

**Progress Report**

**Q4 2015**

*Including end of year report*

# IFS 2020

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**A STRATEGY FOR IRELAND'S  
INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR  
2015-2020**





# IFS2020

A Strategy for Ireland's International  
Financial Services sector 2015-2020

## IFS2020 Progress Report – Q4 2015

Incorporating end of year report

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## Foreword



I am very pleased to introduce the Q4 2015 Progress Report on the implementation of IFS2020. While we are still in the early stages of the strategy's 5-year lifecycle, the three progress reports published to date confirm that there has been considerable activity and tangible progress made since the strategy was launched. This, the final progress report for 2015, highlights progress from October – December 2015. It also provides an end-of-year opportunity to review highlights made since the strategy was launched in March, and looks ahead to what we can expect in 2016.

As Chairman of the Public Sector High Level Implementation Committee, evidence to date is that, both in strategic and operational terms, Ireland has travelled a considerable distance in a short period of time. We now have an ambitious, Government-led, industry-supported strategy for the sector, underpinned by a strong Government-industry partnership, enabled by a responsive policy development framework, and delivered by a coordinated and accountable public sector implementation mechanism. Most importantly, the action plan to deliver the IFS2020 strategy is dynamic and iterative, with regular opportunities to review and recast our plans as progress is made and new opportunities emerge.

This Progress Report for Q4 2015 confirms that we have been largely successful in delivering our objectives for 2015. A total of 15 actions have now been completed for 2015, while a further 14 actions are on course and ongoing, including a number of key actions for delivery in Q1 2016. One action – Action 20, Financial Markets Infrastructure - has not proceeded as expected and the action is being reframed in the 2016 action plan. I am very pleased to report that there has been very positive growth in employment terms over the past 12 months. Employment in the IFS portfolios of EI and IDA has increased by 2,608, up from 35,448 at end-2014 to 38,056 at end-2015, representing 7.4% growth in the sector, keeping us firmly on track to reach our ambitious growth target to end of 2020.

Beyond the key performance metrics, there is also strong anecdotal evidence that IFS2020 is making a positive impact. The IFS2020 Industry Advisory Committee has proved to be an invaluable channel for engaging strategically with key stakeholders. During my visits to the US, the UK, Germany and France I have been impressed with the level of interest in and engagement with IFS2020 from senior company executives, local business networks, and Irish diaspora groups. It is clear that the broad welcome for IFS2020 is not only for the coherent and ambitious strategic framework it provides, but also for the mechanisms it has put in place to ensure accountability around implementation and responsiveness in forward planning.

I want to acknowledge the vital role that is being played by IFS companies in Ireland, both Irish owned and multinational, in driving the growth of the sector. It is through the hard work, initiative and entrepreneurial endeavor of these companies that the sector continues to grow. I also want to acknowledge the excellent work that both IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland have done during the year. As we begin 2016, two significant milestones are nearing: the holding of the inaugural European Financial Forum in Dublin Castle on 27<sup>th</sup> January, and the launch of a new banner brand for promoting Ireland's IFS sector. This will provide an excellent platform to add further momentum to our efforts, which will be underpinned in 2016 by a new action plan.

Simon Harris, T.D.  
Minister of State and Chair of the IFS2020 Joint Committee



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## End of year review and outlook

### Strategic Priority 1: Promote Ireland as a location for International Financial Services & world class innovative products & services

This strategic priority focuses on enhancing the effectiveness of Government Departments and Agencies, and their overseas representatives, in promoting Ireland as a location for, and producer of, International Financial Services and products, including innovative technologies. IFS2020 seeks to leverage the expertise and international reach of State bodies through an enhanced and more coordinated approach to promotion, marketing and branding, in conjunction with stakeholders including industry bodies.

Throughout 2015, there was significant activity to promote Ireland as a location for IFS activity. A number of overseas ministerial programmes included IFS promotional messages and events during the year, including a series of visits by Minister of State Harris to the UK, France, Germany, the United States and Hong Kong. Enterprise Ireland also organised a number of Financial Services trade missions during the year, including to China and the United States, and included IFS elements in broader trade missions to a number of established and emerging markets.

2015 also saw the continuation of extensive ministerial-level support to the IFS sector domestically. Among others, the Taoiseach, Minister of State Harris, Minister Bruton and Minister Noonan delivered a series of keynote speeches at industry events, hosted meetings with IDA and EI client companies, and participated in jobs announcements and offices openings, all with a view to augmenting Ireland's profile and standing as a leading location for IFS companies.

Specifically in Q4, the newly-appointed IFS representative attended his first meeting of the Export Trade Council, at which Minister Harris presented an update on IFS2020. Minister Harris also delivered an address and participated on the discussion panel at the IFS session of the Global Irish Economic Forum in November, at which upwards of 50 members of the global Irish diaspora met to discuss future opportunities for Ireland's IFS sector.

Looking ahead to 2016, we can expect the promotion and marketing agenda to advance significantly, beginning early in the New Year. The inaugural **European Financial Forum**, to be held in Dublin Castle on 27 January 2016, provides an opportunity to open the year with discussion and debate on the current and future challenges facing the sector, with an audience of senior corporate and policy decision makers from the US, Asia and from across the EU. This event, which is being led by IDA Ireland, is envisaged to become a significant fixture on the global IFS calendar, and should provide a strong platform to reach global audiences. A key development at the European Financial Forum will be the launch of a new **banner brand for Ireland's IFS sector**. The design of the banner brand is entering its final stages, following extensive consultation with industry stakeholders representing both indigenous and foreign-owned companies across all sub-sectors of the IFS industry in Ireland.

The launch of a new banner brand for IFS will set the context for extensive further promotion and marketing activity in 2016. The public and private sectors will operate in a coordinated and complementary way to enhance Ireland's profile internationally as a location of choice for IFS companies, and as a leading centre for specialist international financial services.



### Box 1: Job Announcements in 2015

IFS2020 sets an ambitious target to grow the level of direct employment in the IFS sector to at least 45,000 people by 2020, requiring the enterprise agencies to support the creation of a net total of 10,000 new jobs, or an almost 30% increase in employment across their combined IFS portfolios, over the period of the Strategy.

In this context, there has been very positive growth in IFS employment over the past 12 months. Employment in the IFS portfolios of IDA and EI has increased by 2,608, representing 7.4% growth in the IFS sector and keeping us firmly on track to reach the ambitious growth target by 2020.

Growth in the sector has been broad and diverse – from high profile multinational companies to indigenous Irish-owned IFS companies, including existing enterprise agency clients and new portfolio additions. Significantly, given this Government's commitment to regional growth and development, many of the job announcements have been outside the greater Dublin region. Importantly, while there have been many high profile announcements during the year, the successful growth of the IFS sector is also coming through multiple, low-key successes across the 400-plus IFS companies in the sector.

Enterprise Ireland clients in the IFS sector had an extremely successful year, increasing overall employment in the sector, and attracting significant investment from a range of international stakeholders. Some of the highlights in terms of jobs announcements and securing funding include:

- CurrencyFair announced that they had secured €10 million in funding in April. This success was followed, in October, by their announcement that they would be recruiting at least another 50 people in the next year.
- Blue Insurance, one of Ireland's leading niche insurance providers, announced the creation of 100 new jobs over the next 18 to 24 months to support the company's expansion into the international insurance market.
- Fenergo, a global leader in the Client Lifecycle Management solutions space for financial institutions, secured \$75 million in investment.

Ireland's reputation as an international location of choice for IFS investment was buttressed in 2015 by a number of significant investments and expansions by some of the world's leading IFS companies. IDA clients opened new premises and expanded existing ones in locations all over Ireland.

Some highlights for international IFS investment include:

- Pramerica announced the creation of 330 new jobs in Letterkenny in a new state of the art campus. These will add to the 1,200 currently employed in by Pramerica in Letterkenny.
- Marsh & McLennan opened their innovation centre in Dublin in May. The centre, the first of its kind, will employ 100 highly skilled people, working to provide industry leading digital solutions.
- Northern Trust expects to employ more than 1,000 people in Limerick by the end of 2017 after announcing the creation of 300 new jobs in March.



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## **Strategic Priority 2: Drive continuous improvement in the operating environment & competitiveness of Ireland's IFS sector**

This strategic priority recognises the importance of improving Ireland's standing as a competitive location for innovative IFS companies. It covers a broad range of issues, including education and skills; promotion of IFS as a career option for young people; promotion of Ireland as an attractive location for mobile international talent; promoting the regional dimension of Ireland for IFS; developing the business environment for IFS, including the regulatory, tax and infrastructure arrangements.

During 2015, there has been significant progress with the education and skills agenda. The IFS2020 Education and Skills Forum met for the first time in September, with over 60 stakeholders from key government departments and agencies, indigenous and foreign-owned IFS companies, and from the Further and Higher education system. The views and ideas put forward at that event have made a valuable contribution to developing the new action plan to be implemented in 2016. The Apprenticeship Council of Ireland has designated five IFS-related proposals for further development. The Government-funded Skillnets Finuas networks have begun to broaden their offering to accommodate emerging subsectors like Aviation Leasing & Finance, FinTech and Alternative Investments, while extending provision to enhance skills in data analytics, technology and the law, risk and compliance. A National Talent Branding Programme, designed to promote Ireland as a location for top tech career opportunities and job openings, has been approved and a tender for its design and operation will be awarded in the near future. The Employment Permits Critical Skills List is being updated regularly to reflect IFS related skills needs. The Summit Finuas network has published a Skills Needs Assessment for the IFS Sector, highlighting the future demand for skills that will exist in the sector.

There has also been ongoing progress in enhancing Ireland's business and regulatory environments. Six of the eight Regional Action Plans for Jobs, which include a focus on IFS, have now been published. In July 2015 the Central Bank published its performance report on Regulatory Transactions Service Standards for the period January – June 2015, and the Central Bank and Department of Finance continue to engage on these authorisation standards, to further evolve the performance reporting process.

In relation to Financial Markets Infrastructure, work is ongoing by the Department of Finance and other stakeholders to consider the most suitable approaches and the particular action will be reframed in light of recent regulatory developments.





**Strategic Priority 3: Drive Research, Innovation & Entrepreneurship in the IFS sector, with a particular focus on financial technology & governance, risk & compliance.**

This strategic priority focuses on the significant role of research, innovation and entrepreneurship in developing Ireland's status as a leading global location for Financial Services. The objective is to continue to develop and promote Ireland as a centre for innovative, scaling and next generation companies with world-class capabilities in financial technology, governance, risk and compliance, working within an innovation ecosystem that supports advanced research and commercialisation in areas such as Data Analytics, Mobile Banking/Payments, Cloud Computing, etc.

Budget 2016 introduced a number of measures which will support investment in the IFS industry and across the economy including: the introduction of a new "best in class" knowledge development box; new tax credits and CGT relief for entrepreneurs; increased PRSI threshold for employers; an Earned Income Tax Credit for the self-employed; the extension of the three year tax relief for start-up companies.

As IFS companies seek innovative technological solutions in areas such as governance, risk and compliance, RD&I infrastructures play a crucial role. The enterprise agencies continue to provide specific assistance to companies, as well as increasing the investment of resources in FinTech-related activities. The enterprise agencies have worked proactively with IFS companies and the research and technology centres to raise awareness, pursue business development opportunities and to support increased collaborative research – an example being the EI / IDA / SFI Innovation Showcase event which showcases research centres across all industry areas including financial services and technologies.

Significant progress has been made in identifying funding mechanisms for FinTech and Payment companies, including Enterprise Ireland support for Financial Services Angel Investors network, and the announcement by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation of the availability of up to €65m for co-investment in seed funds, co-ordinated through Enterprise Ireland.

In addition to the existing FinTech accelerators, a number of new accelerator and incubator spaces were launched in 2015 (see Box 2) with strong support and engagement from key stakeholders including IFS companies, enterprise agencies and the public sector. Enterprise Ireland undertook a review of successful overseas accelerator models and has proactively engaged with new and existing accelerators.

The launch of the FinTech and Payments Association of Ireland (FPAI), and the subsequent FinTech and Payments Working Groups, has brought together a diverse range of stakeholders and created a unified voice to progress the growth of the FinTech and Payments sectors. The FPAI is central to driving the FinTech and Payments agenda and provides a key focal point for engagement between FinTech and Payments companies, industry groups and the public sector in terms of implementing IFS2020. In that context, the FinTech and Payments Working Groups, in consultation with key industry and public sector stakeholders, will develop strategies for their respective sectors in early 2016.



### Box 2: Incubator / Start-up / Accelerator space for IFS companies

Above and beyond office space, start-up and scaling companies need places to interact and innovate, in an environment that is conducive for meetings, relationship-building and networking. As the number of IFS start-ups in Ireland continues to increase, the availability of incubator, start-up and accelerator space is important both from a practical and a reputational perspective, to highlight Ireland's strengths as a leading location for research, development and innovation. 2015 has seen the continued expansion in the provision of innovation and accelerator hubs in Ireland, in particular in the Dublin Docklands area.

Developments in 2015 included:

- The opening of the newly-renovated Vaults at Dogpatch Labs, in partnership with Ulster Bank. This facility provides 7,000 sq ft of new space in the historic 200 year old vaults below the CHQ building in Dublin's IFSC. The redeveloped Vaults will give both Dogpatch Labs residents and the wider tech community in Ireland a world class platform from which to host meetups, workshops, events and hackathons. In addition, it will serve as an offsite Fintech R&D lab for Ulster Bank / RBS. The venue will host FinTech events including the Ulster Bank sponsored 'FinTech Fireside Chat Series' which will see leading Irish and international CEOs share learnings about how to build world class scalable FinTech businesses.
- The launch of the second Accenture FinTech Innovation Lab Accelerator programme, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, which will offer six of Ireland's leading early stage tech companies a place on this 12-week mentoring programme, commencing in January 2016.
- The Citi Accelerator Hub was opened in June 2015, offering Fintech startups access to Citi's mentoring network to advise and support business development, as well as hosting industry meetups to help strengthen their network in the Fintech sector.
- The opening of the Ulster Bank 'Hub' – an offsite innovation initiative at Dogpatch Labs. The Hub accommodates the Ulster Bank product team, with the objective of immersing management, product, innovation and other teams from Ulster Bank into a new and dynamic environment to encourage them to 'think different'. Working shoulder to shoulder with some of Ireland's brightest start-ups, the Hub is triggering a cultural change and delivering real value for Ulster Bank.
- The opening of the NDRC LaunchPad Spring 2016 programme for new applications. This accelerator programme targets exceptional early stage startup teams who are developing a digital business model innovation to apply for the programme which now offers up to €30,000 micro-seed investment to each venture. Selected participants will begin the 12 week accelerator programme in January 2016.



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## **Strategic Priority 4: Develop job-creation opportunities from emerging IFS sub-sectors & new markets**

This section reports on progress in developing new opportunities from IFS sub-sectors. The actions for 2015 included a focus on Funds, Payments and BPO.

An indigenous “funds services cluster” was established in 2015, with three of the members shortlisted in the 12 Best FinTech start-ups in Europe within the Funds space. Separately, Enterprise Ireland has approved equity investments in a number of High Potential Start-Ups in the Funds sub-sector.

A Payments Forum involving the enterprise agencies, representative associations and payments companies was established, an output of which will be the development of a strategy for the payments industry in 2016 – to be completed by the newly-established Payments Working Group.

An Enterprise Ireland-supported BPO industry cluster has inputted into an analysis of the needs of the financial services sector in Ireland, and the ability of the BPO industry cluster to service them. This work will be carried forward into 2016.

Regarding opportunities afforded by the EU Capital Markets Union (CMU), there has been intensive engagement during 2015 between the Department of Finance, industry stakeholders and the EU Commission on the development of CMU proposals, including a submission to the Commission's Green Paper consultation process. The Department of Finance is engaging with industry stakeholders where appropriate and necessary in relation to CMU.

Looking ahead to 2016, the new iteration of the action plan will include a more developed set of actions focusing on these and other sub-sectors and thematic issues. In particular, the recently established working groups on Payments and FinTech will be taking a lead role in developing proposals and actions for these important sub-sectors.



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## Benchmarking Ireland's Progress in IFS

### Strategic Priority 5: Data and Benchmarking of Progress

The key benchmark of progress with IFS2020 objectives is job creation for the year 2015, as reported by the IDA and Enterprise Ireland, based on comprehensive end of year survey data.

There has been very positive growth in employment terms over the past 12 months. Employment in the IFS portfolios of EI and IDA has increased by 2,608, up from 35,448 at end-2014 to 38,056 at end-2015, representing 7.4% growth in the sector, keeping us firmly on track to reach our ambitious growth target to end of 2020. It is encouraging to see that this growth has happened across both foreign-owned and Irish-owned IFS companies.

At an overall level, Ireland continues to make progress on key indicators. Since 2011, Ireland's relative international competitiveness as measured by a range of international indices has improved. In the IMD's World Competitiveness Yearbook, Ireland moved from a ranking of 24<sup>th</sup> in 2011 to 16<sup>th</sup> place in 2015. In the WEF Global Competitiveness Report, Ireland moved from 29<sup>th</sup> in 2011 to 24<sup>th</sup> in 2015. The World Bank's "Doing Business" report for 2015 shows Ireland is now ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries, up two places since 2014.

Specifically in relation to International Financial Services, Dublin's ranking as a Global Financial Centre has risen 27 places to 46<sup>th</sup> in the Global Financial Centres Index 18 (Z/YEN, Long Finance). The interim GFCI 18.5 indicates that Dublin is set to maintain this momentum.



## Appendix 1: Progress Update for Q4 2015

### Action 1 - IDA Ireland

Working through a dedicated IFS global team, IDA will actively promote and market Ireland as a high quality location of choice for investment in IFS. This will be achieved working in partnership with key stakeholders at home and overseas, including the Embassy network, with the intention of meeting investment and job creation targets to contribute to sectoral development and economic activity.

**Responsible:** D/JEI, IDA Ireland

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** Work by the IDA in promoting and marketing Ireland as a location for IFS is continuing, and the agency continues to support new inward investments into Ireland.

**Detail:** The promotion of Ireland as a location for specialist financial services is the responsibility of the IFS Division of IDA Ireland. The team continues to engage with IFS companies both at home and abroad to develop the level of activity in the Industry.

During Q4 2015 the US IFS Division team hosted a Ministerial visit led by Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation. Minister Bruton was accompanied by IDA CEO Martin Shanahan and senior officials from the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation. The visit began in New York before moving on to New Jersey and then to Boston where it concluded. The schedule involved meetings with a mix of target and existing client companies and the Minister and the CEO also attended and addressed a number of business events with a strong IFS involvement.

The IDA organised a roundtable event in Dublin for IFS client companies in Ireland with operations that predominately service the North American marketplace to discuss winning new mandates; profit/cost centre business models; talent acquisition and operational best practice.

IDA also had a stand at the Money 2020 conference in the USA in October. This is one of the largest FinTech and Payments conferences in North America with over 10,000 people in attendance including C-suite executives and Senior Management from existing and target IDA companies.



## Action 2 – Enterprise Ireland

Utilise the extensive EI overseas office network and dedicated Financial Services Global Team (FSGT) located in key target international markets to support the expansion and growth of Irish owned entities through increased international sales and exports to deliver on job creation targets and economic activity in Ireland, and in so doing, raise the profile of Ireland's expertise and capabilities in technologies and innovation in the IFS.

Leverage and work in partnership with the Embassy networks as appropriate to support overseas activities, promotional engagements and trade missions.

**Responsible:** D/JEI, Enterprise Ireland

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** This ongoing action is on course. Enterprise Ireland staff regularly liaise with local embassy networks in overseas offices and support client access to international IFS markets.

**Detail:** Through its Financial Services Global Team, Enterprise Ireland continues to coordinate in-market activity for Irish IFS client companies with meetings, market visits, inward buyer missions, seminars, trade missions, etc. A number of inward buyer meetings were arranged to coincide with buyer contacts visiting the Web Summit in November and provided an excellent business opportunity for Enterprise Ireland clients.

Enterprise Ireland's London office organised the 10th Annual Financial Services Embassy Dinner in November, hosted by the Irish Ambassador to Great Britain, Dan Mulhall. Minister Harris was the guest of honour at the event which had c.100 attendees including executives from Enterprise Ireland client companies and their senior industry guests, customers and influencers.

The Johannesburg office supported a multi-sectoral Trade Mission to Nigeria and Ghana in late November and early December. This trade mission, led by Minister Coveney, included c.40 companies with a small group from International Financial Services. Two key IFS events took place: a breakfast seminar in Lagos and a FinTech forum in Ghana with key individuals in the local banking industry.

Enterprise Ireland overseas staff have been actively promoting the European Financial Forum and working with local embassy staff to encourage senior Financial Services contacts to attend.



## Action 3 - Embassy Network

The IFS Public Sector Coordination Group will provide clear briefing materials and information to equip the Embassy network to engage in informed and insightful discussion, setting out the objectives, government support environment, existing enterprise base and distinctive strengths in IFS. Such briefings will be updated regularly, with presentations and/or verbal updates provided at regular intervals, including at local market team meetings, and annually to inform the update of local market plans.

**Responsible:** IFS Public Sector Coordination Group

**Timeline:** Q2 2015 and ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** This is an ongoing action aimed at ensuring the provision of clear briefing materials and information to the Embassy network.

**Detail:** The IFS Public Sector Coordination Group has developed draft material which will be used in the development of promotional material for use in overseas markets under the new IFS Banner Brand to be launched in January 2016. Pending completion of new promotional material, the Trade Division of D/FAT has provided targeted briefing to the Embassy network, as required, to support their efforts in promoting Ireland as a location for IFS and producer of innovative products and services. Training to outgoing ambassadors has been updated to include an IFS module.



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## Action 4 - Embassy Network and Enterprise Development Agencies

Following the launch of IFS2020, the Embassy network and the overseas offices of the enterprise development agencies will ensure that appropriate priority is given to the IFS sector in their ongoing planning and activities, including through reviewing and updating local market plans, where applicable, and setting out actions that reflect the specific market potential, culture and resources:

This will include:

- a review of all Ministerial and other high-level visits in order to identify IFS opportunities;
- identifying and collating significant local IFS developments and trends and disseminating information to relevant government departments including D/Taoiseach, D/Fin, D/JEI , D/FAT;
- consultation with local Irish and international business networks, including Chambers of Commerce and members of the Global Irish Network and, where appropriate, the establishment of new IFS-specific networks;
- recommendation of international conferences and events where high-level attendance should be considered for the promotion of Ireland's IFS industry.

**Responsible:** D/FAT, IDA, Enterprise Ireland

**Timeline:** Q 2 2015 and ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** This is an ongoing action, and is on course. During 2015, the Embassy network coordinated a number of Ministerial visits involving an IFS focus, working closely with Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland.

**Detail:** Arising from the publication of IFS2020, the Trade Division of D/FAT has been explicitly tasked with coordination of promotional activities by the Embassy network in support of the Strategy and with providing necessary supports to assist the Embassy network in this task. In the period under review, the Embassy network supported Ministerial visits with an IFS focus in New York, Boston, China, Nigeria and Ghana. The Ambassador in London hosted the 10th Annual Financial Services Dinner at the Embassy on behalf of Enterprise Ireland.

In November 2015, D/FAT organised a dedicated panel discussion on ‘IFS: Positioning Ireland for the Future’ as part of the 4th Global Irish Economic Forum. The well-attended panel saw a lively discussion, helping to highlight some key opportunities and challenges facing the industry.





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## Action 5 - Coordinated approach to international promotion of IFS

A co-ordinated international programme of high-profile IFS platform events, and overseas trade missions (including Ministerial participation where appropriate) will be developed by the IFS Public Sector Coordination Group in consultation with industry stakeholders. Industry representatives will be consulted on the international programme and will be invited to participate in all appropriate events overseas.

**Responsible:** IFS Public Sector Coordination Group, key industry bodies

**Timeline:** Each Annual programme to be finalised in Q4 of preceding year

**Status:** On course

**Detail:** This action is on course. The PSCG, in conjunction with the Embassy network and State agencies, has developed a coordinated approach to overseas missions and engagements with IFS-related components. Drafting of an annual programme for 2016 commenced in Q3 2015, in consultation with industry representative bodies. Consultation is continuing with industry stakeholders on the development of a shared calendar of promotional opportunities for 2016.

## Action 6 - Targeted Secondments

Relevant Departments and Agencies will explore the possibility of appropriate private-sector secondments both in Ireland and overseas to support the objectives of IFS2020.

**Responsible:** D/FAT, D/Fin, Enterprise Ireland, IDA

**Timeline:** Q2 2015 and at frequent intervals

**Status:** Completed for 2015

**Summary Overview:** A number of departments and agencies have entered targeted secondment arrangements with the private sector, and the issue is kept under periodic review.

**Detail:** This is an ongoing action. Agencies and Departments will review the issue periodically.



## Action 7 - Export Trade Council

A representative from the IFS industry will be invited by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to participate in the Export Trade Council to reflect the priority attached to the sector and to support the Government's broader trade and investment activities.

**Responsible:** D/FAT

**Timeline:** Q2 2015 and ongoing

**Status:** Completed in Q2 2015

**Detail:** A representative from the IFS industry has been appointed to the Export Trade Council, and attended his first meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

## Action 8 - Banner Brand for the IFS sector

Work with key stakeholders, including industry associations, to develop a "banner brand" and associated marketing material which will be used to promote Ireland's IFS sector, including during overseas trade missions and at selected international events.

**Responsible:** IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Industry

**Timeline:** Commence Q2 2015, Launch Q1 2016

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** Banner brand is on track to be launched on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

**Detail:** The procurement process to deliver on the banner brand was completed in Q4 2015. The successful service provider was contracted to implement this action for launch at the European Financial Forum in January. The implementation involves undertaking the following tasks;

- Desk research (which included output from previous work in the area)
- Visual audit
- Stakeholder interviews
- Industry workshop
- Brand definition & verification
- Brand identity design & tagline
- Client Presentation

Following completion of this work the next step is to incorporate the design and tagline into marketing collateral in Q1 of 2016. This will be used, in accordance with guidelines developed in consultation with Industry, to present co-ordinated promotional material in international markets for the IFS Industry in the New Year.



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## Action 9 - IFS Summit

Ireland will host a major IFS Summit to highlight emerging trends and opportunities in the sector and facilitate the building of connections amongst investors, entrepreneurs, policy-makers, and representatives of leading global companies. This event will aim to attract leading international policy makers, companies, entrepreneurs and innovators across the sector with the intention of assisting them to build and renew relationships and pursue commercial opportunities, while simultaneously highlighting Ireland’s role, commitment and value to the global industry.

**Responsible:** IDA, Enterprise Ireland, industry stakeholders

**Timeline:** Q1 2016

**Status:** On course

**Detail:** Preparation for the European Financial Forum (EFF) on 27 January in Dublin Castle intensified in Q4 2015. Organised in partnership with FT Live, the conference and events team of the Financial Times, the EFF was formally launched in November by Minister of State Simon Harris. The event provides an opportunity at the start of 2016 for global industry leaders, policy makers and regulators to explore the disruptive forces that are shaping the financial sector in a European context. Patrick Jenkins, FT Financial Editor, will chair the Forum, which will include a plenary session with keynote speeches from policy and industry leaders followed by specialist streams exploring topical issues.

The Forum Liaison Group, a dedicated team drawn from the members of the Public Sector Co-ordination Group, worked with FT Live to invite delegates from the Irish financial services industry, as well as representatives from overseas. The agenda, featuring a keynote address from the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England Andrew Bailey, was published online along with logistical details for delegates. Further details at <https://live.ft.com/Events/2016/European-Financial-Forum>.

## Action 10 - Establish an IFS Education and Skills Liaison Group

Establish an IFS Education and Skills Liaison Group to provide a forum for the IFS industry to liaise with education sector stakeholders and relevant Government Departments and Agencies on implementing the skills/education elements of IFS2020, and to facilitate dialogue between industry, education/training providers and policy makers on emerging opportunities and challenges for the sector, feeding as appropriate into other fora and bodies including the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and the IFS2020 High Level Implementation Committee.

**Responsible:** IFS Public Sector Coordination Group, Labour Market Council

**Timeline:** Q2 2015

**Status:** Completed

**Detail as per Q3 update**



## Action 11 - IFS Training and Future Skills Needs Assessment

Deliver training needs and future skills needs assessment for the sector, taking into account the drivers of change within the industry, positioning for international competitiveness and the range of activities involved in a broader Internationally Trading Financial Services sector.

**Responsible:** IFS Education and Skills Liaison Group, D/ES, SOLAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU), Summit Finuas Network, Skillnets, Financial Services Ireland

**Timeline:** Q3 2015

**Status:** Completed

**Detail as per Q3 update**

## Action 12 - Enhance Finuas Network

Enhance the Finuas Network to take account of the broadening of IFS activities in Ireland with a particular focus on Payments and FinTech.

**Responsible:** D/ES, Skillnets

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** Completed

**Summary Overview:** Work on the Finuas Networks Programme Strategy (Finuas 2020) was completed during Q4 2015, and will be published in January 2016. Finuas networks have broadened their offering to accommodate FinTech and other emerging subsectors, while extending provision to enhance skills in data analytics, technology and the law, risk and compliance, all of which have been highlighted within IFS2020.

**Detail:** Law Society Finuas Network designed a FinTech Law Masterclass Programme for Start-Ups, Financial Services and Legal Professionals. Delivery commenced as scheduled during Q4 2015. The key objective is to demonstrate the evolution of FinTech, the opportunities it presents and how it has introduced innovative alternatives to financial and banking products and services.

Law Society Finuas Network developed an Executive Leadership Masterclass Programme in 2015. The need to enhance leadership capacity, identified through direct consultation with member companies, is a key pillar of the newly developed Finuas 2020 Strategy. The programme will commence in Q1 2016. Target participants include those with 10 years' experience as partner, principals in private practice, heads of department in larger law firms, and heads of legal in commercial enterprises.

Aviation Finance Finuas Network commenced mainstream delivery of a Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) in Aviation Leasing and Finance in 2015. First piloted in 2014, the programme was developed and is being delivered by the University of Limerick on behalf of the network. Aviation Finance Finuas Network supported the participation of member companies on the 2015 Corporate MBA in Aviation Management, also delivered by the University of Limerick.



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Summit Finuas Network launched a Professional Diploma in Applied Alternative Investments, in conjunction with the Institute of Banking. The programme is an opportunity for professionals working in the funds industry to develop their expertise in the growing alternative assets market. Delivery commenced as scheduled during Q4 2015.

## Action 13 - Promoting IFS as a career choice

The IFS Education and Skills Liaison Group will consider ways to raise the profile of IFS career opportunities through new and existing career guidance initiatives and platforms. Industry will contribute to the development of IFS-specific occupational information and multi-media content, to better inform school leavers and jobseekers regarding the nature and range of IFS opportunities.

**Responsible:** IFS Education and Skills Liaison Group, D/ES, D/SP, SFI

**Timeline:** Q2 2015

**Status:** Completed

**Summary Overview:** Planning is underway to leverage existing platforms including the SFI SmartFutures and CareersPortal websites, and the Slingshot Academy initiative, with new IFS-focused initiatives to be rolled out in 2016.

## Action 14 - Talent Attraction - Employment Permits Critical Skills List

Ensure that the 6 monthly review of the critical skills list for employment permits continues to reflect the skills shortages experienced by the IFS.

**Responsible:** D/JEI, industry

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** The first 2015 review of the Critical Skills List has been completed, following broad-based consultation with stakeholders. The revised list has been included as Schedule 3 of the Employment Permits (Amendment) Regulations 2015, which commenced on 1 September 2015.

**Detail:** The employment permits system is closely aligned with the work of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), and critical skills lists are reviewed twice each year and updated as required. This ensures that the critical skills list, on which the grant of Critical Skills Employment Permits is based, remains relevant to the needs of enterprise, including the IFS sector, as the economy continues to recover.

The first review of the critical skills list for 2015, which involved broad-based consultation with stakeholders including IBEC, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland, has been completed. A wide range of technical and financial occupations are included on the current Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations Lists on the basis of the data supplied by EGFSN and supported by inputs from these bodies. On the



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same basis, an exception is being made on the Ineligible Categories of Employment for Employment Permits List for specific financial clerical staff with languages to meet the needs of financial services companies.

The updated list is effective from 1st September 2015, when the Regulations commenced. The second review process for 2015 is underway.

A total of 490 employment permits issued in respect of the Financial Services area as at 30th November, of which 286 were Critical Skills Employment Permits. The occupations included both positions in financial services and in the ICT area.

### Action 15 - Talent Attraction – Single Website Portal

The agencies with responsibility for engaging with industry to devise and implement a programme around a single website portal, to attract international ICT talent.

**Responsible:** D/JEI, EI, IDA, industry

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** The competitive tender process has been completed and the contract awarded with development ongoing.

**Detail:** This action is ongoing and on course. Enterprise Ireland are leading the National Talent Branding Programme and the tender for developing the programme and associated web portal was awarded to a consortium during Q4 2015. The focus of this programme is the attraction of specific niche top tech skills to Ireland. The plan is for the implementation team to have ongoing quarterly meetings with the Steering Committee co-chaired by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation and the Department of Education and Skills.



### Action 16 - Placemaking and Regional Development

National - Reflect IFS appropriately in the planned Regional Action Plans for Jobs.

Dublin - Further enhance the profile of the Dublin City region as a place to live, invest, grow a business and nurture innovation. Instigate a coordinated, partnership approach to forward planning and facilitation of Dublin’s financial services ecosystem, taking into account the various dimensions that include: quality of life and culture, intra-city connectivity, welcome/landing services, events, workspaces, and the dynamic established through the Activating Dublin initiative.

**Responsible:** National: D/Taoiseach, D/JEI, Regional Assemblies  
Dublin: Dublin City Council, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, IDA, Enterprise Ireland

**Timeline:** 2015, ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** Regional Action Plans for Jobs for six regions has been finalised. Action Plans for the Mid East and for Dublin are being developed currently and will be launched in the early part of 2016.

**Detail:** D/JEI and its agencies have undertaken extensive consultation and have worked with a range of key stakeholders to develop distinctive Action Plans for six of the NUTs III areas. The regional Action Plans for Jobs have been published for the South West, South East and Midlands regions. The Plans for the North East/North West were launched on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015. Work has commenced to develop the Dublin Regional Action Plan and stakeholder consultation took place on 4<sup>th</sup> December. Dublin hosts a diverse range of sectors and activities and boasts a dynamic, innovative and entrepreneurial environment. The focus will be on differentiating Dublin’s offering (and set in the context of Enterprise 2025) – highlighting sector specific needs if/as relevant and including financial services.

These Action Plans focus on realising the potential within the areas, leveraging existing sectoral and research strengths and identifying new areas of opportunity - including opportunities presented by IFS. The Action Plans will drive collaborative action to focus the range of public bodies, agencies and the private sectors on a clear agenda to drive entrepreneurship, company development and investment in these areas over the coming years.

Implementation/monitoring groups will be set up to meet and report on a six monthly basis on progress being made.

In the context of the €40 million fund launched by Minister Bruton earlier this year aimed at stimulating collaborative action to build on regional strengths, a call for Expressions of Interest was issued through Enterprise Ireland. This will be followed by a competitive call for proposals. The calls themselves are not sector specific – but allow for sectoral groupings to make proposals in accordance with the criteria set out.

Enterprise Ireland’s Regions & Entrepreneurship Division continues to promote IFS activity in all regions of Ireland and have fed into the Regional APJ process as appropriate.



## Action 17 - Marketing the overall opportunity in the SDZ

There is further scope for key stakeholders in the SDZ area to work together to market the overall opportunity to interested end user/investors in the IFS sector. In this context, Dublin City Council (as the SDZ Development Agency) will co-ordinate with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and NAMA (as funder and facilitator) around the identification of prospective end user demand with the focus on the pipeline of new space in the Dublin Docklands. Enterprise Ireland will consult with key stakeholders in the Irish start-up ecosystem regarding a designated IFS incubator space with the SDZ.

**Responsible:** NAMA, Dublin City Council, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** On course, with an ad-hoc group considering commercial propositions for the SDZ.

**Detail:** During 2015 there has been ongoing engagement with the relevant stakeholders on the marketing of the SDZ and the demand for, opportunities and barriers in terms of the commercial use of space in the SDZ. In terms of NAMA's engagement, while the IFS sector has expanded nationally, Dublin's docklands will continue to be a key hub for the sector. In December, NAMA announced details of the Dublin Docklands SDZ programme, a major funding programme that aims to deliver almost 4 million square feet of office space in Dublin Docklands, as well as significant residential development. The Dublin Docklands SDZ programme will require total funding of €1.9 billion. NAMA is engaging with multiple stakeholders to drive the final delivery and planning process.





## Action 18 - Operational Metrics for Central Bank

The Central Bank and Department of Finance will, in accordance with their respective legal roles, review the authorisation service standards reported by the Central Bank in 2015.

**Responsible:** D/Fin

**Timeline:** Q3 2015

**Status:** Completed for 2015, with further action planned for 2016

**Summary Overview:** Completed for 2015, with further action planned for 2016. In July 2015, the Central Bank published its performance report on Regulatory Transactions Service Standards for the period January – June 2015.

**Detail:** In July 2015 the Central Bank published its performance report on regulatory transactions service standards for the period January-June 2015. This is a combined report which provides detail on the Central Bank's performance in respect of standards in respect of authorisation of funds; authorisation of FSPs; and processing of PCF 'IQ' applications.

The report also sets out how the Central Bank has delivered on the commitments made in the consultation on authorisation of regulated firms, funds and intermediaries.

Both institutions continue to review the authorisation service standards reported by the Central Bank, with a view to further refining these standards by Q3 2016. The Department of Finance has also received industry feedback on the latest report.

Link to Central Bank Report here:

<http://www.centralbank.ie/regulation/processes/authorisation/ServiceStandards/Documents/Service%20Standards%20Performance%20Report%2031%20July%202015.pdf>



## Action 19 - Double Taxation Treaties

The Department of Finance, Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Enterprise Agencies will liaise with the IFS industry to identify potential target countries for consideration with regard to opening negotiations on double taxation treaties, and updating existing agreements where necessary.

**Responsible:** D/Fin, Revenue Commissioners, D/FAT, IDA, Enterprise Ireland, industry

**Timeline:** Commencing Q2

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** Action is on course. Progress has been made in the development of the network with changes arising in the Finance Bill

**Detail:** The action is on course and there is ongoing development with respect to the development of double taxation treaties. Progress is contingent on reciprocal interest and engagement from other countries. There is on-going capacity for informal engagement with the relevant authorities on the development of the tax treaty network. The Finance Act, 2015 provides for the ratification of a new double taxation agreement with Ethiopia and new treaties to replace the existing treaties with Zambia and Pakistan, as well as a new protocol to the existing German treaty. The Act also provides for the ratification of new information exchange agreements with Argentina, the Bahamas and Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts) and Nevis.

## Action 20 - Financial Markets Infrastructure

Determine the position with regard to core markets infrastructure with input from the key stakeholders, examining key strategic issues, dependencies and critical emerging issues.

**Responsible:** D/Fin, IDA, industry

**Timeline:** Q3 2015

**Status:** Delayed

**Summary Overview:** Reflecting less progress than initially anticipated due to external factors this action is being reframed in the 2016 Action Plan.

**Detail:** Work is ongoing by the Department of Finance and other stakeholders to consider the most suitable approaches, including considering key issues and an understanding of the regulatory environment. Part of the action also relies on development and agreement of EU legislative regulatory proposals.



### Action 21 - Drive Research and Innovation

Drive continued innovation in the IFS Industry by increasing the number of companies engaged in projects with research institutes through Technology Centres, Gateways and Strategic Research Clusters, including:

- Governance Risk and Compliance Technology Centre (GRCTC)
- Centre for Applied Data Analytics Research (CeADAR)
- Telecommunications Software & Systems Group (TSSG)
- The Irish Centre for Cloud Computing and Commerce (IC4)
- INSIGHT Centre For Data Analytics
- The Financial Mathematics Computation Cluster (FMC2)

**Responsible:** D/JEI, Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, SFI

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** On Course.

**Detail:** The level of interaction and engagement of IDA client companies with Technology Centres continued to grow during Q4. In particular the GRCTC has begun to develop its presence within the IFS sector with a number of projects that are being developed for Fund Administration companies progressing in Q4. The CeADAR technology centre, which focuses around dedicated research themes in the area of data and analytics, is developing a number of practical applications for IFS companies. A key area that continues to develop is where IFS companies are looking to use the significant levels of data they produce as an opportunity to add value and differentiate their product offering through the application of analytics technology.

Among the other technology centres a number of strategic partnerships began in Q4 between industry and INSIGHT, while FMC2 has made further progress in collaborations with stakeholders in the structured finance sector.



### Action 22 - Drive Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) within existing firms

Encourage more IFS enterprises to invest in RD&I, building on existing work to raise awareness of state investments and initiatives and to stimulate collaborative approaches between enterprises, and between enterprises and research institutes. Raise the profile and understanding of innovation in financial services, and its potential impact in delivering economic and societal benefits. Facilitate peer-to-peer learning across companies, sectors and ownership through a semi-structured model of site visits, case study dissemination and on-line fora.

**Responsible:** IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Status:** On course

**Summary Overview:** Enterprise Ireland, IDA, and Science Foundation Ireland are working proactively with companies and the research and technology centres to raise awareness, broker introductions and support collaborative research.

**Detail:** Delivery of the RD&I agenda by the IFS Divisions of IDA and EI in Q4 2015 saw continued momentum as IFS companies across all sectors employ their own strategies to engage with the scale and pace of technological disruption in the Industry. There is a heightened awareness among IFS companies that the traditional IT systems utilised in financial services need significant investment to enable them to fulfil the needs of their customers. This is leading to increases in the number of engagements, with the support of the enterprise agencies, with the Technology Centres and Research Institutes, where companies see the benefits of shared innovation platforms in conjunction with or in contrast to in-house development.

The final quarter of 2015 saw an increasing number of projects in Dublin and the regions approved by the IDA Board that involved RD&I support, including winning a major new innovation centre from a key client in the investment funds industry. These RD&I projects came from across all sectors and feature a range of companies at different stages of engagement with their digital strategies. An increasing feature, in addition to reducing costs, is the deployment of technology in the area of cyber security and data and analytics. Increasingly IFS companies in Ireland are looking to the quality of data generated by their organisations and transforming this through innovation to add value to their clients.

Enterprise Ireland's Financial Services Department continues to provide direct support to client companies to conduct Research and Development in innovative FinTech and RegTech segments such as cybersecurity, authentication, compliance and risk, etc. Introductions between Enterprise Ireland client companies and the various research centres and technology gateways have also taken place during Q4 with a view to increasing indigenous industry collaboration with the third level sector.

Innovation Showcase 2015 took place in Dublin on December 8<sup>th</sup> and was organised by Enterprise Ireland on behalf of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and supported by IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland. During Innovation Showcase 'Innovation 2020', Ireland's 5-year strategy for research and development, science and technology was published. This innovation plan is a key element of the Government's overall jobs strategy, Enterprise 2025, aimed at building a new economy based on exports and enterprise, and delivering full employment on a sustainable basis. A key ambition of the Strategy is to increase total investment in R&D in Ireland, led by the private sector, to 2.5% of GNP.



### Action 23 - Enhancing IFS – ICT sectoral collaboration

IDA and Enterprise Ireland will work in partnership with other stakeholders to build a more cohesive financial technology ecosystem in Ireland to drive increased collaboration between Ireland’s IT and international financial services sectors, indigenous and foreign-owned firms, and centres of research. The agencies will expand and deepen the pool of FinTech companies and activities in Ireland by winning investment from both existing clients and new entrants.

**Responsible:** Enterprise Ireland, IDA and public and private stakeholders

**Timeline:** Q4, 2015

**Status:** Completed for 2015. Further action planned for 2016.

**Summary Overview:** Action has been completed for 2015, with further activity planned for 2016. Interaction between the enterprise agencies and key FinTech stakeholders is ongoing, including the FinTech and Payments Association of Ireland, and its working groups.

**Detail:** Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland participated in the National Payments Conference in October. This event was organised as part of the week-long Start-up Gathering series of events. This event was opened by Ged Nash T.D. Minister of State at the Department of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation. Speakers included representatives of multinational and Irish IFS companies involved in the payments industry, DCU, Dundalk IT and payments consultants, as well as IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

Following its establishment in Q3 2015 the Fintech and Payments Association of Ireland has opened up membership to individuals and companies from across various sub-sectors of the industry. The association has begun recruiting a new CEO and membership of a number of sub-groups.

Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland organised the Innovation Showcase event in the Convention Centre on December 8th. The main goal of this event is to achieve significant economic impacts through increased engagement between the public research system and industry. The event showcases research centres across all industry areas including Financial Services and Technologies.



## Action 24 - Sources of Funding for FinTech

Identify both domestic and international sources of funding for FinTech companies and develop an engagement process to facilitate introductions to investor ready companies.

Review funding mechanisms for start-ups, including feasibility of developing a dedicated syndicate to fund FinTech start-ups.

**Responsible:** Enterprise Ireland

**Timeline:** Q4 2015

**Status:** Completed for 2015. Further action planned for 2016.

**Summary Overview:** *Completed for 2015. Further action planned for 2016.*

**Detail:** Following the success of the FinTech Investor Pitch evening in June and the subsequent investments made by participating investors, a second investor pitch evening was organised by Enterprise Ireland and the Halo Business Angel Network for December.

Five early stage start-up companies pitched their business propositions to a group of investors made up of HBAN members and HNW individuals with particular interests in the Financial Services sector. Direct follow-up meetings between the companies and this investor syndicate are ongoing.



### Action 25 - FinTech Accelerators

Partner with existing accelerators to support engagement and upskilling and the mentoring process with participating companies. Leverage EI's existing in-market advisory panels to support market activities. Identify other potential accelerator partners and examine the success of FinTech models in other jurisdictions, including the approach in these jurisdictions in relation to key enablers for enhancing the business environment and innovation ecosystem.

**Responsible:** Enterprise Ireland and existing accelerators, private and public stakeholders

**Timeline:** Q4 2015

**Status:** Completed for 2015. Further action planned for 2016.

**Summary Overview:** Action completed for 2015. Further action planned for 2016. EI has continued engagement with existing and new FinTech Accelerators. A review of successful international FinTech Accelerator models has been completed.

**Detail:** Accenture, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland, has been selecting Ireland's best early stage tech companies to join the second FinTech Innovation Lab Accelerator programme. A 'Dragons Den' style pitching session for shortlisted applicants took place in November with successful applicants being notified in December for project commencement in January.

The newly renovated Vaults at Dogpatch Labs was officially opened by Minister Harris in November and provides high quality exhibition space and meeting facilities for supporting the FinTech and wider Start-Up community in the heart of Dublin's Docklands.

On the 19th of November Ulster Bank officially opened 'the hub' offsite innovation initiative at Dogpatch Labs. The hub comprises desk space on ground floor for the Ulster Bank product team and the objective of Ulster Bank's hub is to immerse management, product, innovation and other Ulster Bank teams into a new and dynamic environment to encourage them to 'think different'. Working shoulder to shoulder with some of Ireland's brightest startups is triggering a cultural change and delivering real value for Ulster Bank.

The Citi Innovation Labs supported the inaugural monthly FinTech and Payments Association of Ireland 'meet-up' at its Dublin facility in October with Currency Fair and hosted a follow up event with Alpha Payments Cloud in November.

During December the NDRC LaunchPad Spring 2016 programme was open for new applications. This accelerator programme targets exceptional early stage startup teams who are developing a digital business model innovation to apply for the programme which now offers up to €30,000 micro-seed investment to each venture. Selected participants will begin the 12 week accelerator programme in January 2016.



### Action 26 - Funds Services Cluster

Set up an indigenous “funds services cluster” and support the group to target key markets, in particular the UK and North America.

**Responsible:** Enterprise Ireland, Irish Funds

**Timeline:** Q4 2015

**Status:** Completed for 2015. Further action planned for 2016.

**Summary Overview:** *Completed for 2015, with further action planned for 2016.*

**Detail:** This action is now Complete. The indigenous Funds Services Cluster is established and targeting key markets The Cluster engaged with Irish Funds in participating at its London conference in October. Four companies, as part of the industry cluster group took a stand at the event. Separately, a number of High Potential Start-Ups targeting the funds sector have been approved equity investments by Enterprise Ireland.

### Action 27 - Create a Payments Forum and develop a Sectoral Strategy for Payments

Create a Payments Forum to co-ordinate sector-wide discussion and review of the Payments Industry in Ireland. This Forum should inform the development of a sectoral strategy paper, outlining a national approach to the future of the Payments Industry.

**Responsible:** Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, D/Fin, Payments Ireland, BPF, IFS Industry

**Timeline:** Q4 2015

**Status:** Completed

**Summary Overview:** A Payments Working Group has been established, and its work is ongoing. The Group will develop a sectoral strategy paper by Q2 2016.

**Detail:** Ongoing engagement between Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland and key stakeholder groups continued during Q4 2015. Agency representatives participated in payments industry events such as the E-Payments Conference in October, and the Bitcoin Hackathon in November, and engaged with multinational and Irish companies as well as colleges, entrepreneurs and consultants from across the payments industry.

Enterprise Ireland, IDA Ireland, BPF and FPAI representatives along with a sample of Payments companies and interested parties met in December to establish a Payments Working Group. Initial meetings of the group are focusing on coordination of the sector and the preparation of an outline strategy for the payment sector. These discussions will continue into 2016 with a view to preparing a strategy for the development of the sector in Q2.

**Relevant Links:** [e-Payments Conference: Scaling and Collaboration](#) | [Blockchain Hackathon Dublin](#)





### Action 28 - Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)

Analyse the financial services capabilities of the BPO cluster in Ireland through a high level group and recommend actions to develop the international financial services capability of the BPO sector including a proposed “framework” of engagement with the banking industry.

**Responsible:** Enterprise Ireland

**Timeline:** Q3 2015

**Status:** Completed

**Summary Overview:** Action complete. The BPO cluster continues to engage with banks to target IFS opportunities.

**Detail:** The analysis of needs of the financial services sector in Ireland has been drafted and will now be validated with the sector in Ireland and the UK. Representatives from Enterprise Ireland BPO section have had meetings with the BPFII.

A BPO industry representative from an Enterprise Ireland client company has been appointed to the IFS2020 Industry Advisory Committee.

The BPO sector are actively looking at ways to complement the work in other relevant areas of the IFS Strategy and the European Financial Forum with target international guest lists being reviewed and invitations issued.

### Action 29 - Securitisation and Capital Markets Forum

Develop a working group that will examine the opportunities afforded by the Capital Markets Union green paper as well as follow on opportunities for strategic positioning and skills enhancement.

**Timeline:** Q3 2015

**Responsible:** D/Fin, IDA and industry stakeholders

**Status:** Completed

**Summary overview:** Action completed for 2015 with the establishment of an ad hoc public/private sector group to provide input into engagement with the development of the CMU process by the European Commission. Further action envisaged for 2016.

**Detail:** The Department of Finance actively engaged with industry stakeholders through an ad hoc public/private stakeholder group to advise on input from Ireland into the development of the CMU initiative. There was intensive engagement between the Department of Finance/stakeholders and the EU Commission on the development of a submission in respect of the CMU proposals. The Commission launched a plan for the development of the Capital Markets Union in late 2015. The Department is actively engaged with the legislative process in the EU on CMU related legislation.



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## Action 30 - Data and Benchmarking

Relevant Departments and Agencies will work together to research, design and deliver a year-end annual IFS progress report, which will

- measure progress on implementation of the IFS2020 strategy
- measure performance and trends in terms of the economic impact of the IFS sector
- assess risks to the sector
- benchmark the competitiveness of the sector vis other international locations

**Responsible:** commencing Q2 2015, with year-end report

**Timeline:** D/Taoiseach, supported by relevant Departments and Agencies

**Status:** Completed

**Detail:** D/Taoiseach, D/JEI, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland have produced an end of year assessment of progress towards the IFS2020 objectives – updating the baseline data of direct employment in the sector, and outlining other progress indicators including competitiveness and levels of inward investments to the IFS sector. This initial work will continue and extend in 2016.