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Appendix A:

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference of the Small Business Forum were as follows:

The over-arching task of the Forum is to consider in broad terms the current environment for conducting small business in Ireland and to advise on the adequacy and appropriateness of the public policy responses in the context of that environment, including the interventions by the enterprise development agencies.

The Forum should consider whether there are new or revised strategies that would be beneficial in assisting small business to contribute to the growth of the economy. Any proposals for such new or revised strategies should be complementary to, and be consistent with, the revised enterprise strategy adopted by the Government in response to the Enterprise Strategy Group report.

In particular, the Forum should:

- ❑ Consider whether the strategies being followed to support and develop the spirit of entrepreneurship in Ireland are effective and appropriate;
- ❑ Consider how the pattern of growth of small businesses in Ireland compares internationally and seek to identify the particular characteristics that tend to lead to the growth of small businesses or inhibit such growth;
- ❑ Review the existing environment for accessing finance by small businesses at each stage of development;
- ❑ Review the propensity of the small business sector to conduct research and development and to innovate and to consider the capacity of the sector to access the programmes aimed at the promotion of such activities; and
- ❑ In the light of the foregoing, consider what additional or revised actions could be taken to help more small enterprises grow their businesses in a manner that contributes to the overall growth of the Irish economy.

In conducting this review, the Forum should take account of the relevant priorities for action set out in the revised Lisbon Agenda, including the actions contained in the European Charter for Small Enterprises.