

30th November 2020

PRESS RELEASE

- **The National Competitiveness Council will now be known as the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council, reflecting the Council's expanded mandate as Ireland's National Productivity Board**
- **The Council's new remit will see it support further research and analysis to better inform the design of policies to enhance productivity in all sectors of the Irish economy, especially in SMEs, as the economy recovers and prepares for the green and digital transitions**
- **The Council will continue its longstanding role of informing policy decisions in Ireland based on international comparative analysis of competitiveness issues facing Ireland**

On 10 November 2020, the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment requested that Cabinet give approval to amend the name of the National Competitiveness Council to now be known as the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council in order to better reflect the Council's expanded mandate since 2018 as Ireland's National Productivity Board and to revise the Terms of Reference for the Council to reflect this amendment.

A renewed focus on productivity issues is important as ultimately productivity is the engine of long-term economic growth and is key to securing improvements in living standards for all of society. While aggregate productivity growth rates are high in Ireland compared to other advanced economies, this strength primarily derives from a highly-concentrated group of high-productivity multinational enterprises, with sometimes limited spillovers or gains for Irish businesses and households. Boosting the productivity performance of the increasingly diverse domestic sector will be important to ensure a more resilient, widespread and sustained growth of productivity in Ireland.

The NCPC will actively support the further development of productivity research in Ireland so that this analysis can be used to better inform the design of policies to enhance productivity in all sectors of the Irish economy, especially in SMEs. Ensuring the competitiveness and resilience of Irish enterprises will be important as challenges and opportunities arise as the economy recovers and as we transition to a green and digital economy.

Following today's approval, the Chair of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC), Dr Frances Ruane said *"At the heart of Ireland's national competitiveness is creating an environment in which Irish businesses are able to compete successfully in Ireland and on international markets. This requires a whole of government and economy-wide approach. I welcome the amendment of the Council's name and our expanded mandate and renewed focus on productivity issues"*.

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment noted that *"Ireland has a reputation as a great place to do business. This is largely because of the skills and talent of our workforce, our role in the European Union and our openness as an economy. The next few years will be really challenging as we rebuild after Covid and deal with the aftermath of Brexit. In order to remain competitive, we need to keep looking at how we can improve productivity and secure sustainable foundations for our economy. The Council's expanded remit is really welcome in this context. It plays an important role in advising the Government and I look forward to its insights."*

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

National Competitiveness and Productivity Council

The National Competitiveness Council (NCC) was established in 1997. It reports to the Taoiseach and the Government, through the Minister Enterprise, Trade and Employment on key competitiveness issues facing the Irish economy and offers recommendations on policy actions required to enhance Ireland's competitive position.

The European Council recommended the establishment of National Productivity Boards in each euro-area country in September 2016. In accordance with the recommendation, the Government mandated, in March 2018, the National Competitiveness Council as the body responsible for analysing developments and policies in the field of productivity and competitiveness in Ireland. This underpins the decision to rename the Council as the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC).

Each year the Council publishes an annual report for Government on the key competitiveness and productivity challenges facing the Irish economy and suggests specific policy actions to address these challenges.

As part of its work, the NCPC also periodically publishes:

- A Competitiveness Scorecard;
- The Costs of Doing Business report;
- A Productivity Statement; and,
- A series of competitiveness bulletins and other papers on specific competitiveness and productivity issues.

The work of the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council is underpinned by research and analysis undertaken by the Enterprise Strategy, Competitiveness and Evaluation Division of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

The Members of the Council are:

Dr Frances Ruane	Chair, Economist and Honorary Fellow, Trinity College Dublin
Pat Beirne	Chief Executive Officer, Mergon Group

Kevin Callinan	General Secretary, Fórsa
Micheál Collins	Assistant Professor of Social Policy, University College Dublin
Ciaran Conlon	Director of Public Policy, Microsoft, Ireland
Isolde Goggin	Chair, Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
David Hegarty	Assistant Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Fergal O'Brien	Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Ibec
Dirk Pilat	Deputy Director, Science, Technology and Innovation, OECD
Martin Shanahan	Chief Executive, IDA Ireland
Julie Sinnamon	Chief Executive, Enterprise Ireland
Margot Slattery	Global Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Sodexo
Ian Talbot	Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland
Patrick Walsh	Managing Director, Dogpatch Labs
Jim Woulfe	Chief Executive, Dairygold Co-Operative Society Limited

Representatives from the Departments of the Taoiseach; Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Environment, Climate and Communications; Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; Social Protection; Finance; Housing, Heritage and Local Government; Justice; Public Expenditure and Reform; Transport; and Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht provide advisory support to the Council and the Secretariat.