

Enterprise Newsletter

April 2021

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Tánaiste Signs Code of Practice on Right to Disconnect

The Right to Disconnect gives employees the right to switch off from work outside of normal working hours, including the right to not respond immediately to emails, telephone calls or other messages. There are three rights enshrined in the Code which came into effect on Thursday, 1 April 2021:

- the right of an employee to not have to routinely perform work outside their normal working hours.
- the right not to be penalised for refusing to attend to work matters outside of normal working hours.
- the duty to respect another person's right to disconnect (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours).

[Tánaiste signs Code of Practice on Right to Disconnect](#)

Public Consultation on the introduction of a Right to Request Remote Work

The closing date for submissions is Friday, 7 May 2021.

The Tánaiste has launched a public consultation on the introduction of a statutory right to request remote work. This consultation will inform new legislation which is a key action under the [National Remote Working Strategy](#), launched in January 2021. Currently in Ireland, all employees can request remote work from their employers but there is no legal framework around which a request can be made and how it should be dealt with by the employer.

Introducing legislation on this topic will provide a framework around which requesting, approving or refusing such a request can be based. It would also provide legal clarity to employers on their obligations for dealing with such requests.

It is recognised that not all occupations, or particular roles within an enterprise, will be suitable for remote working. Therefore, even in cases where employers want to support workers and be as flexible as possible, it will not always be an appropriate or suitable option.

The background to this initiative is set out in the consultation paper, which also provides an opportunity to provide views on important relevant issues including: duration of service before having an entitlement, carrying out a risk assessment on a proposed remote work location, reasonable grounds for refusing a remote working request; the right of complaint; provision of necessary equipment; and monitoring of activity by employers.

For more information about this Public Consultation, please click on the below link.

[Public Consultation on the introduction of a Right to Request Remote Work](#)

Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC)

Applications for Phase 1 of the Small Business Assistance Scheme for COVID (SBASC) are now open. The applications should be made to your [Local Authority](#). **The closing date for receipt of applications is Wednesday, 21 April 2021.**

SBASC gives grants to businesses who are not eligible for the Government's COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS), the Fáilte Ireland Business Continuity grant or other direct sectoral grant schemes. This scheme aims to help businesses with their fixed costs, for example, rent, utility bills, security.

A payment grant of €4,000 is available for the first quarter of this year. A decision on payment for the second quarter of this year will be made in due course. To qualify for the scheme, enterprises must have:

- 250 employees or less;
- turnover of over €50,000; and
- the turnover of the business over the claim period is estimated to be no more than 25% of previous levels

Government agrees extension to €2bn Credit Guarantee Scheme

Credit Guarantee Scheme will remain open for applications until end of 2021

[The Credit Guarantee Scheme](#) is the biggest ever state-backed loan guarantee in Ireland. The Scheme offers an 80% Government guarantee to participating lenders to provide Irish businesses, including those in the farming and fishing sectors, with access to low interest loans as they respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

Loans provided under the scheme range from €10,000 to €1 million for terms of up to 5.5 years. Loans under €250,000 do not require any personal guarantees or collateral. Interest rates will vary depending on the loan, however they will be lower than would otherwise be available in the market.

[COVID-19 Credit Guarantee Scheme](#)

Public Consultation on enhancing and reforming the Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB)

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment invites submissions from interested parties to a public consultation on enhancing and reforming the [Personal Injuries Assessment Board](#) (PIAB).

PIAB was established in 2004 and is Ireland's independent State body which assesses claims for compensation arising from personal injuries sustained as a result of a motor, workplace or public liability incident.

Since its establishment the PIAB model has delivered major benefits by providing a low-cost, quick and fair option in injury compensation. However, the number of cases being finalised through PIAB has fallen in recent years. The Department is now seeking observations from the public and interested parties on the role of PIAB and the operation of the PIAB Acts 2003-2019.

The overarching objective in seeking to enhance and reform PIAB is to bring more cases within PIAB's ambit and reduce the number of cases and time involved in progressing to litigation. Encouraging more claimants and respondents to avail of the PIAB model should lead to cost savings in the claims environment and should ultimately lead to reductions in insurance premiums.

The deadline for submissions is Saturday, 17 April.

Replies and any queries on the consultation should be sent by email to: PIABreform@enterprise.gov.ie

Please visit the link below to view this Public Consultation [Public consultation on enhancing and reforming the Personal Injuries Assessment Board \(PIAB\)](#)

Webinar: Enterprise Ireland's Agile Innovation Supports - Process Monitoring and Automation for SMEs: 14 April, 2021

When: Wednesday, 14 April at 11.00am to 11.45am

Enterprise Ireland's In-Company R&D Unit is hosting an online information webinar on their Agile Innovation, Research and Development funding programmes.

The Agile Innovation Fund can help companies develop new products, processes and services with grant support of up to 50% in support of innovation projects with a total cost of up to €300,000.

Hosted by Broadcaster: Jonathan Healy, Broadcaster & Communications Consultant.

Speakers include:

Enterprise Ireland's In-Company R&D Supports team, detailing the Agile Innovation Fund, what it's for, eligibility criteria, the application process and how to access our funding supports. Contributions from innovation experts and a guest company speaking of their successful R&D activity.

Further details and registration information is available in the link below:

[Agile Innovation Fund Promotional Events](#)

Webinar: KTI Unlocking Knowledge Transfer – Intellectual Property and Brexit: 13 April, 2021

When: Tuesday, 13 April at 11.00am to 11.45am

The **KTI Unlocking Knowledge Transfer** webinar series continues on Tuesday, 13 April at 11am with a discussion on how impacts of Brexit may have on your intellectual property rights.

KTI will bring together a panel of intellectual property (IP) experts to advise you on the immediate considerations for ensuring your IP portfolio remains protected in the UK now that the Brexit transition period has ended. We will also highlight related upcoming deadlines that are important for protecting the outputs of your R&D projects.

Speakers Include :

David Brophy - *Partner & Patent Attorney, FRKelly*

Stephen Donoghue - *Knowledge Transfer Case Manager, NovaUCD*

Joe Doyle, *IP Manager - Enterprise Ireland*

[Register for the Webinar](#)

Public Consultation on the transposition of Directive (EU) 2020/1828 on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is currently seeking views from stakeholders and interested parties on the transposition of Directive (EU) 2020/1828 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2020 on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers and repealing Directive 2009/22/EC.

This Directive, which must be transposed by 25 December 2022 will provide tools for stopping illegal practices and facilitating redress for consumers where a number of them are victims of the same infringement of their rights, in a mass harm situation. No such system currently exists in Ireland.

The deadline for submissions is *Friday, 7 May 2021* and more information can be found at:

[Public consultation on the transposition of Directive \(EU\) 2020/1828 on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers](#)

Webinar: Enterprise Ireland's Technology Insights Webinar - Process Monitoring and Automation for SMEs: 13 May, 2021

When: Thursday, 13 May from 11.00am to 11.45am

Process monitoring and automation are the principle means of reducing production costs, improving process continuity and product quality. The availability of low-cost, smart sensors make process monitoring a compelling, low-risk opportunity for many industries. It is the basis for both predictive maintenance, and real-time process control.

Monitoring and sensor technologies are components of automated processes, which serves to reduce waste, improve quality of work and provide a basis for continual improvement. Automation and process monitoring technologies are readily accessible to organisations of all sizes and underpin competitiveness in terms of cost and quality.

This webinar will explore the methods and technologies required for implementing or enhancing monitoring and automation in SME's.

The Technology Insights series aims to provide Irish industry with a platform for interesting and engaging discussion on a wide range of current and future technologies, presented by industry experts within the Technology Gateway Network

[Register for the webinar](#)

OECD-NDA Employer Survey Ireland

In partnership with the [National Disability Authority \(NDA\)](#), the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\)](#) is conducting a review on effectively engaging employers to improve labour market outcomes for persons with disability in Ireland. This project aims to provide Ireland with an independent and internationally recognised diagnosis of key trends and untapped opportunities, as it relates to engaging employers in improving labour market outcomes for persons with disability.

As part of the project, the OECD has prepared an online survey to explore how companies can better create job opportunities for persons with disability. We are aware that it is a difficult time for companies. We would like to undertake this exercise now, nevertheless, to ensure the government can support employers in the most adequate way when the economy picks up again. Ideally, the person in charge of the HR management and/or recruitment should take part in the survey. **Please click the following link to access the survey: [OECD-NDA Employer Survey Ireland](#).**

The term “persons with disability” for the purpose of this survey includes all people who either have a legal disability status; or receive a disability payment; or present themselves as having a disability or a chronic health problem. It can be a disability of any type, including vision impairments, hearing impairments, mental health conditions, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, physical disabilities, and chronic illnesses. Many disabilities, especially but not only mental health conditions, are invisible and people have to choose to disclose them. Many people choose to hide their disability to avoid discrimination. However, non-disclosure perpetuates the widespread stigma that disability is undesirable. This OECD project aims to continue changing attitudes so that individuals, companies and government see people’s abilities, not their disabilities.

The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. All responses are confidential and will be analysed by the OECD. We kindly ask that you complete this survey by no later than **Wednesday, 21 April 2021** (extended from 31 March 2021). Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact [Christopher Prinz](mailto:christopher.prinz@oecd.org) (christopher.prinz@oecd.org).

We thank you for your participation!