

Minutes for NCC Meeting 100

Meeting: National Competitiveness Council No 100
Venue: WebEx Audio Visual
Date: 8.30 am – 9.50 am, Thursday 23 April 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
Julie Sinnamon, Chief Executive, Enterprise Ireland
Jim Woulfe, Chief Executive, Dairygold Co-operative Society Limited
Kevin Callinan, General Secretary, Fórsa
Margot Slattery, Country President, Sodexo Ireland
Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive, IDA Ireland
Micheál Collins, Assistant Professor of Social Policy, University College Dublin
Patrick Walsh, Managing Director, Dogpatch Labs
Pat Beirne, Chief Executive Officer, Mergon Group

Advisors

Carol Baxter, Department of Justice and Equality
David Moloney, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
John Conlon, Department of Employment and Social Affairs
John Shaw, Department of the Taoiseach
Maria Graham, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Patricia Cronin, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
Sinead McPhilips, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
John McCarthy, Department of Finance
William Beausang, Department of Education and Skills
Ray O'Leary, Department of Transport, Tourism, and Sport

Secretariat

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

<p>100.1 Chair’s Introduction, Minutes & Matter Arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Chair opened the meeting acknowledging the changed economic landscape since the Council’s last meeting due to the Global Coronavirus Pandemic. She briefly commented on the ongoing disruption to economic activity and society at large due to the pandemic and it’s impact on Ireland’s healthcare system, individuals, businesses, the labour market, and the wider economy. ▪ She highlighted the importance for the Council of continuing to: meet its obligations as per the its TOR and obligations as a NPB; it’s work being relevant to the new reality; and its role in positively influencing the economic recovery process. <p>The minutes from NCC Meeting 99 were approved.</p>	
<p>100.2 NCC Strategic Review - Progress Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion took place on the progress of Action Point 1 - Review the NCC Terms of Reference which had been identified as part of the Strategic Review at the February 2020 meeting. 	<p>Members to submit their comments to secretariat by 30 April</p>
<p>100.3 Ireland’s Competitiveness Scorecard</p> <p>Discussion focused on the following issue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scorecard and the current economic landscape <p>Members input</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some suggested the need to explore wider indicators across the dimensions of the NCC’s Competitiveness Pyramid and also the need for more indepth indicators to understand where the challenges are. ○ Inclusion of additional indicators on balance sheets, trade linkages and financing to make the Scorecard more relevant to the current crisis. ○ Many spoke for the need for the Scorecard to highlight the impact of COVID-19 across the sectors of economy in more detail - make the text that accompanies indicators as relevant as possible to the current COVID context. ○ There was a consensus that while it was challenging to catch all the issues when things are changing so rapidly, it was important for the Scorecard to be ‘crisis relevant’ and convey a clear message. The big issues that are most relevant and impacted by the crisis such as business costs, skills, liquidity, supply chain disruption, digitalisation and institutions need to be flagged to set the scene for the Challenge report. 	<p>Secretariat to take Members’ comments on board</p> <p>Subject to receipt of outstanding comments from members and advisors, the Scorecard was approved -final comments to be circulated to the Secretariat by 30 April</p>
<p>100.4 Topics for the Competitiveness Challenge</p> <p>The topics for consideration in <i>Ireland’s Competitiveness Challenge 2020</i> were discussed. These included the five topics which were drawn from the members</p>	

contributions at the Council meeting in February, the subsequent communications between the secretariat and members, and the additional topic arising in light of the pandemic. The topics discussed were:

- COVID-19
- Climate Action
- Human Capital and productivity
- Infrastructure and Planning
- Legal and Insurance Costs

Members Inputs

- Members were in agreement that the Challenge 2020 should be forward looking in the context of Covid-19.
- Members proposed that the Council should have a specific focus on the shift in the economic paradigm and the mitigation measures in the short term. It was also proposed to communicate the NCC’s message of the importance of addressing long-term structural issues to sustain and improve Ireland’s competitiveness and productivity.
- Key focus should be on remote work and productivity – policy measures around human capital, training, reskilling/upskilling, education system to support new business model and broadband.
- Specific emphasis on sectoral issues and the areas of financing, housing, digitalisation, debt relief, tax subsidies and skills shortages.
- Aspects of start-up support system and lessons than can be learned from other jurisdictions were discussed.
- Efficiency around the planning system and its impact on business investment across regions was seen as important.
- Regional focus on investment strategy.
- Emphasis on the Climate Action Plan and burden sharing across businesses and other sectors.

Institutions: Members suggested that the current crisis has highlighted the importance of Government institutions in the economy. It was proposed that the Challenge 2020 report would include the role of Institutions with emphasis on the importance of strength, flexibility and efficiency in their processes to mitigate the impact and lead the recovery. Emphasis on the need for well-ordered interactions among institutions to support business needs. It was suggested that this coverage encompass issues around the legal system/cost, insurance sector/cost and SME financing model and cost of credit.

There was a consensus that in the current context it was important for the Council to clearly communicate to policymakers the short and long term policy measures required for the economic recovery.

Secretariat to email the members on the summary of the discussions and request any final comments

<p>100.5 AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dates for NCC meetings in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 23 July - 15 Oct 	<p>The Secretariat will email the date of the July meeting to the Council and send a meeting request.</p>