme has been developed to provide long-term investment financing for Irish businesses to help them strategically invest in a post-Brexit environment.</p> <p>The Scheme is intended to provide finance of 8 to 10 years for investment in process and organisational innovation, and investment in tangible and intangible assets on agricultural holdings linked to primary agricultural production. The Future Growth Loan Scheme was launched in March 2019, in partnership with the Department of Business, Enterprise & Innovation and the department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, with the financial backing of the European Investment Fund.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				This is a €300 million scheme and is available to eligible SMEs including the primary agriculture and seafood sector to support strategic long term investment of between 8 to 10 years with a maximum interest rate of 4 per cent. At 9 August 2019, a total of 860 applications have been received for scheme eligibility by the SBCI and 105 loans have progressed to sanction at bank level to a total of €16,227,200.
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 and ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>The SME Advisory Group has regular proactive engagement with SME Representative Bodies. The OGP works with the SME industry representative bodies as well as DBEI, ITI and EI to promote the engagement of SMEs in public procurement. A cross-body communications strategy subgroup of the SME Advisory Group has been formed. The strategy has led to the introduction of industry targeted and regional informative breakfast briefing events, which have taken place in a number of locations around the country with further events currently being planned to take place in 2019.</p> <p>The Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services were published in 2017 and were revised in January 2019, these guidelines will help deliver a more consistent approach to procurement throughout the State making it easier for SMEs to deal with procurers.</p>
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	<p>Completed</p> <p>Action Completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>
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.	DCCAE	2017-2019	<p>In progress</p> <p>Trading Online Voucher Scheme is on target to meet objectives. In the first half of 2019, over 630 vouchers were approved and distribution was in line with the target of approximately 60% of businesses in rural Ireland.</p>
93	As part of the EU Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020, roll out the women's entrepreneurship initiative to promote female entrepreneurship and develop their entrepreneurial capabilities.	DJE	2017	<p>Completed</p> <p>Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>
94	Continue the implementation of supports for the Rural Female Entrepreneurs Initiative (Acorns programme).	DAFM	Ongoing	<p>Completed</p> <p>ACORNS has supported approximately 250 female entrepreneurs to date which includes 50 participants in 2019.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				The contract has been extended for 2019/2020. A new cycle of the ACORNS programme was launched in August 2019 by the Minister for Agriculture, Food 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 Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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 Request for Tenders to conduct a review of the 2015 and 2016 REDZ programmes has been prepared and will be issued shortly. There are some good examples of successful REDZ projects throughout the country and the concept of towns and villages working across administrative boundaries was incorporated into the Town and Village Renewal Scheme in 2017 and subsequent years.
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 Action completed. The 2015 – 2017 SICAP ran to 31 December 2017 and included supports for social enterprises in some Local Authority areas. SICAP 2018 - 2022 was launched in April 2018 and provides supports including provision of training, volunteering and employment opportunities, business planning and development services, and development of new services to improve the sustainability of the enterprise.
99	Develop and publish a National Policy on Social Enterprise which will encompass the full range of activity in this sector.	DRCD	Q3 2017	Completed On 18 July 2019, Minister Ring launched Ireland's first National Policy on Social Enterprise (2019 – 2022). This followed a public consultation in April which received well over 100 submissions. The Policy is focussed on three main objectives: 1. Creating Awareness of Social Enterprise, 2. Growing and Strengthening Social Enterprise, and 3. Achieving Better Policy Alignment. There are 26 commitments set out in the policy under the 3 main objectives which are scheduled to be delivered throughout the next 4 years by social enterprise stakeholders in partnership with the Government.

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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 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 this specific measure in the Action Plan, as it risked duplicating other work being conducted.
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 continued to support SMEs to face the challenges associated with Brexit. Their Brexit Advisory Service assists SMEs and includes the provision of factual advice, information materials and supports for capability building and the provision of other specialist expertise for companies. In the first six months of 2019 over 3,184 companies engaged with Brexit Advisory Service through ITI Conferences, workshops, presentations and non ITI speaking events etc. Another key part of InterTradeIreland's Brexit work is the provision of Brexit 'Start to Plan' vouchers, which enable companies to obtain specialist advice in areas such as customs, tax, tariff and non-tariff barriers, legal and labour mobility issues. These are worth €2,250 to each of the companies. In the first 6 months of 2019 there were 737 vouchers approved. In March 2019, ITI launched a further financial support in the form of the "Brexit Implementation Voucher", this provides financial support up to €5,625, with InterTradeIreland paying 50%, towards implementing critical changes in relation to Brexit matters. For the first six months of the year 19 of these vouchers were approved. In March 2019, ITI also launched their Virtual Learning Environment. This online tool offers free, accurate and independent online learning for practical help for cross-border SMEs on how their business can prepare for Brexit, with modules covering a range of topics, such as customs, people & supply chains.
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 Action Completed. Construction in respect of all 7 courthouses has been completed with Mullingar Courthouse officially reopening in 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	EPA	Ongoing	In progress The NWPP was reviewed in 2018 to ensure alignment to the 'Circular Economy' concept. The programme has identified priority areas as Agriculture; Food Waste; Local Waste Prevention; Construction & Demolition; Plastics; and Resources & Raw Materials.

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	Enterprise, Green Business, Green Hospitality, Green Healthcare, Smarter Farming and 'Stop Food Waste'.				The EPA is currently developing new national-level partnerships to promote waste prevention in these areas. Initiatives include Stop Food Waste; Smart Farming; and the Local Authority Prevention Network which promote sustainability and waste prevention to rural communities.
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	The Dairy Farm Support Scheme reopened in 2019, increasing by the end of June to a total of 141 active grants. The scheme provides support for the installation of more efficient vacuum and milk pump technology. The SME Smart Lighting programme reopened in 2019 with successful applicants receiving grant support of up to 30% to upgrade to more efficient lighting and permanently reduce their future energy use and spend on lighting. To end of June 2019 there were 148 applications with an estimated grant spend of €1.3 million. A new Learning Management System has gone to tender. This aims to advise, educate and train enterprises of all sizes, on energy efficiency for business, through online modules.
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 4 times so far in 2019. 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. By end 2018 exports have increased by almost 20% over the baseline.
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, accounts for over 90% of Ireland's total food and drink exports. The supporting base of over 500 Origin Green participating companies accounts for 95% of total food and drink exports. Origin Green provides a platform and replicable model that can be adopted across other regions and industries. It enables farmers and producers to set measurable sustainability targets and the independent verification ensures a robust, evidence based approach to support our sustainability model and continue to grow the value of Irish agri-food and drink exports.
108	Support a further cohort of new food entrepreneurs under Food Works and develop the Food Works Plus	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.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	supports for those entrepreneurs continuing to pursue their ventures.				
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	<p>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.</p> <p>The Future Growth Loan Scheme was launched in early 2019 to provide up to €300 million of long-term strategic investment loans and is available to eligible Irish businesses, including farmers and the agri-food & seafood sectors.</p>
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	<p>In the first half of 2019, EMFF grants of €4 million were awarded by BIM to 38 seafood enterprises supporting €16 million investment in seafood processing and aquaculture businesses. An investment of €4 million was announced for 274 coastal based projects under the EMFF Fisheries Local Area Action Group Strategy for Ireland's seven coastal regions.</p> <p>The EMFF Programme is in its 4th full year of operation with 19 support schemes operational. Investment to end 2018 was €101 million, with expected investment of €60 million forecast for 2019.</p>
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. See Action 111.

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113 Finalise the Draft Bioenergy Plan, which will capture the potential of the bioenergy sector and help generate employment opportunities.	DCCAE	Q1 2017	Closed	Following an examination of the crossover in scope of the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) and the Bioenergy Plan, it was intended that relevant policies and measures in the Bioenergy Plan would be integrated into the NECP and this action closed. The draft NECP was published in Q4 2018.
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.	DCCAE	Q3 2019	In progress	The RESS EU State Aid approval process commenced in June 2019 and it is expected that the registration for the first RESS auction will open in late 2019. RESS will provide a framework for renewable electricity technologies to deliver renewable generation in a cost effective manner. Work is ongoing and progressing across three main areas: Detailed RESS auction design, EU State Aid notification and development of the enabling framework for community participation.
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.	DCCAE	Q4 2018	Completed	Phase 1 of the scheme, an installation grant for heat pumps, opened for applications on 12 September 2018. Following State aid clearance from the EU Commission, Phase 2 of the scheme, an operational support for biomass boilers and anaerobic digestion heating systems, opened for applications on 4 June 2019.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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. Action 118 has evolved to the action below: Establish a Bioeconomy Implementation Group (BIG) on foot of the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy, published in March 2018.	DCCAE & DAFM	Q2 2017	*Completed *Establishment of the Group completed but the work of the group continues	The National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy (NPS), published by the Government in March 2018, established the Bioeconomy Implementation Group (BIG) -co-chaired by the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment and the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine. The BIG, comprising eleven Departments and eight agencies, was charged with addressing challenges and advancing actions identified in the NPS to further develop the bioeconomy in Ireland. The First Progress Report of the Bioeconomy Implementation Group was published on 3 September 2019.
119 As part of the International Financial Services (IFS) Strategy 2020, showcase the competitive and operational	IDA	Ongoing	In progress	IDA Ireland continues to engage with regional actors in packaging and promoting the key benefits of their region as a base for IFS companies.

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	advantages of regional locations for new and existing international financial services activities.				The IDA regional value proposition includes more competitive property solutions, access to growing talent pools and unique opportunities for collaboration with third level institutions which is gaining traction with new name targets and existing companies in the IFS portfolio.
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	The North-East, South-East & South-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020 have identified actions in relation to IFS.
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 are engaging with a broad range of sectors, particularly high skilled manufacturing and ICT. The most up to date figures to date show 75% of engagement is with micro enterprises and SMEs. The RSF managers have engaged with over 1,000 enterprises in 2018, compared with some 700 in 2017. In H1 2019, approximately 800 enterprises were engaged with. A key emerging strategy for industry both nationally and in the regions is the upskilling of the existing workforce at all levels. Although engagement is across a range of economic sectors, Manufacturing, Construction and ICT continue to be the three main area of engagement.
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	There are continued efforts to progress and implement actions in the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020. Currently there are over 16,000 apprentices undertaking one of 45 apprenticeship programmes. These cover a broad range of occupations, ranging from the traditional craft apprenticeships to new apprenticeships in occupations such as hospitality, finance and ICT, with further new programmes such as retail, hairdressing and animation to get underway in Q4 2019. In addition, there are 75 traineeship programmes currently available with 1745 participants (as of 31 July).
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	Completed	3-year Strategic Performance Agreements for 2018 – 2020 have been agreed between SOLAS and the 16 ETBs. Post-second level school leavers can avail of a host of FET options including apprenticeships, traineeships, and PLC courses. Information is available through www.fetchcourses.ie or local ETBs.

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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	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	<p>The annual SciFest competitions took place in schools, 14 Institutes of Technology and Dublin City University between April and May 2019. SciFest events were held across the country including Co. Galway, Kerry, Louth, Leitrim, Limerick, Tipperary and Westmeath.</p> <p>Engineers Week (organised by the Steps Programme in Engineers Ireland) and Tech Week (organised by the Irish Computer Society), both funded under the SFI Discover Programme, took place in March and May, respectively. Events and activities associated with these took place in schools, libraries and other venues across the country.</p> <p>SFI recently announced funding of €476,000 to 13 regional science festivals and 13 standalone events to take place during Science Week 2019. The theme of this year's event is 'Climate Action'. Regional festivals this year include the Cavan Monaghan Science Festival, the EUREKA Science and Technology Festival (Carlow), the Festival of Farming and Food (Co. Cork), the Kerry Science Festival, the Mayo Science and Technology Festival, the Midlands Science Festival, the Sligo Science Festival, the Southeast Science Festival, the Tipperary Science Festival and WexSci (the Wexford Science Festival).</p> <p>Maths Week (organised by CALMAST in Waterford IT), also funded under the SFI Discover Programme Call, will take place in schools and other venues around the country from 12 to 20 October 2019.</p> <p>SFI supports a network of 59 Discover Centres across the country, including many rural areas. This network offers SFI-accredited workshops and outreach programmes to support teaching and informal learning in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM).</p>
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	Since January 2019, SFI has funded 4 awards in the area of agriculture and agri-food. The combined value of these 4 awards was €1.55 million.

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				One award will involve the application of drones and artificial intelligence imaging techniques to evaluate the risk of enhanced rainfall and flooding to the critical barley industry in Ireland (€1.47 million), while another will study novel, sustainable alternatives for food storage and decontamination in the agri-food sector (€66 k).
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 Údarás continues to work in conjunction with various third level institutes in the areas of media development, language planning and more, including NUIG, GMIT, WIT, LYT.
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 A series of events and projects are being implemented in order to further links with the diaspora, including trade missions, cultural projects and Cairde na Gaeltachta, a diaspora newsletter.
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 working group has been formed in respect of this initiative with further progress also anticipated through Heritage Ireland 2030 and the new National Policy on Architecture.
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 2019 activities: 5 day International Grassland Training course with attendees from Finland, Latvia, Department of Agriculture NI and Ireland. 8 day Ruminant Nutrition Course is complete. Grassland Pesticide Training Course. 2 Precision fertiliser application events for agricontractors. 2 Soils Training Courses including 1 for agricultural consultants. 12 Cecra Training Courses. 6 Industry webinars. 1 Regional Brexit Briefing. 3 day training course for DAFM. 5 day Credit Union Training. 1 day Training for agri-accountants. Teagasc ConnectEd continues to support agri-professionals on NMP and eProfit Monitor.
131	Develop and deliver training and education programmes for farmers to:	Teagasc	Ongoing	In progress (a) Industry consortia have been established to progress the development of agricultural/horticultural /equine apprenticeship programmes.

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	<p>(a) ensure that the appropriate skillsets and knowledge are applied at each stage of development of the primary producer's business; and</p> <p>(b) Up-skill farmers as employers, in areas such as improving farm practices, employing staff and responsibilities as an employer</p>				<p>All proposed apprenticeship programmes have to be validated by QQI and the Apprenticeship Council before a rollout process can commence.</p> <p>(b) Teagasc is currently developing a standardised branded format for both accredited and non-accredited CPD courses for farmers with CPD course offerings and details to be published on the dedicated www.teagasc.ie webpages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 (employing People on Dairy Farms) training courses will be offered this autumn, in collaboration with Macra SkillNet and six milk processors; • 4 Dairy Start-up courses will be offered at four regional venues; • 50 Grass 10 Grassland Management courses are being delivered (having started in spring 2019) • Best Practice in Milking courses are being delivered by FRS, with input from Teagasc (5 courses in July with 49 learners; 110 learners so far in 2019).
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	Plan to run 12 options workshops (one per Teagasc region) involving external agencies during Q4 2019.
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	Work is on-going to develop further functionality on the portal. Portal is being used to register financial courses in autumn 2019.
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 developing the freelance Irish language translation sector at home.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	Ongoing, funding of €1.1 million sanctioned for courses in 2019/2020 academic year.
135	Continue to support jobseekers through the network of local Intreo offices and DSP case workers.	DEASP	Ongoing	In progress	DEASP continues to provide support to jobseekers through its network of local Intreo centres and case workers, and advance their job seeking efforts via a range of pro employment supports, incentives, training and education as appropriate.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	In progress	From 2018 to mid-year 2019 SICAP has assisted 43,043 individuals on a one to one basis. 16,502 people completed a lifelong learning course. 4,024 people set up their own business. 2,168 people got jobs.
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 redesigned SICAP 2018 - 2022 was launched in April 2018. The programme has reduced the number of goals from 3 to 2. Goal 1 - Community Engagement, and Goal 2 - Individual Engagement. This reflects the need to engage and support the most disadvantaged individuals. The overall reduction in targets for the programme will ensure the Local Community Development Committees (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	The Dormant Accounts Fund supports measures right across the country aimed at addressing economic, social and educational disadvantage, and supporting persons with a disability. Annual Action Plans, which identify the measures and programmes to be funded, have been published each year, with the most recent plan published in June 2019. Over the last number of years there has been a significant ramp up in the level of funding utilised from the Dormant Accounts Fund. Funding levels have increased from €12 million in 2016 to €15.8 million in 2017 and €28 million in 2018; greatly enhancing the impact of the fund on disadvantaged communities.
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 were increased by €5 per week in Budget 2019. This follows on from a similar €5 per week increase in Budget 2018. The qualified child allowance payments to Farm Assist recipients was increased by €3 per week for children aged 12 and over and €2 for children up to the age of 12. An extra €2 per week in the Fuel allowance was also announced. These increases are effective from January 2020. There were no increases in the personal or qualified adult rates paid to Farm Assist recipients announced in Budget 2020.
140	Develop and conduct an awareness campaign in rural communities to highlight the Farm Assist and Fish Assist schemes.	DEASP	2018	Completed	DEASP ran an information campaign to raise awareness about the Farm Assist and Fish Assist schemes in April and July 2018.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	In progress	This measure is in progress. DEASP continues to look 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.
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	These schemes are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are targeted appropriately. An Interdepartmental group was set up in Q1 2019 to look at what Department was best placed to host the Social Inclusion places on CE and the Rural social Scheme and Job Initiative schemes.
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	10 rural projects are receiving funding under the ESF PEIL 2.9 Gender Equality Women Returning to the Workforce Strand. Contracts awarded in 2017 will run until Q2 2020. The projects are located throughout rural areas of Ireland. The 10 projects will receive a total allocation of approximately €3 million over 3 years. The participants in these projects attend group training and one-to-one coaching to improve job readiness skills and are supported both into and in employment.
144	Continue to support farm incomes through the roll-out of CAP payments of over €1.2 billion annually.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	Applications for the 2019 BPS were received by the closing date of 16 May 2019. Work is ongoing in relation to the processing of cases for payment from 16 October 2019. Under the 2018 BPS, €1.18 billion has now been paid to over 124,000 farmers.
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 7 separate strands of support and is open for applications in rolling three-month tranches with fourteen completed as of July 2019. Approvals are issuing on an ongoing basis with a total of over 22,000 applications approved to date and some 410,140 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, and the increase has taken effect from January 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	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	Budget 2019 included the publication of the “Progress Implementation Update of the Agri-taxation Review 2014”.

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	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.				This shows the progress made over recent Budgets with the implementation of the 25 recommendations, which has resulted in positive changes for Irish agriculture, especially in the areas of land mobility and succession.
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.
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 Amendment of section 604B of Principal Act (relief for farm restructuring) 29. Section 604B(1)(a) is amended in the definition of "relevant period" by substituting "31 December 2019" for "31 December 2016".
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 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	Fáilte Ireland recently released the Final Tourism Facts for 2018. Fáilte estimate that tourist volume in rural areas increased to 8.782 million in 2018. The target for action 152 from the APRD has been reached and surpassed 1 year ahead of schedule.
153	Carry out a feasibility study in relation to the development of the 'Ireland's Lakelands' brand as a	Fáilte Ireland	Q1 2017	Completed	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	separate proposition to sit alongside the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East.				
154	Develop a Tourism Investment and Development Strategy for the Gaeltacht.	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Q1 2017	Completed	The strategy is currently being implemented, with a targeting of key Gaeltacht rural areas underserved through tourism.
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 2019-2021, published in December 2018, will continue to drive the implementation of the Government's Tourism policies, one of which is to collaborate with and support Local Authorities all around the country, with an emphasis on regional growth. As part of this plan the County and City Management Association will develop and roll out a Local Authority Tourism Officer Capability Programme to build tourism knowledge and key core capabilities/competencies. The programme will utilise the biennial Local Authority Tourism Conference as a platform for sharing best practise and inspiring other community groups.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	The Regional Co-operative Market Access Scheme promotes air and sea access direct to the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Ancient East and is administered by Tourism Ireland with matching funding from airlines, sea carriers, airports, ports and regional tourism stakeholders including Local Authorities. In light of the likely impact of Brexit on the regions, the Regional Co-operative Market Access Scheme has been further extended for 2019. €1 million exchequer funding has been made available for this scheme annually since 2016, with an additional €250,000 allocated in 2019.
158	Include Eircodes in Satnav and digital spatial mapping platforms to help simplify navigation in rural areas and enhance the tourist experience.	DCCAE	Q2 2017	Completed	Action Completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
159	Develop cultural digitisation initiatives to enhance “Ireland’s Roots” tourism offering.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	This is ongoing as a new scheme is being devised for roll out in the near future.
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	<p>OSi meet with voluntary action groups such as Mountaineering Ireland to discuss developments in OSi mapping, particularly with regard to rural upland areas. OSi continues to collaborate with Tourism Ireland to produce an All-Ireland map using a combination of tourist information and mapping, and liaise with Sport Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) to assist in the capture of up to date walking routes in rural areas in order to depict them on OSi leisure maps.</p> <p>OSi also produced a Wild Atlantic Way map of Ireland with additional tourist information supplied by Fáilte Ireland. Together with the O’Brien Press, they held a launch in Westport House in 2018 with representatives from Fáilte Ireland, Westport House and The Mayo News present as well as many people from the local rural community.</p>
161	Accelerate diversification of overseas tourism to Ireland to reduce the impact of possible decline in visits from Great Britain.	Tourism Ireland	Ongoing	Completed	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	Ongoing, 2019 sees the addition of additional universities in the USA and Canada to the scheme, as well as a new unique Mohawk Irish Language Scholarship, announced in April 2019 by Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for the Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands Seán Kyne TD, and Grand Chief Joseph Tokwiro Norton of the Mohawk Nation. This award will facilitate a Mohawk Scholar to attend an Irish Language course in An Cheathrú Rua each year.
163	Support Agri-Food tourism initiatives by local authorities, including local markets and food and beverage trails.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress	<p>A further 11 projects were funded in 2018 following a call for proposals.</p> <p>In 2019, 12 projects have been approved for funding.</p>
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	Ongoing	In progress	<p>Carlingford Lough Greenway:</p> <p>Louth County Council in partnership with Newry Mourne and Down District Council are advancing the Carlingford Lough Greenway project to planning stage on this Cross Border trail.</p> <p>Following recent public consultations, the design and related environmental screening have developed to a Planning Process in both jurisdictions.</p>

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
		relevant parties			<p>Following the Planning Process they look forward to proceeding to concluding land holder discussions, detail design, and then procurement of a construction contract for the remainder of the Greenway between Newry and Carlingford. They currently programme this work to be complete by 2021.</p> <p>Smithboro to Middletown Greenway: Work continues following a slight delay due to loss of Project Manager (promotion) and subsequent recruitment process. Contractors were appointed for overseeing the design and construction of the route in May, and they are now proceeding to produce a detailed design. It is intended to have this out to public consultation in the autumn, with a view to submitting for planning approval before the end of the year. It is hoped to commence construction in mid-2020 with completion due in mid-2021.</p>
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>Supported by Fáilte Ireland, Connemara West bid for and won the opportunity to host the <i>North Atlantic Forum 2021</i> conference in Tullycross/Letterfrack in September 2021. Actual or potential Irish partner organisations include UCD, WDC, NUIG, GMIT, NPWS, DRCD, Fáilte Ireland and the Marine Institute. The theme for this prestigious biennial conference is Sustainable Communities and it typically attracts 150 international delegates from universities, NGO's and policy makers.</p> <p><i>Interchanges 2019</i> (The Fifth Transatlantic Conference on Education, Research and Community Engagement) was held in Renvyle, Connemara in June 2019. Discussions initiated with 3 new US colleges who attended Interchanges 2019 about establishing study abroad programmes in Connemara in 2021/2022.</p> <p>Planning began for <i>Interchanges 2020</i> to be held in June 2020. 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.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>Building on their study abroad programme with Connemara West, Lourdes University, Ohio officially launched the University's new Bachelor of Science Degree in Craft Beverages (the first of its kind in the United States) in March 2019 at the Portershed in the heart of Galway City's innovation district. This degree will offer US students the opportunity for an international internship at breweries and/or distilleries in County Galway in particular and the Western seaboard more generally.</p> <p>One new US college, University of Findlay, Ohio, brought students on a summer programme in June 2019.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>D/CHG is working with the island communities, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, to enhance services provided to visitors to the islands as well those living on the islands.</p>
167	Develop a strategy to underpin the development, funding and promotion of Greenways to support activity tourism in rural areas.	DTTAS	Q2 2017	<p>Completed</p> <p>Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal Canal Blueway - The first Blueway on the Royal Canal was officially opened in 2018. The Blueway activities centred around Mullingar, and Westmeath to Longford. An activity provider facilitated cycling, canoeing and stand up paddle boarding hire from the harbour in Mullingar during the summer of 2018. Royal Canal Greenway - Infrastructural work on the Royal Canal Greenway from Maynooth to Richmond Harbour is nearing completion and it is planned to officially launch the product in Q1 2020 for the 2020 season. Barrow Blueway – An Bord Pleanála upheld the decisions of the local planning authorities and planning was thus granted for a 46km stretch from Lowtown to Athy. Waterways Ireland subsequently undertook an economic appraisal of the route and have submitted, (with Kildare County Council being the lead partner), an application under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. The project will cost in excess of €6m and work will commence when funding is secured.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlow Sports Partnership in conjunction with Carlow LEADER, Carlow Tourism and Waterways Ireland again established the Town Park Activity Hub in the 2019 summer season. • The Hub provided a central location for on and off water activity providers and was successful in attracting 100's of new users to the various activities including canoeing, paddle boarding and hiking. • Lough Derg Blueway - officially launched in March 2018, is experiencing yet another successful year, mainly within the national market. • Shannon Blueway - The third phase of the Shannon Blueway was opened by Michael Ring, Minister for Rural and Community Development, on 28 June 2019. The project creates a new path along the shores of Lough Allen linking four tourism businesses to the lock at Blackrock and Drumshanbo town. Car parking for 13 vehicles has also been created, with a new entrance to Drumshanbo Lock at Blackrock and the newly developed Blueway. Funding of €340 k for the project was obtained by a partnership of Waterways Ireland and Leitrim County Council under the Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Scheme through the Department of Rural and Community Development.
169	Enhance infrastructure on and along the inland navigation system to support increased recreational and economic activity in rural Ireland.	Waterways Ireland	2017-2019	<p>In progress</p> <p>The Shannon Masterplan is being developed through the Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland Strategic Partnership Agreement, as part of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. A study is also taking place on the feasibility of a 'Pilgrim Way' along the Shannon and Erne navigations to Donegal, using LEADER funding, and will be completed by September 2019. Development work continued using third-party funding and focused on development of towpaths along the 140km of the Royal Canal working in partnership with the local authorities along the route and with support from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. The Greenway from Maynooth to Richmond Harbour will be completed in the Autumn 2019.</p> <p>The Ulster Canal Greenway Project from Smithboro, Co. Monaghan to Middletown, Co. Armagh secured €4.95 million in December 2016 from the INTERREG VA programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>Waterways Ireland have partnered with local County Councils and agencies to develop the 22 km route as part of a wider and longer-term Ulster Canal Greenway Strategy. It is also hoped to commence the construction phase in 2020/early 2021.</p> <p>Lock 16 to Kilclare Blueway Deliverables - 4.9km Blueway trail with associated signage and interpretative panels. Funded from the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. Planning permission has been obtained for the development, and the detailed design and tender phases are being progressed.</p> <p>Ballyconnell to Bellaheady Bridge Recreational Trail Deliverables – 5.5km Blueway trail with associated signage and interpretative panels (approx. 4.5km off road section and 1km on road section). Planning permission has been obtained, and the detailed design and tender phases are being progressed.</p> <p>Planning approval for moorings at Castlesaunderson has been approved and this project will be completed in October 2019. Funding was received from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to develop proposal for a 'Terminus' in Clones, Co Monaghan, on the Ulster Canal Route. A tender is currently being progressed for a feasibility of a sustainable water supply to the 'Terminus' and work is also progressing with Monaghan County Council on the development of a masterplan which will examine the potential benefits of the project to the local area. The project will provide a harbour, reinstate an area of canal and create a 2km walk in Clones town.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>The 2018 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme commenced in June 2018 and will continue through to October 2019. Funding was provided to 232 projects in 2018, to the value of €20.77 million. The 2019 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure scheme was launched in March 2019 and 284 applications were received and are currently being assessed by the Department.</p>
171	Expand the National Walks Scheme with a view to doubling the number of walks in the scheme by 2019.	DRCD	2017-2020	<p>In progress</p> <p>The Programme for a Partnership Government included a commitment to increase the number of walks covered by the Walks Scheme. In line with this commitment, funding for the scheme was doubled in Budget 2019 - from €2 million to €4 million - to allow the expansion to proceed.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				The Department advertised for expressions of interest for walks that might be considered for inclusion in the expanded scheme and these EOIs are considered under a number of criteria, including the strategic importance of the trail, landowner agreement to participate, and state of readiness. To date 57 EOIs have been received from 11 applicant bodies, and the Department is considering these at the moment.
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 the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DCHG) and is comprised of representatives from DCHG, the Department of Rural and Community Affairs, Fáilte Ireland and five public landowning organisations (NPWS, Waterways Ireland, Coillte, Bord na Mona & Inland Fisheries Ireland). Meetings are held in locations around the country and relevant local authorities are also invited to attend.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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 The PORA only becomes officially active when funding is granted for its resourcing. Until then, each partner in PORA (Coillte, Waterways Ireland, Bord na Mona, DCHG, Inland Fisheries Ireland) will endeavour to deliver on elements of it, where they can within existing resources or other funding streams as they become available. The partners for each of the 4 flagship projects are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Midlands Cycling Destination – Offaly County Council, Coillte, WI, BnM (As this is the only one with Coillte involvement, Coillte can report that the Slieve Bloom MTB element of the project is now fully funded under the RRDF programme and will be delivered by 2024. 2. Barrow Blueway – WI 3. Connemara Cluster – DCHG/NPWS 4. Spatial Database – DCHG/NPWS

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>An Bord Pleanála upheld the decisions of the local planning authorities and planning was thus granted for a 46km stretch from Lowtown to Athy. Waterways Ireland subsequently undertook an economic appraisal of the route and have submitted, (with Kildare County Council being the lead partner), an application under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.</p> <p>The project will cost in excess of €6 million and work will commence when funding is secured. Waterways Ireland are continuing to work with the Local Authorities along the Barrow navigation to 'animate' the river and canal section for recreational purposes.</p> <p>Carlow Sports Partnership, in conjunction with Carlow LEADER, Carlow Tourism and Waterways Ireland, again established the Town Park Activity Hub in the 2019 summer season. On 29 September a 'Barrow Way Walk' has been organised in collaboration with the Local Sports Partnerships, Local Authorities, Get Ireland Walking and Sport Ireland to encourage a national day of walking on the Barrow. The event, as part of the European Week of Sport is hoped to be the largest walking event in Ireland in 2019.</p>
175	Progress the development of niche outdoor activities in our National Parks and Nature Reserves drawing on their unique attributes which will contribute to sustainable tourism in rural areas.	DCHG	2017-2019	<p>In progress</p> <p>Building on the Department's (NPWS) Strategic Partnership with Fáilte Ireland, which has the aim of enhancing the tourism offering at Ireland's National Parks, and the launch in 2018 of 'Experiencing the Wild Heart of Ireland, a Tourism Interpretative Masterplan' for all six National Parks and Coole Park in 2018, the Department secured €5 million in funding under the Rural Regeneration Fund. A total of 32 projects, targeting the upgrading and development of trails across the Parks and Reserves network, increased visitor facilities and improved signage and branding will be funded. Hybrid buses in selected National Parks will be purchased to assist in lowering the carbon footprint of visitor activities.</p>
176	Agree and implement a scheme to indemnify private land owners with regard to recreational users of their lands.	DRCDD	2017	<p>Delayed</p> <p>The Department of Rural and Community Development has, for some time, been examining how best to introduce a scheme to indemnify private land owners, particularly in upland areas, with regard to the use of their lands for recreational purposes.</p> <p>This is a complex issue and the Department has been advised that an indemnity scheme such as the one envisaged will require legislative provision. A number of separate pieces of legislation could require amendment.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				In light of the complexity involved, the Department is also considering other options that might be available to address the matter as an interim measure. The Department been making enquiries into alternative options and will continue to work to find a solution that meets the concerns of landowners who provide access to their lands for recreational purposes.
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>On 6 June, Minister Michael Ring announced the appointment of Dr. Liam Twomey as the new Chair of Comhairle na Tuaithe and presented a new mandate to the Council which will reinforce and strengthen its advisory role in relation to the sustainable development of the outdoor recreation sector in Ireland, which includes hill walking.</p> <p>Comhairle will act as a forum for consultation and collaboration between stakeholders and advise on matters relating the use of the countryside for recreational purposes. Comhairle will identify opportunities to develop rural enterprises based on outdoor recreation activity, and to consider the scope for the development of a new National Strategy for Outdoor Recreation, taking account of recent developments and investments across the sector.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Work continues on this measure with the summer months being the period when most work is undertaken. IFI has applied for funding under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Measure to further resource and deliver on this measure.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>In April, Inland Fisheries Ireland awarded funding to 46 organisations, for over 200 individual angling or fisheries related events; approximately 60 of these to be held in the 1 January - 30 June 2019 period dependent on weather conditions and other influencing factors.</p>
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	<p>Completed</p> <p>Action Completed. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>
181	Develop and promote Ireland's angling tourism offering abroad to assist in generating tourism in rural Ireland.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	Ongoing	<p>In progress</p> <p>Inland Fisheries Ireland has attended angling shows in the US, UK, Germany and France in the period January to June. The Angling in Ireland Marketing Strategy awaits finalisation and will be delivered by partners from the state tourism and fisheries agencies (North, South and Cross Border) as well as industry reps.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
182 Rollout the Capital Works Scheme under the National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) to help deliver an accessible and sustainable, world class inland fisheries resource.	Inland Fisheries Ireland	2017-2018	In progress	Three schemes are in delivery: 2016 CGS, 2017 NSAD and 2018 SCF/MFF. €2.9 million has been awarded over the three schemes and delivery of all three schemes is at over 80%. IFI has opened a 2019 scheme to applications and these are currently under evaluation.
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 2018/19 Scheme has been completed. This is in collaboration with The Blackrock Education Centre and other Education Centres throughout Ireland. 104 schools took part in the program with the total number of 2200 students. Planning is underway for the school year 2019/2020.
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 use Blogs and Social Media to promote walking and outdoor activities in Ireland. These have included Irelands Greenways and Trails, Ireland's Best Picnic Spots and the History of Irish Place Names. OSi also distributes a Newsletter to promote walking and leisure, and supported and featured in RTE's recent programme "Creedon's Atlas of 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	Completed	Hub na nÓg was officially launched in November 2017. It has consulted with children and young people on a number of consultations, e.g. on 'Cruinniú' 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 and improving visitor experience to drive sustainable tourism in rural areas.	DCHG	Ongoing from Q2 2017	In progress	Nearly €5 million was directly invested in the network of National Parks and Natures Reserves through the vote of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2017 & 2018. Expenditure in the region of €3 million is anticipated in 2019. Under "Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage, 2018 – 2027" capital investment of some €50 million has been earmarked for the National Parks and Nature Reserves. Under the Strategic Partnership with Fáilte, over €400k has been expended on scoping and feasibility studies with a further €4 million allocated to 2 large scale projects in Wild-Nephin Bally National Park and Connemara National Park. A further €5 million in funding has been secured under the Rural Regeneration Fund for a total of 32 individual projects, targeting the upgrading and development of trails across the Parks and Reserves network, increased visitor facilities and improved signage and branding will be funded.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>Highlights of the capital investment to date include: Completion of the Killarney House restoration with the opening of the 21 room Exhibition, Historic Rooms and Visitor Centre.</p> <p>The Expansion of Wild-Nephin Ballycroy National, which increased the total size of the National Park to over 15,000 hectares. Trail maintenance including upgrades to Diamond Hill in Connemara National park, and the Blue Road at Shrahduggan in Ballycroy National Park.</p> <p>Upgrading of the road network in Killarney National Park and the restoration of the historic windows and essential maintenance and restoration works to the roof of Muckcross House.</p> <p>Restoration of the of the Victorian Servants' Dining Hall and Laundry Room in the basement of Muckcross House.</p>
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 The NPWS of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in consultation with other relevant agencies will undertake a feasibility study in relation to the creation of a National Peatlands Park in 2020. Discussions are ongoing.
188	Develop and publish an updated National Heritage Plan to protect, manage and promote our built and natural heritage.	DCHG	2017	In progress Following a 4-month consultation process, Heritage Ireland 2030 is now being drafted following analysis of over 2,100 submissions.
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 Through the auspices of the Irish Uplands Management Partnership Board (IUMPB) and its co-ordinator, the Heritage Council is supporting the Irish Uplands Forum (IUF), which is a voluntary body established in 1995, to assist upland communities. The IUPMF expect to launch a significant report: "A Profile of Ireland's Uplands" by Q4 2019, aiming to provide a human geography of Ireland's uplands and demonstrate challenges to economic status and activity, accessibility and connectivity issues throughout Ireland. The Heritage Council also directly supports the Wicklow Uplands Council (WUC), by means of a SLA (Service Level Agreement) to achieve set goals and objectives in line with the Heritage Council's Strategy 2018-2022. The WUC has recently moved into the new EIP (European Innovation Partnership) model – DAFM.

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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	Tentative list nomination process opened Jan 2019. Engagement is ongoing with leading local authorities and relevant stakeholders to review the current List and identify new sites for inclusion.
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	<p>€11.5 million funding was approved for 10 Ireland's Ancient East (IAE) projects including €8.2 million for 8 sites outside the Dublin region.</p> <p>Work continues to progress in relation to investment in these sites including the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Brú na Bóinne. Work is on-going with Interpretative Designers at Brú na Bóinne and Newgrange. New visitor facilities are due to open at Knowth in Q3 2019. A new exhibition will officially launch in Ormond Castle in Q3 2019. Restoration works at King John's Castle, Carlingford are due for completion in Q3 2019.</p> <p>A major investment of €4.3 million has been announced in 4 key heritage sites along the Wild Atlantic Way which will enhance the visitor experiences at each location. The 4 sites to benefit from this investment are: The Blasket Island Visitor Centre, Céide Fields, Inis Mór and Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery. Interpretative Designers have now been appointed for all four sites and works is underway. The Viewing Platform at the Blasket Island Visitor Centre is at tender stage.</p>
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	National Monuments Service and Built Heritage Policy units continuing to work in tri-partite strategic partnership with OPW and Fáilte Ireland, with ongoing work to identify sites for Phase 2 investment under the partnership. New World Heritage visitor centre at Brú na Bóinne and Knowth to open Q4 2019 following €5 million investment. Detailed discussion ongoing under tripartite partnership around investment in Clonmacnoise and Rock of Cashel.
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	<p>The Historic Structures Fund, formerly the Structures at Risk Fund is administered through the 31 local authorities. The 2019 scheme, which was launched in November 2018, has an allocation of €1.78 million.</p> <p>A total of 70 projects are being funded in 2019, comprising of 60 projects under Stream 1 (grants from €15,000 up to €50,000), 4 projects under Stream 2 (grants from €50,000 up to €200,000)</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				and 6 projects funded under Partnership with State-funded organisations. Figures in relation to days of employment will be available in November 2019.
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 While the Heritage Council was not in a position to run a Community Grants scheme in 2019, funding support of €653,904 was awarded, in February, to 71 local projects nationally through the Heritage Council funded county heritage plan programme. These projects are implemented by County Heritage Officers in conjunction with local community groups and local heritage forum. These projects support local communities to preserve and value the natural, built and cultural heritage.
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 2019 was held from 17-25 August. It focused on the themes Pastimes – Past Times. Co-ordinated by the Heritage Council, approximately 1,100 event organisers from the public, private and voluntary sectors organised more than 2,000 heritage events across the country. Based on 2018 figures it is expected that more than 400,000 people will have attended events ranging from community archaeology to medieval festivals to nature camps for children in Ireland. Wild Child Day took place on 21 August and Water Heritage Day on 25 August. Precise figures for the 2019 Heritage Week will be available later in the year.
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 (HTI) is a joint undertaking by the Heritage Council and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. A seminar for applicants was held in Kilkenny on 11 January 2019. Funding of €1 million was subsequently awarded for projects in six towns, Boyle, Ballina, Kilrush, Navan, Letterkenny and Nenagh. This includes street façade conservation works and conservation to historic buildings.
197	Encourage the conservation and reuse of historic properties and lettings to tourists in rural communities.	Irish Landmark Trust	Ongoing	In progress Funding of €40,000 was provided under the Historic Structures Fund towards the conservation of Killee Cottage (a thatched cottage) in Mitchelstown Co. Cork. When completed, it will be added to the Landmark's portfolio of historic properties available to let for holiday accommodation. Funding of €5,000 was provided by Donegal County Council under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme towards essential works to Termon House, Co. Donegal, which is one of Trust's properties let as holiday accommodation.

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				The Trust is in discussion with Waterford City Council about the possibility of bringing a vacant historic property to let as holiday 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	<p>In progress</p> <p>An allocation of €45,000 per year was provided (2016 – 2019) to the Irish Historic Houses Association to assist in achieving the objectives of the 2016 Action Plan for the Sustainable Future of the Irish Historic House in Private Ownership. Further funding is available under the Department’s Historic Structures Fund.</p> <p>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 condition of the scheme is that the property is required to be open to the public for a minimum numbers of days each year, or in use as a registered guest house.</p> <p>Following a review of the operation of Section 482 by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Finance, with support from the Revenue Commissioners it is proposed to maintain Section 482 relief.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>2019 events include -</p> <p>February: The IWTN National Heritage Plan and IWTN Action Plan consultation day in Kilkenny, 20 attended, with research visits at the end of the day to Medieval Mile Museum and Callan to learn about heritage-led regeneration.</p> <p>March: A 3-day historic town’s research trip to Kilkenny, Waterford and Youghal, focusing on heritage-led regeneration, with 30 attendees. CADW was a partner organisation. Wales/Ireland urban regeneration seminar held in Youghal. Videos of seminar available to watch online.</p> <p>April: IWTN capital and interpretation grants letters issued to applicants. €150,000 was allocated to 8 capital projects. The projects funded under the capital scheme include conservation of town walls and the preparation of archaeological consent documents.</p> <p>A further €97,690 was allocated to 19 heritage interpretation projects.</p>

Action		Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
					<p>The projects funded under this scheme include medieval festivals, interpretive drawings & signage, a feasibility plan, displays for a museum, inlay paving, conference, community excavation project, health and safety actions, an arts led interpretation project and educational materials.</p> <p>June: Event titled 'Climate change and historic towns: adapting to change conference' held in Kilmallock with 50 attendees. Videos of seminar available to watch online.</p> <p>Opening of IWTN supported east wall walkway in Kilmallock.</p> <p>IWTN AGM with tour of heritage tourism actions in Buttevant, with 20 attendees.</p>
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	NMS input- various interpretation enhancements ongoing under tripartite Fáilte Ireland-OPW-DCHG partnership, including at Brú na Bóinne.
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	NMS organised an international 1-day conference on 5 October in Dublin Castle to focus on heritage pilgrimage across Europe.
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	Will be considered and progressed further in the context of Heritage Ireland 2030.
Pillar 4 - Fostering Culture and Creativity in Rural Communities					
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	Completed	The list of successful projects under the Arts and Culture Capital Scheme 2016-2018 [Streams 1 & 2 and 3 (small capital)] is available on the Department's website.
204	Increase funding supports to regional museums across the country ensuring access to our cultural heritage for rural dwellers.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	€129,100 allocated to 19 projects under the Regional Museum Exhibition Scheme in addition to ongoing support of regional and specialised museums.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	The Mobility of Collections scheme is demand driven. 2 applications were supported in 2019.
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	This is in progress. Final outcomes will be available Q4 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	Completed	The programmatic approach has been to: a) strategically support and advance children's and young people's provision within Local Authority framework agreements; b) advance learning and capacity in building inclusion in the arts (cultural diversity, arts and disability) with the conference Places Matter, building inclusion in the arts March 2019 including an international CPD opportunity (Nina Simon) with Local Authorities and other arts leaders.
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 investment in small festivals increased from a total budget of €930,419 in 2016 to €1.4 million in 2019. The average festival grant has subsequently increased from €8,731 to €10,852 over a period of 3 years. The increased investment has enabled arts activity to take place in local communities in every county in Ireland and increased opportunity for public engagement in the arts.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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 are continuing to go from strength to strength. In 2018, over 1,200 new initiatives/projects were rolled out with funding of over €4 million provided between DCHG and DHPLG.
211 Develop a Culture and Creativity Plan in every county as part of the Creative Ireland programme.	LAs	End 2017	Completed	31 5-year culture and creativity strategies were published and launched in 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	Action completed. Each Local Authority received €97,000 to roll out annual plans. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	Completed	In 2017, research was conducted to develop and consider the potential roll out of this scheme, looking at international and national best practice. In 2018 discussions were entered into with 6 local authorities and the Regional Assemblies on possible locations, identifying 6 towns through arts investment/social deprivation indexes. Budget constraints will allow for one pilot project to be launched in Q4 2019.
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	Cruinniú na Cásca evolved in 2018 into Cruinniú na nÓg, a national day of creativity for children. Now in its second year, there were over 750 events nationwide for Cruinniú na nÓg 2019. This is the first event of its kind worldwide, and it provides free activities for children, in their own locality, to explore creativity in all its forms. The 'Voice of the Child' is an integral part of this process, to ensure that this event provides the services that children and young people want. This event has a positive effect on culture, creative and arts activities in rural Ireland.
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	DCHG have decided not to proceed with this action based on initial discussions with their Creative Ireland Co-ordinators. Many felt that every County has a unique culture and heritage which should be celebrated. Increased funding to all counties has allowed further creative engagement to take place.
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	The recent Arts and Culture Capital Scheme 2016 - 2018 is focused on the refurbishment and enhancement of the existing stock of arts and culture facilities throughout the country. To date, funding of €10.21 million has been allocated to 134 projects under three complementary grant streams. This is the most significant investment in cultural infrastructure in a decade with funding provided to a range of facilities, including arts centres, theatres, galleries and museums, as well as artist studios and creative spaces throughout the state.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	Culture Night 2019 took place on 20 September 2019, with an estimated 400,000+ people participating in events around the country.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
219	Implement the Arts in Education Charter, a joint initiative between D/AHRRGA and D/ES to ensure that arts and cultural engagement in schools at all levels will be attained across the country.	Arts Council	Ongoing	In progress	<p>The Arts in Education Charter has now been ‘embraced, fast-tracked and resourced’ by the Creative Ireland Programme and forms part of Creative Youth.</p> <p>The programme is the plan for Pillar 1 of Creative Ireland, and commits to resourcing and implementing the Charter. Creative Youth was published jointly by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.</p> <p>A range of initiatives such as the development and maintenance of the Arts in Education Portal (www.artsineducation.ie) and the holding of a National Arts in Education Portal Day are ongoing. The Portal Day in 2019 will be held on 9 November. This year’s guest speaker will be Professor Bill Lucas, Director of the Centre for Real-World Learning (CRL) at the University of Winchester.</p> <p>Other initiatives in the Charter include the expansion of Music Generation, and an initiative called ‘Arts Rich Schools’ (ARÍS), which is now being implemented as Creative Schools/Scoileanna Ildánacha. 150 schools began the initiative in September 2018 and are continuing their engagement in the new 2019/20 school year. A further 150 schools are due to also begin the initiative in September.</p> <p>Arts in Education Partnerships, another action in the Charter, are being reconceived as Local Creative Youth Partnerships, which are due to be piloted in 2019 by Kerry ETB, Laois-Offaly ETB and Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB.</p>
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	Formal agreements are in place between the Arts Council and the County Managers Association CCMA.
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	A Strategy Working Group has been established consisting of members from DCHG, ÚnaG, Foras na Gaeilge, TG4, the Arts Council and Creative Ireland. The Terms of Reference for the Group have been finalised.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	Closed	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 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.
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	One Language Plan relating to a Gaeltacht Language Planning Area was approved in the first half of 2019, bringing the total number of approved plans to 14. 2 further Plans were subsequently received from Údarás na Gaeltachta.
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 Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. 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	Funding continues to be provided to a wide range of capital projects throughout the Gaeltacht to assist with the development and upgrading of various community facilities. 59 capital projects were funded in 2018 at a cost of €1.3 million. Current funding was provided to 2 Gaeltacht organisations to fund 94 language assistants in 139 participating schools throughout the Gaeltacht. 2,030 packages under the Clár Tacaíochta Teaghlaigh programme were distributed to families who wish to raise their children through Irish. 200 summer camps were organised at a cost of €330,000. Funding was provided towards the provision of the sports programme in 65 participating schools, assisting 4,400 pupils throughout the Connacht and Munster Gaeltacht.
225 Roll out the Techspace as Gaeilge Initiative, currently operating in the Connacht region, to all other regions.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress	This project is going from strength to strength with the rollout to Munster in 2018 and the rollout to Leinster and Ulster currently underway.
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	Completed	The second of the two-year Dioplóma courses has been launched and is underway.
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	A range of arts projects across all Gaeltacht areas are being developed with Ealaíon na Gaeltachta funding, along with developing projects in conjunction with Galway 2020.
228 Continue to support the development of cultural tourism in the Gaeltacht by administering the Irish Language Learners scheme.	DCHG	Ongoing	In progress	This measure is ongoing. Students attended various Gaeltacht Irish Colleges during August 2018. In 2018, a total of €4.178 million was spent on this scheme under which funding was provided to 712 Gaeltacht households who provided accommodation to 26,228 students attending 55 Irish colleges.

	Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
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	<p>Scéim na bhFéilte has a maximum grant available of €5,000 or £3,500. Applications under this scheme for festivals in 2019 were sanctioned by the Board on 18 January 2019. 53 Festivals were funded and a budget of €115,699 was approved.</p> <p>Scéim na gCompántas Drámaíochta offers a maximum grant of €50,000 or £30,000. Applications for Scéim na gCompántas Drámaíochta in 2019 were approved by the Bord on 8 March 2019. 17 Companies were funded and a budget of €215,729 was approved.</p> <p>Six festivals were funded under Scéim na Mór-Imeachtaí Ealaíon in 2019 and a budget of €48,467 was approved by the Bord on 26 April.</p>
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	<p>Summer Camp Scheme: The deadline for applications for the Summer Camp Scheme was 22 March 2019. A total of 85 applications were received, 83 of which were eligible for funding.</p> <p>Foras na Gaeilge's board approved the recommendation to fund all eligible applications at a total cost of €172,847. Camps will run during July and August.</p> <p>Youth Event Scheme: The deadline for applications for the Youth Events Scheme was 5 April 2019. A total of 85 were received, 84 of which were eligible for funding. Foras na Gaeilge's board approved the recommendation to fund 72 of the eligible applications at a total cost of €278,380 over two calendar years (€149,502 in 2019 & €128,878 in 2020).</p>
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. These education opportunities will continue to be developed and adapted to better support the implementation of the language planning process and the Policy on Gaeltacht Education.
Pillar 5 - Improving Rural Infrastructure and Connectivity					
232	Implement the National Broadband Plan to provide high speed broadband to every premises in Ireland.	DCCA	Ongoing	In progress	<p>As of Q2 2019, 76% of the 2.4 million premises in Ireland have access to high speed broadband.</p> <p>This includes 282,123 premises passed as of Q2 2019 as part of the eir rollout of high speed broadband to over 300,000 rural premises.</p> <p>According to eir, the final premises within this rollout will receive access to high speed broadband before the end of 2019. In May 2019, Government</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				approved the appointment of a "Preferred Bidder" to the National Broadband Plan procurement process to provide access to high speed broadband to remaining premises. Work is at an advanced stage to finalise the NBP Contract and associated legal and financial documents. This is the final step before signing of the NBP Contract and the commencement of deployment.
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	<p>Completed</p> <p>The Taskforce Implementation Group was established in March 2017 and is chaired by the Minister of State for Natural Resources, Community Affairs and Digital Development. It meets, and reports, on a quarterly basis and is composed of State stakeholders and industry representatives.</p> <p>All stakeholders involved are responsible for progressing actions falling under their remit, aimed at identifying solutions to broadband and mobile phone coverage deficits. In addition, the Group is investigating how better telecommunications services can be provided to consumers prior to full rollout of the network planned under the National Broadband Plan (NBP) State Intervention.</p> <p>In February 2019, the Implementation Review 2018 was published. It includes the 2019 work programme, identifying over 30 new actions for delivery in 2019. Quarterly progress reports are published, the latest Q2 report was published in July 2019.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>As part of the prioritisation strategy for the National Broadband Plan (NBP), each local authority was asked to identify up to 12 sites for Strategic Community Access Hubs (SCAH), these were later renamed Broadband Connection Points (BCP). In total 319 locations countrywide have been selected to become BCP sites.</p> <p>These sites include community centres, schools and sports clubs. BCPs will offer local residents in rural areas the opportunity to connect to high-speed broadband ahead of the delivery of nationwide coverage.</p> <p>BCPs will offer a minimum 30Mb/6Mb connection over a fixed wireless network initially and will be upgraded to fibre when the NBP rollout reaches the surrounding area.</p>
235	Assign an officer with responsibility for broadband in each Local Authority area who will act as a single point of	LAS & DRCD	Q1 2017	<p>Completed</p> <p>All 31 local authorities have appointed Broadband Officers. These appointments were supported by DRCD through a subvention of €35,000 per annum in 2018.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
	contact for telecommunications operators who are building out broadband infrastructure.			<p>This has risen to €42,000 for 2019. Broadband Officers have proven to be an invaluable resource, providing a much needed single point of contact for telecommunication operators and department officials. Broadband Officers have also made significant contributions to preparations for the National Broadband Plan through their engagement in various fora and sub-groups and by sharing their knowledge, expertise and insights.</p> <p>In 2019 to date DRCD have organised 8 Telecommunication Action Group (TAG) meetings, with another 2 scheduled. These meetings allow DRCD, DCCAE and other stakeholders to meet with Broadband Officers and other local authority personnel. The TAGs also provide a networking opportunity for Broadband Officers leading to the sharing of experiences, innovation, planning and co-ordination.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>DRCD engaged the services of Indecon Economic Consultants to research and produce Local Digital Readiness Assessments. Each Assessment measured digital maturity against a 7-pillar framework and compared each local authority's progress to their peers. Peer groups are defined by urban/rural population percentages. These Assessments provide local authorities with the quantitative data needed to identify where their digital strengths and weaknesses are when preparing their Digital Strategies.</p> <p>A number of local authorities are at varying stages of their digital journey with several local authority Digital Strategies already published. DRCD has facilitated additional information sessions for local authorities throughout 2019, in order to further assist them in drafting and developing their Digital Strategies.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>8,790 people received training during the period January-June 2019.</p> <p>Since training commenced in 2017 over 48,000 people have received training across all counties, including 6,666 unemployed people, 6,218 members of the farming community and some 18,284 people over the age of 65.</p> <p>Data collected from participants show that 28% feel that the skills learned will improve their job prospects, 48% feel less isolated, 70% reported an increase in their self-confidence,</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				62% will use their skills to stay in touch with family/friends and 59% 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	Completed 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 continues to engage with planning authorities in relation to its implementation.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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.	DCCAE	Q2 2017	In progress The Knock and Banagher MANs are now in operation and the Management Services Entity (enet) continues to explore new opportunities to increase the take up on the MANs generally.
241	Monitor 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. (The function of this action has evolved from reviewing to monitoring)	DTTAS	Ongoing	In progress The latest version of the Guidelines for Managing Openings in Public Roads (Purple Book) was published in April 2017. This document provides guidance and specifications for excavation and road opening works on public roads, material on the legal background and requirements as well as procedures for the use of the MapRoad Licensing System (national centralised road opening licensing system). Training to support implementation is being rolled out. The Purple Book will be reviewed on an on-going basis. The Stakeholder (User) Forum was established in November 2017. This Forum will seek to address operational issues relating to the Purple Book, the MapRoad Road Licensing System and the Green Book (Guidance on the Potential Location of Overground Telecommunications Infrastructure on Public Roads) together with any subsequent associated guidelines.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
242 Optimise State assets to facilitate the roll out of strategically-paced telecommunications infrastructure, leading to improved broadband and mobile phone coverage.	DRCD & DCCAE	Ongoing	In progress	The Working Group on State Assets, a sub-group of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce and chaired by officials from the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment, was established in 2018. The Working Group's remit is to consider the development of a national policy to facilitate access to state owned assets for the purposes of installation, maintenance, upgrading and replacement of necessary telecommunications infrastructure. The Working Group includes officials from several Government departments and agencies and has engaged with State and non-State stakeholders. Regular meetings were held in Q3 and Q4 of 2018 to inform the development of a policy document for presentation to Government. This document is nearing completion and it is envisaged that it will be presented to Government in the near future. DCCAE and DRCD are finalising a draft Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Facilitating Telecommunication Provider Access to State and Publicly-owned Assets. It is expected that the Policy Statement will be presented to Cabinet in the coming weeks.
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. For further details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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	Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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 consumers - particularly in rural areas - choose the network provider that best meets their needs depending on where they live and work.	COMREG	2018	Completed	ComReg appointed an IT consultancy company following a tender process to deliver the mobile coverage map. Updated data was provided by Mobile Network Operators in late October and early November 2018. A test version of the Map was released to mobile operators with 4G data in December 2018. ComReg published the coverage map with all 2G, 3G and 4G data in February 2019, available at https://coveragemap.comreg.ie/map
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	Completed	A focus group was established by DCCAE in 2018 to provide guidance with respect to categories of location where high quality reliable mobile coverage should be made available as a priority. Having completed its work, the report of the focus group was published on DCCAE's websites on 31 August 2018.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				It is anticipated that the output of the focus group should influence the actions of the mobile network operators in their work to reduce mobile phone blackspots. It will also inform future policy in DCCAE with regards to priorities for mobile phone services.
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 third annual Stakeholder Forum of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce was held on 11 October 2019.
				This event brought together representatives from local authorities, Government departments, telecommunications operators and community groups to engage in open dialogue around issues impacting on broadband and mobile phone coverage, and to identify solutions to those challenges in order to enhance and improve services. (see 233 above).
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. Further info may be obtained in the Capital Plan Tracker which is available on DPER's website https://www.per.gov.ie/en/investment-projects-and-programmes-tracker/
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 DCHG 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. In November 2018, a Heads of Agreement was signed between the owner of Connemara Airport and DCHG, which enables a process whereby DCHG could become the owner of that airport, thus bringing added stability to the future of the Aran Islands air service, and the Department is continuing to work to this end.
250	Continue capital investment in island piers and harbours.	DCHG	2017-2019	In progress Project Ireland 2040 specifically refers to capital investment for marine infrastructure at Inis Oírr, Inis Meáin, County Galway and for Machaire Rabhartaigh, County Donegal. This will greatly benefit those islands. The pier development at Inis Oírr should progress to construction stage in 2020. With regard to the piers at Inis Meáin and Machaire Rabhartaigh, these projects are still in a pre-construction phase and plans will be progressed through 2019.
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 DTTAS completed the significant research and analysis required to inform a public consultation as part of its review of public transport policy and the Minister launched the Issues Paper for Consultation on the development of Ireland's next Regional Airports Programme on 30 August 2019, open until 30 September 2019.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				A further public consultation on Personal Powered Transport (PPTs) was launched on 01 September 2019 and runs until 01 November 2019.
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	In progress <p>It was announced in May 2019 that, following the piloting of evening and late-night Local Link services which began in Summer 2018, 59 performing services will continue, with funding provided to the end of this year.</p> <p>Under the Community Transport Service pilot scheme, it is proposed to fund a maximum of 15 pilot projects over a twelve month period with the services becoming operational from November 2019 onwards.</p> <p>The Local Area Hackney Scheme (Rural) pilot was launched in Summer 2019 with a closing date of 30 September 2019 for receipt of applications. It is proposed to fund a maximum of fifteen Local Area Hackney pilot projects over a 12-month period, with the services becoming operational from November 2019 onwards. This grant is designed to provide a contribution towards the costs associated with providing this service. The outcome of the pilot scheme will help inform the NTA's local transport plans over the next 5 years.</p> <p>A total of 8 new Rural Regular services have been introduced (to September 2019) across the Local Link network.</p>
253	Rollout a programme of awareness of the Rural Transport Programme amongst rural communities.	NTA	Ongoing	In progress <p>Events, up to September 2019, include a Local Link feature in Irish Farmers Journal (supplement) in May 2019, Dementia Awareness Training of Local Link Drivers and Passenger Assistants nationally, Active Retirement Ireland campaign, participation at Ploughing 2019, working with Fáilte Ireland to promote Local Link services that connect with the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartland.</p>
254	Ensure that Rural Transport Programme vehicles are accessible, having regard to all passenger needs.	NTA	Ongoing from 2017	In progress <p>As cited in previous updates, it is the aim of the Rural Transport Programme to provide fully accessible transport services on all routes with a target to achieve at least 95% fully accessible trips by 2020.</p> <p>To date, the procurement process for rural transport services required 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</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				is provided)...that buses must be accessible from the outset of the Contract)." From September 2019 onwards however, all services procured must be wheelchair accessible.
255	Examine the potential for, and where possible, integrate Health Service Executive non-emergency transport services with rural transport services.	NTA	Ongoing	In progress Research project underway which is looking at where possible, the integration of Health Service Executive non-emergency transport services with rural transport services. A preliminary report is due to be completed by end of Q4 2019.
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	In progress In the 2018/19 school year there were over 117,500 children, including over 13,000 children with special educational needs, transported in over 5,000 vehicles on a daily basis to primary and post-primary schools throughout the country covering over 100 million kilometres annually.
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	In progress Changes to small public service vehicle (SPSV) driver entry testing at the end of 2017 resulted in a 27% increase in candidates completing the test, with 66% of these achieving a pass. On foot of this there was an increase of 51% in the average number of new SPSV Driver Licences issued per month in 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. The number of active licences remains low overall, with a stable 11-12 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 in 2019.
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 details, see the Second Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.
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.	DRC D	Ongoing	In progress €10 million in funding was allocated under the Local Improvement Scheme in 2019. To date, over 1,500 private roads in rural areas have benefitted from investment of over €38 million under the Local Improvement Scheme during 2017 and 2018. €25.3 million in funding was allocated under the Community Involvement Scheme over a two year period (2018-2019).

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>A total of 288 schemes were completed in 2018. 150km of road were treated in 2018 under the Community Involvement Scheme. The overall cost of the works was €12.2 million approximately, with a community contribution of 17% approx. €15.3 million has been allocated for the Community Involvement Scheme in 2019. 411 projects were approved under the Scheme in 2019 and details of these are on the Department's website.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>In 2018, a total of €3.65 million was paid in capital funding in respect of safety and security related projects at the regional airports of Donegal, Kerry and Ireland West Airport Knock. Funding of operational support for the regional airports totalled €3.77 million.</p> <p>€21.7 million has been allocated to the Programme in 2019, divided between Capital (€10.4 million) and Current (€11.3 million). The latter amount, which provides for operational support to airports, includes an annual payment for PSO air services of €7.25 million.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Passenger numbers at Cork Airport have increased by 9% to just over 2 million in the first nine months of this year and are expected to hit 2.6 million by the end of the year, which would be an 8% increase for the full year. Recent announcements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryanair - a 4% expansion of its flights Cork Airport next summer, with additional frequencies on Malaga (now 6pw) and Palma De Mallorca (now 4pw), plus a new Summer 2020 service from Cork to Katowice, which launched in October 2019. Ryanair's winter 19/20 schedule includes an additional four new services to Alicante, Budapest, Malta and Poznan. • Air France - doubling of its operation from Cork to Paris Charles de Gaulle in summer 2020, with the addition of a 2nd daily flight to operate 14pw. • SWISS - expansion of its summer 2020 season to Zurich with 7% additional capacity. The airline will operate 4pw commencing 29 March and running until 20 October. • TUI - will increase its capacity by 11% at Cork Airport next summer and will operate three times weekly.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				In 2020, TUI will operate a new service to Lanzarote, and continue existing routes to Reus and Palma.
262	Grow existing routes and services at Shannon Airport which will benefit the region.	Shannon Group	Ongoing	In progress Some challenges are now being experienced as Norwegian has reduced planned winter operations for 2019. Additionally, new routes have been added to Ibiza and East Midlands but the new Liverpool route from 2018 did not return in 2019. Airlines remain very cautious on growth in Ireland outside of Dublin.
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 well under the new 2017 revised Code of Practice. Joint working includes development of effective reporting systems to manage the current stream of projects across the State, ensuring 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 liaison with OPW to address impacts of extensive flood relief programme and ensure systems are in place to manage mitigation. Liaison with Irish Water and over establishment of appropriate mechanisms to safeguard heritage.
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 defence schemes around the country that will provide protection for properties at risk of flooding.	OPW	2017-2021	In progress The Government's National Development Plan (NDP) 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 prioritised flood relief schemes. The NDP allocation taken with the funding allocations already made in 2016 and 2017 under the capital investment plan 'Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016 – 2021' represents total investment of over €1 billion in flood defence 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.
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 The Flood Risk Management Plans were approved by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in April 2018. A €1 billion 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.

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>In most cases, Project Steering Groups have been established to oversee the implementation of the projects and Local Authorities are leading on the delivery of the projects.</p>
266	Introduce a prioritised and targeted voluntary home-owners relocation scheme for those again affected by the flooding of December 2015-January 2016.	OPW	2017	<p>Completed</p> <p>Introduction of the scheme is complete, the scheme is underway.</p> <p>In April 2017 the Government agreed arrangements for a Voluntary Homeowners Relocation Scheme for those primary residential properties that flooded between 4 December 2015 and 13 January 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.</p> <p>The OPW and the Local Authorities are examining the feasibility of engineering solutions for some affected homes. As at December 2018, eligible applicants are being assessed under Stage 2 of the process which involves a site inspection of their property. Site inspections due to be completed in Q1 2019 have been completed.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>The study to determine the feasibility of any future once-off targeted scheme for Voluntary Farm Building Relocation has been completed. The report is currently under consideration by DAFM. Funding for any potential scheme is a particular issue in light of the current overall budgetary situation in the Department.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>5 Hydrometeorologists are currently in place, while a Principal Meteorological Officer has recently been appointed and will take up a position shortly. Another recruitment drive will take place later in the year for additional Hydrometeorologists.</p> <p>The OPW and Met Éireann are working to refurbish the third floor of the Glasnevin HQ, with works expected to finish in late Q4 2019 or early Q1 2020.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				<p>The Hydrological Model Contact is entering the trial stage. This will take place in Q3/Q4 2019 and the outcome of the trial will determine which models will be used in the operational flood forecast centre.</p> <p>A Communication Strategy has been developed for the National Flood Forecast Warning Service and the plan is for all stakeholders to agree this in Q4 2019. The implementation plan will be developed in 2020.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>Following the launch of the Flood Risk Management Plans in May 2018, work to assess any potential flood risk in some of those areas not addressed in the current Flood Risk Management Plans is underway.</p>
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	<p>In progress</p> <p>The OPW and the Department of Finance meet with Insurance Ireland on a quarterly basis to discuss the means of sharing data on completed flood defence schemes to assist with the availability of flood risk cover to the public. Additional meetings of a technical working group are held, as necessary. Discussions include the provision of data prior to the completion of schemes. Data relating to 4 schemes has been provided to Insurance Ireland, as the first set of data to pilot a comparative analysis of the levels of flood cover before and after schemes have been completed. Discussions are continuing in relation to flood insurance in areas protected by demountable defences. The OPW has provided comprehensive detail to Insurance Ireland on its demountable defences which is being reviewed by the industry.</p>
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	<p>Completed</p> <p>Action completed. For further details, see the Third Progress Report of the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>
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	<p>Completed</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 Group agreed to continue to trial the lowering of the lake levels for the coming Winter.</p>

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				The ESB has also commissioned a study of the last 20 years to inform the management of levels on Lough Allen and work is underway to identify the scope of environmental assessments required if the protocol is to be extended.
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
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
275	Identify potential solutions to address the risk of flooding from turloughs.	GSI	2017-2019	In progress
276	Continue implementation of the Forestry Programme (2014- 2020) by increasing annual planting, carbon sequestration and more effective land management.	DAFM	Ongoing	In progress

Action	Lead Body	Timeframe	Status	Update
				Total planting in 2018 was 4,025ha, 44% less than the targets. In July 2019, the Department commissioned a study to look at the forestry approvals process.
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	Completed The taskforce report has been completed and launched and will now undergo the next phase: implementation.

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
ITI	InterTrade Ireland
LAs	Local Authorities
LAGs	LEADER Local Action Groups
LDCs	Local Development Companies
LCDCs	Local Community Development Committees
LEOs	Local Enterprise Offices
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
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