



Note on the Enterprise Forum of Wednesday, 12 June 2024

Meetings are held under Chatham House rule

Attendees

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Peter Burke, TD (Chair)
Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation	Dara Calleary, TD
Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail	Emer Higgins, TD
DETE officials	Pauline Mulligan, Colm Forde, Eamonn Cahill, Brian Walsh, Manus O'Donnell, Linda Kane, Rory Mulholland, John Hughes, Santosh Aryal Advisors: Laura Mannion, Brian Keegan Forum Secretariat: Susan McNamee, Sinéad O'Brien, Anthony Barrett
Enterprise Ireland	Donal Leahy
IDA	Shay Power
Local Enterprise Office Network	Tomás Hayes
American Chamber of Commerce	Colm O'Callaghan
Business in the Community Ireland	Tomás Sercovich
British Irish Chamber of Commerce	Aidan Finnegan
Construction Industry Federation	Hubert Fitzpatrick
Chambers Ireland	Ian Talbot
IBEC	Danny McCoy, Sharon Higgins
Irish Exporters Association	Simon McKeever, Karl Picard
ISME	Neill McDonnell
Retail Excellence	Jean McCabe
RGDATA	Tara Buckley
SFA	David Broderick
The Family Business Network	John McGrane
Department of Finance	Anne-Marie Walsh
Revenue	Sinéad McNamara

Item 1: Welcome and opening remarks

- Minister Burke noted that this was his first time to chair the Enterprise Forum meeting and he thanked the attendees both in the room and online for their attendance.
- Minister Burke informed the Members that over 60% of eligible businesses had registered for the ICOB Scheme before it's closure on 29 May and €76m has been paid to date.
- Minister Calleary encouraged the members to engage with their stakeholders on the opportunities and challenges they face with AI.
- Minister Higgins emphasised that reducing red tape for SMEs is one of her priorities.
- All 3 Ministers reiterated the importance of members sending their pre-budget submissions to the Department as soon as possible so the requests can be considered and fed into Government discussions.
- The minutes from the Enterprise Forum meeting of 6 March were approved.

Item 2: Tour de Table on pre-Budget submissions and Labour Market issues and skills

- Minister Burke invited each Member to participate in a 'tour de table' discussion on their budget requests along with any labour market and skills issues of concern. Issues raised include the following:
 - Cost of inflation, cost of employment, cost of doing business;
 - Support for businesses in areas such as decarbonisation, green incentives, promoting renewable fuels, investment for research into biodiversity;
 - Review Taxation system – Capital Gains Tax is a concern for family-owned SMEs, R&D Tax Credits, PRSI, enhance tax relief on pension contributions;
 - Examine Capital Allowance rules;
 - Social inclusion and support for vulnerable job seekers, gender equality;
 - Infrastructure improvements for future growth (transport, housing, security of energy and water supplies), planning, enhance regional attractiveness;
 - Consider modernising the structure of the Labour Employer Economic Forum;
 - National Training Fund;
 - Applying the SME Test to all new legislation;
 - Encouraging Irish exporters onto the global stage;
 - Develop talents and skills (particularly R&D skills);
 - Support for businesses on their digital journey, increase AI awareness/targeting business model around AI;
 - Childcare facilities struggling with Rate Freeze;
 - Sector specific supports/study (engineering, experience economy);
 - Competitiveness;

- Biopharma sector experiencing drug shortages; and
- Crime – investment in Garda presence, address antisocial behaviour among juveniles.
- Forum members welcomed the ICOB scheme. However, as the grant is based on the value of commercial rates paid, some of their members were not eligible to apply and consideration needs to be given to those whose landlord pays the rates.

Item 3: Revenue Commissioners/Department of Finance presentation on Enhanced Reporting Requirements

- Officials from the Department of Finance and Revenue gave a presentation on Enhanced Reporting Requirements.
- Since January 2023 Revenue have issued a series of ROS Inbox Notes and held over 30 webinars for employers to explain the new reporting requirements and facilitate industry feedback. The Revenue website also has an ERR hub page with user manuals and FAQs for assistance.
- In mid-December 2023, when the Commencement Order was made, Revenue issued advice that a “service for compliance” approach would be taken during the 6-month period between 1 January and 30 June 2024, where Revenue will not be applying any penalties for non-compliance. It was reiterated that the focus is on helping and supporting employers through this new process.
- Members discussed consultation on the changes.

Item 4: Artificial Intelligence – opportunities and threats posed in the near term

- Eamonn Cahill from the Department’s AI and Digital Regulation Unit gave a presentation on “Realising the potential of Artificial Intelligence technology”.
- Members were informed of the three pillars under the EU approach to AI – Guardrails, Governance and Innovation.
- An update to Ireland’s National AI Strategy is due to be published towards the end of the Summer.
- It was highlighted that the Public Consultation on the Implementation of the AI Act closes on 16 July 2024, and all members were encouraged to consider this.

Item 5: AOB

- Members were reminded to contact the Enterprise Forum Secretariat with any topics they would like discussed at future meetings of the Forum.
- Members were also reminded of the dates for the Forum meetings in September and December 2024.