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Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

## **SME and State Bodies Group Terms of Reference**

**Date:** 15th September 2020

### **Background**

The *Programme for Government – Our Shared Future* recognises the central role that will be played by Ireland’s small and medium enterprises in determining the strength of the recovery for the economy and for jobs from the shock of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Programme acknowledges that “central to our recovery will be our SME community. They are the backbone of our economy and support many jobs across the country”.

The Programme for Government identifies a number of groups which will be led by Government to support the formulation of the policy responses at the different stages of the COVID-19 recovery.

This includes an SME and State Bodies Group.

### **Objective**

The objective of convening the SME and State Bodies Group is to provide a platform for dialogue on the current and potential future COVID-19 related challenges facing our SMEs which will inform Government’s ongoing response to COVID-19 for SMEs.

### **Group Members**

The SME and State Bodies Group will be chaired jointly by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Minister for Finance.

This Group will consist of representation from a range of invited business representative bodies (e.g. Ibec, ISME, SFA, and Chambers Ireland), the Central Bank and the existing membership of the State Bodies Access to Finance Group which is:

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Department of Finance
- Department of Public Expenditure & Reform
- Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport
- Credit Review Office
- Enterprise Ireland
- European Investment Bank (EIB)



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- Fáilte Ireland
- Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF)
- Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)
- Microfinance Ireland (MFI)
- Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI)

***Meeting Structure***

The Tánaiste (and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment) may identify a specific theme or topic for discussion ahead of each meeting.

The Tánaiste (and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment) and the Minister for Finance will provide opening addresses to the Group.

The Irish SME representative bodies, or other invited representative bodies, will be invited to respond to any topic assigned for the meeting or may be asked to provide broader insights on the issues and challenges facing SMEs based on the evolving COVID-19 context.

Representatives of state bodies will be called on as appropriate to respond to specific issues or concerns raised in the course of these meetings.

***Outcomes***

The dialogue will support Government in developing informed policy responses to COVID-19 for SMEs.