

Minutes for NCC Meeting 101

Meeting: National Competitiveness Council No 101
Venue: WebEx Audio Visual
Date: 8.30 am – 10.30 am, Thursday 23 July 2020

Members Present:

Dr Frances Ruane, Chair
Ciarán Conlon, Director of Public Policy, Microsoft, Ireland
David Hegarty, Assistant Secretary, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Dirk Pilat, Deputy Director for Science, Technology and Innovation, OECD
Fergal O'Brien, Director of Policy and Chief Economist, Ibec
Ian Talbot, Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland
Isolde Goggin, Chair, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
Jim Woulfe, Chief Executive, Dairygold Co-operative Society Limited
Kevin Callinan, General Secretary, Fórsa
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive, IDA Ireland
Patrick Walsh, Managing Director, Dogpatch Labs
Rowena Dwyer, EI (in place of Julie Sinnamon)

Advisors

Carol Baxter, Department of Justice and Equality
John Conlon, Department of Employment and Social Affairs
John McCarthy, Department of Finance
Maria Graham, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Patricia Cronin, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Ray O'Leary, Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport
William Beausang, Department of Education and Skills

Apologies

Julie Sinnamon, Chief Executive, Enterprise Ireland (Rosena Dwyer attended on behalf)
Margot Slattery, Country President, Sodexo Ireland (check if she attended part of meeting?)
Micheál Collins, Assistant Professor of Social Policy, University College Dublin
Pat Beirne, Chief Executive Officer, Mergon Group
David Moloney, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
Sinead McPhilips, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
John Shaw, Department of the Taoiseach

Secretariat

Marie Bourke
Manus O'Donnell
Linda Kane
Santosh Aryal
Tamsin Greene Barker

<p>101.1 Chair’s Introduction, Minutes & Matter Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The minutes from NCC Meeting 100 was approved. 	
<p>101.2 Ireland’s Competitiveness Challenge</p> <p>Council Members noted the draft report, discussed the findings and provided comments on the overall message and on individual chapters:</p> <p>Members comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There was a consensus that interconnectedness of all the issues needs to be established and highlighted ○ Some referred to the need to highlight the range of impacts and challenges arising from the large-scale transition to remote working (e.g. the potential impact on physical infrastructure, on cities). ○ Some suggested the productivity dimension of remote working should be explored in more details. ○ Digitalisation of public service and its wider knock-on effect on digitalisation should be mentioned. ○ Many suggested a broader focus on skills to include upskilling those at work as well as unemployed – digital and management skills. (i.e life-long learning) ○ It was suggested the report should also address middle-level digital skills gaps (where people aren’t ICT graduates but need enhanced digital skills beyond basic digital literacy). ○ The challenges arising from Brexit and the associated trade issues need to be addressed in more detail. ○ Ireland’s opportunities and strengths in the context of COVID-19 should be mentioned (e.g more focus on the sectors that can thrive in the current context and what needs to be done to encourage growth in these sectors). ○ Some suggested the report could be enhanced by setting out the context of climate action across all sectors before getting into the detail of the enterprise/industry sector (i.e. point out that every sectors of the economy need do their part in emissions reductions, not only business sectors – agriculture sector should be covered in the chapter). ○ Opportunities arising from Climate actions need to be highlighted (e.g. benefits of decarbonisation and the business and jobs arising). ○ Need to highlight the importance of the energy mix to reach decarbonisation target before the specific focus on gas. ○ Carbon leakage also needs to be mentioned in the light of competitiveness and costs. ○ The report should connect domestic actions with what is happening in Europe – EU Green Deal, EU Recovery Package. 	<p>Secretariat to take Members’ comments on board</p> <p>Final comments from members and advisers to be circulated to the Secretariat by cob 31 July</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Importance of sustainable public finance and ongoing impact on competitiveness into the medium term of the debt burden should be mentioned. ○ Report should take into account details of the Government's July stimulus package, in particular in relation to the physical infrastructure chapter. ○ The 'current interventions' section of the chapters should not come across as a sales pitch for Government programmes. ○ The recommendations in the Challenge should be more action oriented and reflect the desired outcome the NCC wishes to see arise from each. 	
<p>101.3 NCC Strategic Review - Progress Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair updated the Council on the progress on the action points agreed in the Council's Strategic Review meeting in February. In particular, she mentioned the progress in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated terms of reference & Change of name for the NCC to the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC) ○ MOU for members ○ MOU for advisors ○ NCC publications timeline 	<p>Secretariat to submit updated TOR to the Tánaiste and for Government's approval in September</p>
<p>101.4 Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair informed the Council of her recent meeting with the DBEI Secretary General. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ She informed the members that discussion on the Council's updated TOR and draft Challenge report took place at the meeting. ▪ The Chair also informed the Council of her upcoming meeting with the Tánaiste. 	
<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair thanked the outgoing Council advisor John Conlon for his contribution to the Council in his capacity as Assistant Secretary, DEASP, for the last number of years and wished him well in his new posting. ○ Date for the next NCC meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 15 October 2020 	<p>The Secretariat will email the date of the October meeting to the Council and send a meeting request.</p>