

## Minutes for NCPC Meeting 119

Meeting: National Competitiveness and Productivity Council No 119  
Venue: IDA Ireland, Three Park Place, Hatch Street Upper, Saint Kevin's, Dublin, 2.  
Date: 8.30 am – 10.30 am, Thursday 13 February 2025

### Members Present:

Dr Frances Ruane, Chair  
Michael Taft, Research Officer, SIPTU  
Dr Laura Bambrick, Head of Social Policy and Employment Affairs, ICTU  
Neil McDonnell, Chief Executive, ISME  
Ciarán Conlon, Director of Public Policy, Microsoft Ireland  
Danny McCoy, Chief Executive Officer, Ibec  
Michael Lohan, IDA  
Kevin Sherry on behalf of Leo Clancy, Enterprise Ireland  
Brian McHugh, CCPC  
Edel Clancy, Musgrave Group  
Maeve Dineen, Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman  
Luiz de Mello, Director at OECD  
Liam Madden, Independent Consultant, Semiconductor Industry  
Gary Tobin, Assistant Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
Niall Egan, Department of Social Protection  
Paul Hogan, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage  
Louise O'Meara on behalf of Andrew Munro, Department of Justice  
John Shaw, Department of the Taoiseach  
John McCarthy, Department of Finance  
Evan Coady, in place of Colin Menton, Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery, and Reform  
Colm Hayes, Department of Foreign Affairs  
Garret Doocey, Department of Transport  
Maria Dunne, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

### Apologies

Bernadette McGahon, IRDG  
Paul Bolger, Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications  
William Beausang, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science  
Cian Ó Lionáin, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media  
Anne Marie Brooks, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth  
Rory Mulholland, Secretariat

### Secretariat

Dermot Coates  
Keith Fitzgerald  
Pádraig O'Sullivan  
Erika Valiukaite  
Jordan O'Donoghue

	Action
<p><b>118.1 Chair's Introduction, Minutes &amp; Matter Arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Chair opened the meeting.</li> <li>▪ The Chair thanked IDA Ireland for hosting the meeting.</li> <li>▪ The Chair welcomed Danny McCoy (Chief Executive Officer, Ibec) to the meeting as he is replacing Fergal O'Brien who has concluded his membership.</li> <li>▪ The minutes from NCPC meeting 118 were approved.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>118.2 Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Chair thanked the Council for their valuable input and feedback for potential inclusion in <i>Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2025</i>.</li> <li>▪ Dermot Coates (Head of the Secretariat) gave a presentation on the key recurrent themes in the Council's feedback and how those themes relate to the NCPC's Competitiveness and Productivity Framework.</li> <li>▪ A discussion followed where Council members expressed their views on the most pressing issues to Ireland's competitiveness position.</li> <li>▪ The discussion included comments on regulatory, legal, infrastructure planning and capacity constraints impacting investment, energy security, and business competitiveness.</li> <li>▪ Members were of the view that the Action Plan on Competitiveness needs clear priorities with actionable recommendations.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>118.3 International Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Erika Valiukaite of the Secretariat presented to the Council on the Competitiveness Compass and the Annual Single Market and Competitiveness Report 2025.</li> <li>▪ Following the presentation Council members engaged in a discussion on what the KPI's included in the Single Market Competitiveness Report say about Ireland's competitiveness challenge.</li> <li>▪ Members commented that Ireland's performance across KPI's was mixed with high business costs, in particular energy costs, and lagging public R&amp;D investment being some of the key concerns.</li> <li>▪ Michael Lohan from IDA Ireland presented to the Council on implications on FDI flows into Ireland in the context of recent international developments.</li> <li>▪ In the discussion following the presentation, members expressed the view that should remain flexible in its approach while ensuring policy continuity and investment in long-term competitiveness.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>118.4 Work in Progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Secretariat provided an update on the upcoming work, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An upcoming Bulletin analysing educational attainment and post-COVID scarring effects and their potential implications for future competitiveness.</li> <li>○ An upcoming Bulletin analysing energy prices and security.</li> <li>○ A Retrospective Review report which aims to evaluate the Government follow up to the Council's recommendations between 2020 and 2023.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

#### 118.5 NCPC Communications and Engagement

- The Chair informed the Council of her virtual presentation to Economic Policy Committee - National Productivity Board joint meeting and the attendance of members of the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat suggested to the Council that the upcoming regional seminar in Waterford would take place on the 26<sup>th</sup> March (this date has since changed and Members were informed via email accordingly).

#### 118.6 AOB

- Date for the next Council meeting:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> May @ at 8.30am