

Minutes for NCC Meeting 82

Meeting: National Competitiveness Council No 82
Venue: Buswells Hotel, Dublin 2
Date: 8:00 – 11.00, Thursday 28th May 2015

Members Present:

Prof Peter Clinch, Chair
Kevin Callinan, Deputy General Secretary, IMPACT Trade Union
Micheál Collins, Senior Research Officer, NERI - Nevin Economic Research Institute
Isolde Goggin, Chair, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
Declan Hughes, Assistant Secretary, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Danny McCoy, Chief Executive Officer, Ibec
Sean O'Driscoll, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Glen Dimplex Group
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive, IDA Ireland

Advisors

John Callinan, Department of the Taoiseach
John McCarthy, Department of Finance
Katherine Licken, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Maria Graham, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
Conan McKenna, Department of Justice and Equality
Ann Derwin, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Secretariat

Adrian Devitt
Caoimhe Gavin
Conor Hand
John Maher

Marie Bourke (EGFSN) also in attendance

Apologies

Liam Casey, Chief Executive Officer, PCH International Ltd.
John Herlihy, Former Vice President, International SMB Sales and Head of Google Ireland
Jane Magnier, Joint Managing Director, Abbey Tours
Louise Phelan, Vice President of Global Operations, Europe Middle East and Africa, PayPal
Heather Reynolds, Director, Eishtec
Dave Shanahan, Chief Executive, Adagio Ventures Commercialisation Partners
Ian Talbot, Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland
Siobhán Talbot, Group Managing Director, Glanbia
David Moloney, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Deirdre McDonnell, Department of Education and Skills
Ray O'Leary, Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport

<p>82.1 Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The chairman welcomed Caoimhe Gavin and John Maher to the secretariat ▪ The Chair also announced that Adrian Devitt was leaving DJEI and thanked him for his years of service to the NCC ▪ The minutes from meeting 81 were approved 	<p>No action required</p>
<p>81.2 Matters Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conor Hand provided an update on activities since the last meeting ▪ The publication of Costs of Doing Business 2015 (25th April) was noted. It was also noted that prior to publication, the Costs report was brought to the Senior Officials Group and Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery & Jobs, and that it was noted by Cabinet and published immediately thereafter ▪ The Submission to D/Finance on Taxation Measures to Encourage Development of Zoned and Serviced Land was noted and it was agreed that this would be published on the NCC website shortly ▪ Notes on the NCC Work Programme 2015 and the Terms of Reference for the Review of NCC Competitiveness Framework were circulated. These notes reflect the in depth discussions from the previous NCC meeting ▪ At this point, the Competitiveness Bulletins (82.6) were circulated and discussed ▪ Conor Hand noted that the Bulletins were produced in response to the Council's request for more regular Council outputs ▪ Bulletins are intended as short, topic specific publications to highlight issues of concern and reinforce the need to maintain competitiveness in particular areas ▪ Bulletins will summarise competitiveness developments in a short, concise manner and/or will reiterate the Council's previously agreed position on a particular theme and will target the policymaking system ▪ Bulletins will be signed off by the Chairman on behalf of the Council ▪ Members welcomed the proposal and format but emphasised that Bulletins should be hard hitting and impactful, generate a sense of urgency where required, and should relate back to the NCC's Competitiveness Framework ▪ It was agreed that the Council should develop a communications plan identifying how we communicate, and with whom. In this regard, it is vital that the NCC maintain an up-to-date circulation list of key stakeholders – it was noted that Council members have a role to play in building the list of NCC subscribers (members can forward contact details etc. to the secretariat) ▪ It was agreed that the secretariat should proceed with the development and publication of Bulletins 	<p>Publish Submission to D/Finance on NCC website</p> <p>Revise language in the labour and energy bulletins to ensure impactful language and publish thereafter</p> <p>Secretariat to consider development of a more formal communications plan – will revert to Council in September</p>
<p>82.3 Ireland's Competitiveness Scorecard 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ John Maher presented the key messages from the draft Ireland's Competitiveness Scorecard 2015. The report was then discussed by members and advisors ▪ It was noted that the decline in Ireland's IMD ranking in 2015 provides an important context for the NCC report – Ireland cannot afford to be complacent about recent successes and this message should be reflected in the Chairman's foreword ▪ A number of amendments to the text were proposed, clarifying some technical points and the interpretation of some indicators (e.g. budget adjustments, productivity etc.). It was also agreed to strengthen the language throughout the report – including the need to highlight that being average is not good enough, 	<p>The report was approved for submission to the Minister, and for subsequent publication subject to comments being addressed</p>

<p>particularly if “the average” is not impressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given the budgetary and political pressures, the prioritisation of public expenditure is essential: hard choices are required to avoid repeating past mistakes and there is a key role for the NCC in analysing and advising on priorities from a competitiveness perspective ▪ The Chair concluded that subject to revisions to language and messaging that the Scorecard was approved for submission to the Minister and for publication 	
<p>82.4 Selection of Topics for Challenge 2015 / APJ Submission 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This was largely addressed as part of 82.3 ▪ A combined Challenge / APJ Submission were discussed at the last meeting – Challenge focusing on medium term and APJ focusing on short term. It was agreed that the topics should reflect the messages emerging from the Scorecard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintaining Fiscal Sustainability ○ Investing in Physical and Knowledge Infrastructure ○ Ensuring Cost Competitiveness ○ Enhancing Talent and Skills ○ Fostering Innovation and Productivity ○ Broadening the Enterprise and Export Base 	<p>Scoping and drafting for Competitiveness Challenge/APJ Submission to commence</p>
<p>82.5 Selection of Topics for NCC Statements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scoping papers were circulated on “talent”, “capital investment” and “e-commerce”, reflecting the Council’s priorities from the previous NCC meeting ▪ Conor Hand introduced the scoping papers noting that NCC Statements enable the Council to investigate and comment on particular policy areas in a greater level of depth than is possible in the Scorecard and Challenge reports ▪ A range of criteria were set out to help determine the most appropriate topics ▪ It was also noted that topics could be turned into bulletin if more suitable ▪ Following a discussion amongst members it was agreed that given time pressures and policy developments that the prioritisation of capital investment should be the primary topic and that a Bulletin rather than a Statement should be produced given the imminent finalisation of the Capital Plan. It was noted that capital investment should also refer to private sector investment as well as public ▪ Addressing skills and the “war for talent”, and eCommerce remain issues of interest 	<p>It was agreed that a Bulletin on Capital Investment (focusing on investment priorities) would be produced</p> <p>Secretariat will consider the publication of Statements / Bulletins further in the context of developing the Challenge report</p>
<p>82.6 Competitiveness Bulletins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See Matters Arising 	
<p>82.7 Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The potential impact of the new Lobbying Act on groups such as NCC (or at least non-public sector members of the group) was noted. The secretariat agreed to look into the implications of the Act and suggested that the most efficient way to deal with the Act is to comply with the criteria of the “Transparency Code” via the NCC website. The secretariat will work towards compliance over the summer ▪ The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for 17th September 2015 	<p>Secretariat to work towards compliance as required</p>