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Trádála agus Fostaíochta
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

Outcome of the Review of the Occupations Lists for Employment Permits

December 2023



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1. Introduction

This report outlines the process and the outcome of the 2023 review of the occupations lists for employment permits and includes a number of changes to those lists as recommended by the Interdepartmental Group on Economic Migration (IDG).

Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail, Neale Richmond T.D., launched the public consultation on the review of the occupations lists on 26th June 2023. This provided an eight-week period for sector representatives and employers to make evidence-based submissions seeking changes to the lists of eligible occupations. The consultation closed on Friday 18th August.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) received 112 distinct submissions from a range of stakeholders including small and medium sized entities, government departments and employment permit users. They cover an extensive number of occupations across a wide range of sectors in the economy, broken down as follows:

- Agriculture/Food
- Arts/Culture
- Charity
- Childcare
- Communications/Energy
- Construction
- Disability
- Finance
- Forestry
- Health
- ICT
- Retail/Sales
- Tourism/Hospitality
- Transport

The last review of the occupations lists occurred in summer 2021. That review received twenty-nine evidence-based submissions, which represented an average volume of responses. The significantly higher volume of submissions received in the 2023 consultation reflects the economic context of this review, specifically the tight labour market, the low unemployment rate, and increasing competition and demand for staff which is being experienced across many sectors. Significant labour and skills shortages are reported throughout the economy, despite efforts to develop skills within the State and to recruit both domestically and from across the European Economic Area (EEA) labour market.

All submissions received were shared for observations with the relevant lead Government departments e.g., Health, Housing, Agriculture and Transport as well as colleagues in DETE's Labour Market and Skills Unit, (LMSU), SOLAS and the Department of Social Protection (DSP). On 12th October, in advance of the IDG meeting, a subgroup was convened comprising DETE officials, SOLAS, and DSP representatives. The role of the subgroup was to provide insights from their respective areas of expertise, to consider observations from lead departments and examine the evidence-based submissions. A meeting of the full IDG was held on 26th.

The Interdepartmental Group on Economic Migration Policy

Consideration is taken of the views of the relevant policy departments and the IDG on Economic Migration Policy which is chaired by DETE. This IDG was devised to oversee

recommendations for changes to the eligibility of occupations for employment permits and was first introduced to play a part in this process in the 2018 Review of Economic Migration Policy¹.

The role of this Group is to enable collaboration between this Department and other government departments and facilitate an integrated approach to addressing labour and skills shortages in the longer-term, and, where shortages are clearly evidenced, to provide an employment permits system which is flexible and agile enough to address requirements and pressures in real time.

The 2018 Review of Economic Migration Policy recommended that relevant government departments should take the lead, with the relevant sectors, for making an evidence-based case for changes to the occupations lists for an employment permit, and in conjunction with the IDG on Economic Migration Policy, those cases and available evidence were considered in preparing the recommendations for Ministerial approval.

The purpose of this exercise is to update the Occupations Lists in a sustainable manner which is cognisant of the seven guiding principles set out in the 2018 Review of Economic Migration Policy:

Principle 1: EEA Preference

Principle 2: Labour Market Responsiveness

Principle 3: Skills Shortage

Principle 4: Balanced Approach to Innovation and Labour Market

Principle 5: Net Contributor

Principle 6: Employment Rights

Principle 7: Legislative Framework and Process

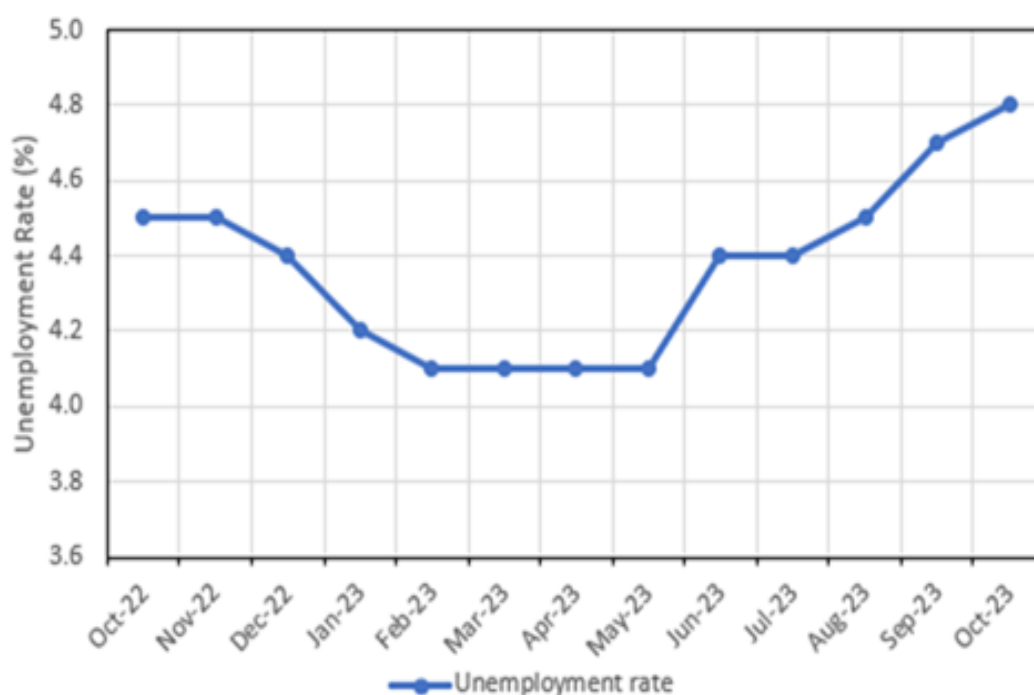
The final recommendations as detailed in [Annex 1](#) and comprises the addition of roles to the critical skills occupations list and the removal of roles from the ineligible occupations list (with or without quota) thus becoming eligible for a general employment permit. These recommendations and an overview of the deliberative process are set out below.

¹ <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/review-of-economic-migration-policy.html>

2. The Current Context

Despite significant adjustments to Ireland's labour market since Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, Ireland's economy has shown remarkable resilience in the face of these shocks, achieving one of the highest growth rates in the euro area in 2021-22. With government supports, as set out in the Economic Recovery Plan, Housing for All and the Renewed National Development Plan 2021-2030, the economy has rebounded strongly. Under Budget 2024, cost-of-living measures of €2.7 billion and €250 million for the public capital programme have also been provided. However, capacity limitations, most notably in the housing and labour markets continue to exist in the short to medium-term.

The Central Statistics Office published the Monthly Unemployment Release for October 2023 with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (for all persons aged 15-74 years) at 4.8%, up from 4.7% recorded in September 2023 and up from 4.5% in October 2022. The seasonally adjusted number of people unemployed was 132,800 compared with 130,100 in September 2023. There was an increase of 13,300 people unemployed in October 2023 when compared with a year earlier.



According to Central Statistics Office's (CSO) Population and Migration Estimates covering the period from April 2022-April 2023², the number of immigrants to Ireland was estimated to be 141,600, while the number of emigrants was estimated at 64,000. These combined flows gave positive net migration (more people having arrived than left), of 77,600 in the year to April 2023, compared with 51,700 in the previous year. This number consisted of 29,600 returning

² [Key Findings - CSO - Central Statistics Office](#) published on 25 September 2023.

Irish citizens, 26,100 other EU citizens, 4,800 UK citizens, and 81,100 other citizens, the majority being from Ukraine. The population of the State is now estimated to be 5,281,600, an increase of 97,600 on the figure recorded in the 2022, which is an increase of almost 2 per cent in a single year.

There has been a simultaneous increase in the volume of employment permit applications received since May 2021, with 27,000 applications received in 2021, increasing to 32,634 in 2022. Despite the temporary downturn in the ICT sector this year, it is forecast that the total number of permit applications received in 2023 will be over 38,000. A further increase is anticipated for 2024 and will be driven by three key factors;

- (i) significant changes to the occupational lists following this Review,
- (ii) recommencement of recruitment in the ICT sector (in particular by multi-national companies), and
- (iii) wider demand for permits across all sectors driven by existing labour shortages in Ireland and across the EEA.

It is important to recognise the positive impact migrants have on Ireland's economy and society. For instance, migration boosts the number of working-age people which is increasingly important given Ireland's aging population. In addition, migrant workers bring skills and experience that are much needed in the current tight labour market and their participation in high-skilled roles supports research and innovation which adds to Ireland's prosperity and competitiveness. Migrants also bring cultural diversity and richness which greatly benefits Irish society.

However, in order to maximise the benefits of economic migration it is imperative that an integrated approach be taken to developing policy in this area. Economic migration should never be regarded as a mechanism for obtaining "cheap labour". Rather, when developed and implemented in a strategic, cross-governmental manner it will allow for the importation of talent to support enterprise while ensuring that migrants have access to the building blocks necessary for successful integration into Irish life, namely healthcare, childcare, education, housing and public transport. This approach will also ensure that the employment rights of migrants are promoted and that these potentially vulnerable workers are safeguarded from possible abuses or exploitation.

To that end, the review process has taken cognisance of the current economic climate, the potential impact of recommended changes on the labour market, sectoral wage rates, the ongoing housing crisis, cost-of living crisis, constraints across healthcare, childcare and other public services, training and apprenticeship schemes and, of course, migrant workers. It is important to emphasise that employment permits should only be used as a short-term solution to support enterprise and should not be relied upon as a long-term solution to address chronic labour or skills shortages. Nonetheless, the Department is aware of the prevailing economic conditions which have provided a situation of near full employment resulting in added pressure on a range of sectors to provide services and run and grow businesses.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this review is to consider the regulations prescribing the critical skills and ineligible occupations lists regarding the shortages and surpluses of occupations in the State and determine where adjustments are appropriate based on the evidence and the observations of the IDG on Economic Migration Policy which was established to oversee the process.

Public Consultation

An eight-week public consultation process ran from 26th June to 18th August 2023, which invited evidence-based submissions from representative bodies, government departments, agencies, and other interested parties. The exercise aimed to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to explain sector-specific observations detailing evidence of skills and/or labour shortages or surpluses. Evidence submitted by stakeholders included: data on skills or labour shortages, recruitment efforts undertaken by the sector, detail of specific retention difficulties, training incentives, impact of shortages on expansion and sources such as industry surveys or reports.

Scope

The scope of the public consultation included all sectors of the economy, and all employment permit types. Commentary on Department of Justice wider migration policy was outside the scope of this exercise.

Examination of submissions

Submissions were reviewed and categorised by sector. The submissions were then shared with the lead Government department with policy responsibility for that sector. Lead departments were requested to consider the requests and provide their observations. Submissions, and lead department observations were shared with the IDG subgroup members.

In order to facilitate the subgroup and IDG meetings, the Department carried out an analysis of submissions:

- i. the requests for adjustment,
- ii. the occupations under consideration in the submission,
- iii. the sector-specific evidence provided,
- iv. the impact on the industry,
- v. Lead department observations

This analysis formed the basis for the discussions at the IDG subgroup and contributed to the decisions made at the full IDG meeting.

Validation

Given the significant volume of occupations that were identified in the submissions received, a process was carried out to filter the requests. This process ensured an efficient and effective management of the overall process.

Requests were considered “**valid**” where they fell within the scope of the review. Valid requests included requests for:

- Occupations to be removed from the Ineligible Occupations list (IOL);
- Occupations to be added to the Critical Skills Occupations List (CSOL).

Requests were considered “**invalid**” where changes were requested which are already in place e.g., seeking to add a role to the CSOL which is already on the CSOL. Requests were also considered “invalid” where the submission did not contain a specific request for change, of which included the following:

- Where the only request specific to a role was “remain as is”, that role was maintained in its current categorisation.
- Requests seeking an occupation to be added to the CSOL which has never been eligible for another permit type.

IDG Subgroup

The IDG subgroup was convened on 12th October to speak to the policy priorities of the specific remits, and to finalise the list of roles for consideration at the main IDG meeting.

The membership of the subgroup covered policy departments and agencies with responsibility for the wider employment and skills agenda of the State. The subgroup consisted of DETE’s Economic Migration Policy Unit and Labour Market Skills Unit, as well as SOLAS, and DSP representatives. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science provided the subgroup with briefing related to training and apprenticeship programmes currently available or in development for specific sectors.

Interdepartmental Group on Economic Migration Policy Meeting

The IDG meeting took place on 26th October 2023. The IDG was convened to hear observations on submissions from lead departments, and to agree the list of final recommendations contained in this report. The IDG was attended by all relevant policy departments (see Annex).

Final Report

This final report was prepared and proposed a number of recommendations for consideration by the Minister.

Research and Evidence

The SOLAS National Skills Bulletin³ was used as a primary source of information as part of the subgroup and IDG process. The key points of the bulletin were presented, and SOLAS was consulted during the deliberative process. DETE's Labour Market and Skills Unit (LMSU) provided briefing on the key findings of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs in relation to specific sectors. The LMSU also provided observations and input related to specific submissions, based on their expertise, and data sourced from the European Labour Authority's Labour Shortages Report 2022⁴. This report identifies the most common and severe labour shortages as well as labour surpluses in Europe and explores the main causes of these trends.

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) has a central role in providing access to the labour market for a broad cross-section of society. Officials from that Department attended the subgroup and main IDG meeting to provide information relating to the connection between certain requests and their impact on labour activation (i.e., assisting people coming off the Live Register and back into employment), and community employment schemes. DSP's Employer Relations Division was also consulted in order to ensure alignment with the policy detailed in the National Employment Services Strategy Pathways to Work 2021-2025⁵.

³ <https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/940b9df162/national-skills-bulletin-2023.pdf>

⁴ [Labour shortages report 2022 - EURES | European Labour Authority \(europa.eu\)](https://eures.europa.eu/en/labour-shortages-report-2022)

⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1feaf-pathways-to-work-2021/>

4. Report Recommendations

This report provides a number of recommendations submitted for Ministerial approval based on the examination of submissions received, expert insights and evidence, departmental observations, and deliberations of the IDG on Economic Migration Policy. This paper takes account of the current economic environment, and the prevailing labour market conditions. The objective of these recommendations is to promote a whole-of-Government, integrated approach to driving responsive economic migration policy and addressing labour and skills shortages as they arise.

4.2 Summary of Recommended Adjustments to the Occupations Lists

4.2.1 (a) Addition of Occupations to the CSOL

In summary, the skills for the roles detailed in the below table were judged to be in critical short supply globally and of critical importance to the national economy.

SOC	Occupation
1213	Professional Forester
1213	Resource modelling, earth observation and data analyst
2113	Meteorologist
2113	Operational Forecaster
2127	Chemical Engineer
2129	Project Engineer
2133	BIM Manager
2214	Optometrist (Ophthalmic Optician)
2436	Commercial Manager
3122	BIM Coordinator/Technician
3531	Estimator

4.2.1 (b) Remove an occupation from the IOL without quota restrictions

The roles detailed in the below table were judged to be appropriate roles to be removed from the IOL and make eligible for an employment permit, without an additional restriction of a quota.

Remove an occupation from the IOL without Quota restrictions	
2229	Play Therapist – In Disability Services
3219	Genetic Counsellor
3231	Family Support Workers – In Disability Services
3239	Project Officer, Disability
3563	Guide Dog Mobility Instructor for the Visually Impaired
3563	Autism Assistance Dog Instructor
5241	Electrical contractor
5241	Electrical engineer

5241 Electrician

4.2.2 Recommendations for changes subject to additional criteria - Quotas

Employment permits legislation regulates demand and impact on sectors through various criteria including minimum remuneration thresholds, highly skilled and ineligible occupations lists and quotas.

Several policy areas intersect on the matter of addressing skills and labour shortages and in recent years DETE has been leveraging the employment permits system to promote an integrated response to addressing the multifaceted nature of such shortages and to ensure that a domestic pipeline for filling future vacancies is established. DETE has achieved this by applying quotas where low skilled roles have been removed from the IOL.

4.2.2 (a) Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a level one quota (>50) to facilitate and protect small domestic industry

The roles detailed in the below table were judged to be appropriate roles to remove from the IOL and make eligible for an employment permit subject to quotas, given the potential effect on the sector and associated labour market impact.

Remove an Occupation from the IOL subject to a level one quota (50)

5211	Smiths and forge workers
5212	Moulders, core makers and die casters
5214	Metal plate workers and riveters
5232	Vehicle body builders and repairers / Body Shop Panel Beaters
5234	Vehicle Paint Technicians
5412	Upholstery and Furniture Operatives
5414	Tailors and Dressmakers
5442	Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers
8113	Textile Process Operatives
8121	Wood Machine Operatives
8129	Saw Doctor
8131	Armature Rewinder

4.2.2 (b) Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a level two quota (100 - 200)

The roles detailed in the below table were judged to be appropriate roles to remove from the IOL and make eligible for an employment permit subject to quotas, given the potential effect on the sector and associated labour market impact.

Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a level two quota (100 - 200)

1242	Residential Day & Domiciliary Case Managers - In Disability Services
3239	Support Worker
6146	Senior Care Workers - In Disability Services
5250	Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades supervisors

4.2.2 (c) Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a quota (200)

The roles detailed in the below table were judged to be appropriate roles to remove from the IOL and make eligible for an employment permit subject to a large quota, given the limited potential effect on the sector and associated labour market impact.

Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a level three quota (200)

5111	Pig Managers
9111	Pig Farm Assistants
5432	Baker
9112	Forestry Workers/ Speciality Harvesting Technician
5231	Car mechanic, Motor mechanic, Auto electrician, Motor vehicle technician
5231	HGV/Bus mechanic

4.3 Review of Existing and Exhausted Quotas

The table below provides details recommended extensions to existing quotas borne out of evidence-based submissions received during the public consultation.

Extension of currently established quotas		Recommended Quota
5431	Butcher/ Boner (meat)	350
9111	Dairy Farm Assistant	350
9119	Horticulture Worker	1,000
8111	Meat Processing Operative	1,000
5231	Vehicle Roadworthiness Tester	200

4.4 Review of Minimum Annual Remuneration Thresholds

The existing minimum annual remuneration (MAR) thresholds for employment permits are out of date, having not kept pace with wage increases and inflation in the nine years since they were set in 2014. At that time the MAR was set at slightly over the average industrial wage. For the same period, the CSO calculated national median annual income at €27,570. Therefore, the threshold was 9% above the median income. In addition, with the increase in the National Minimum Wage (NMW) to €25,756 (based on €12.70 per hour over a 39-hour week) in January 2024, current MAR thresholds will be overtaken.

1. To mitigate risks associated with these out-of-date thresholds, such as the suppression of domestic wages, potential employment rights abuses and ensuring migrants have the means to live without significant recourse to social protection (e.g., Working Family Payment), it is proposed to increase the income thresholds for GEPs. It is also proposed to phase out the provision of employment permits to certain

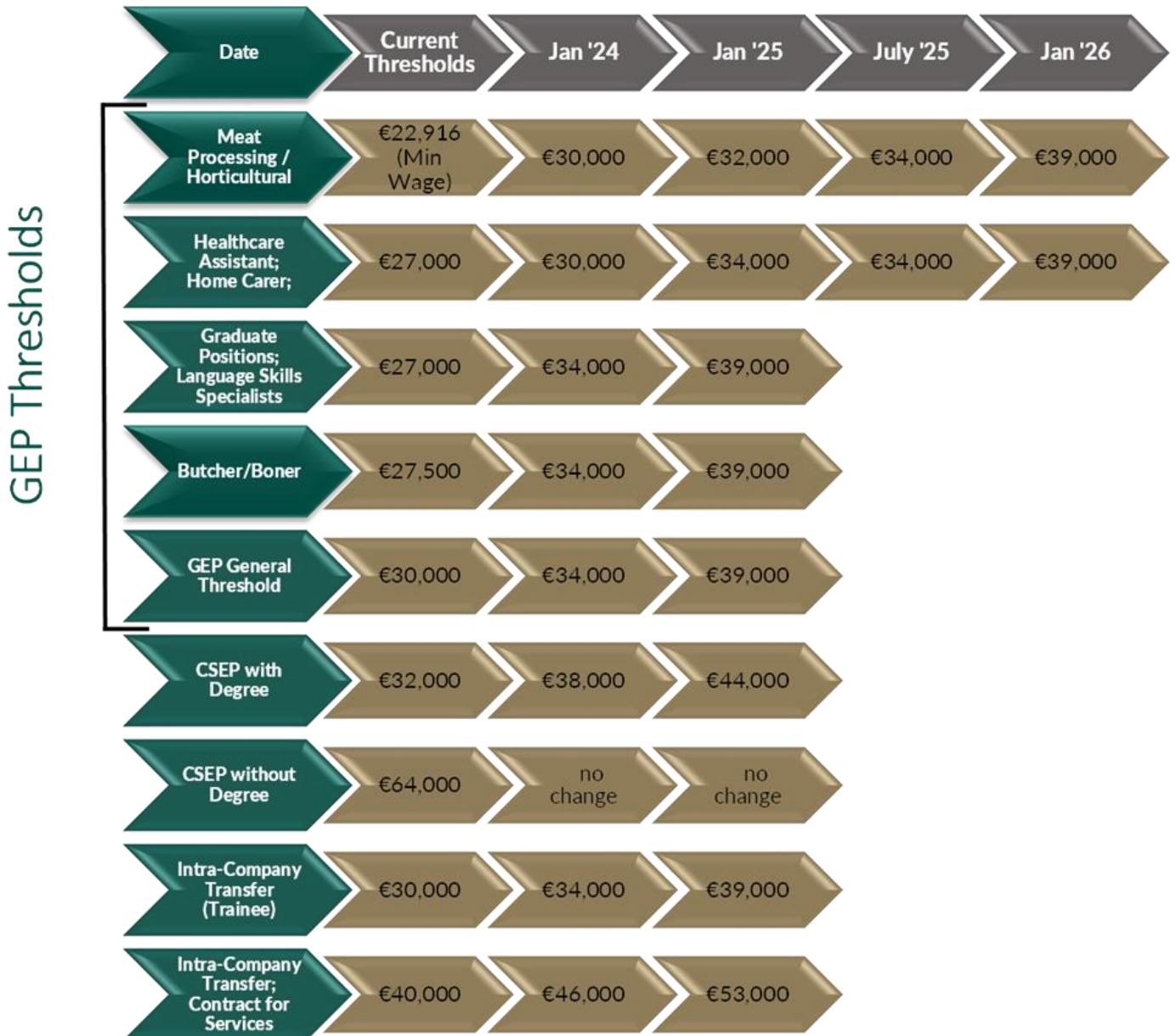
sectors (agri-food, healthcare) on rates below the GEP threshold. Mindful of the significant difference between the existing MAR thresholds and median earnings, a phased approach is proposed as follows.

2. All GEP roles currently subject to a €30,000 MAR threshold will increase to a minimum of €34,000 in January 2024.
3. The following roles will also be increasing to the new MAR of €34,000 in January 2024:
 - a. Butcher/Boner
 - b. Non-EEA students – who have graduated in the last 12 months, from an Irish third level institution, and have been offered a graduate position from the Critical Skills Occupations List
 - c. Non-EEA students – who have graduated in the last 12 months, from an overseas third level institution, and have been offered a graduate position as an ICT professional from the Critical Skills Occupations List
 - d. Employment which requires a person fluent in the official language of a state which is not a Member State of the EEA, where the employment is supported by an enterprise development agency and the employment is in:
 - i. a customer service and sales role with relevant product knowledge,
 - ii. a specialist online digital marketing and sales role, or
 - iii. a specialist language support and technical sales support role
4. These thresholds will increase further to be informed by the latest CSO data on average earnings as of January 2025. For example, using latest available data from the end of 2022 this would be approximately €39,000.
5. The threshold for the roles of meat processing operative and horticulture worker will increase from €22,916 (current NMW) to €30,000 in January 2024, thereafter, increasing to €32,000 (January 2025) with a further increase to €34,000 in July 2025. It will increase in line with all other types of GEP from January 2026.
6. The thresholds for the roles of healthcare assistants (HCAs) and homecare workers will increase from €27,000 to €30,000 in January 2024 and will increase to €34,000 in January 2025. They will increase in line with all other types of GEP in 2026.
7. The Employment Permits Bill 2022 contains a provision which indexes annual remuneration thresholds to the annual change in average weekly earnings as calculated by the CSO. It is intended that this provision be commenced in January 2025.

The new salary thresholds recognise the valuable contribution economic migrants make to this country and ensure they have the means to make a decent life for themselves and their families. However, in order to balance the rights of employment permit holders with the needs of business to prepare for the financial impacts of these changes, the increased thresholds will be introduced on a phased basis. This approach will give sectors, in particular the agri-food and healthcare sectors, sufficient time to reach the income thresholds that are better aligned with median earnings and Ireland's high cost-of-living.

It should be noted that the MAR thresholds of other employment permit types (Critical Skills, Intra Company, and Contract for Services) are to be adjusted in line with the GEP threshold. It is proposed that they be adjusted as set out in the roadmap below.

Roadmap to Minimum Annual Remuneration Thresholds Adjustment



Annex 1 Summary of Recommended Changes to the Occupations Lists

SOC	Occupation	Recommendation
1213	Professional Forester	Add to CSOL
1213	Resource modelling, earth observation and data analyst	Add to CSOL
2113	Meteorologist	Add to CSOL
2113	Operational Forecaster	Add to CSOL
2127	Chemical Engineer	Add to CSOL
2129	Project Engineer	Add to CSOL
2133	BIM Manager	Add to CSOL
2214	Optometrist (Ophthalmic Optician)	Add to CSOL
2436	Commercial Manager	Add to CSOL
3122	BIM Coordinator/Technician	Add to CSOL
3531	Estimator	Add to CSOL

SOC	Occupation	Recommendation
1242	Residential Day and Domiciliary Case Managers - In Disability Services	Remove from IOL
2229	Play Therapist - In Disability Services	Remove from IOL
3219	Genetic Counsellor	Remove from IOL
3219	Social Care Worker	Remove from IOL
3231	Family Support Workers - In Disability Services	Remove from IOL
3239	Project Officer, Disability	Remove from IOL
3239	Support Worker (social, community, public and charity)	Remove from IOL
3563	Guide Dog Mobility Instructor for the Visually Impaired	Remove from IOL
3563	Autism Assistance Dog Instructor	Remove from IOL
5111	Pig Managers	Remove from IOL
5211	Smiths and forge workers	Remove from IOL
5212	Moulders, core makers and die casters	Remove from IOL
5214	Metal plate workers and riveters	Remove from IOL
5231	Auto electrician, Car mechanic, Mechanic (garage), Motor vehicle technician	Remove from IOL
5231	HGV/bus mechanic	Remove from IOL
5231	Vehicle Roadworthiness Tester	Remove from IOL
5231	Technician (motor vehicle)	Remove from IOL
5232	Vehicle body builders and repairers / Body Shop Panel Beaters	Remove from IOL
5241	Electrician, Electrical contractor, Electrical engineer	Remove from IOL
5234	Vehicle Paint Technicians	Remove from IOL
5250	Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades supervisors	Remove from IOL
5412	Upholstery and Furniture Operatives	Remove from IOL

5414	Tailors and Dressmakers	Remove from IOL
5431	Butchers / (de)Boner	Remove from IOL
5432	Baker	Remove from IOL
5442	Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers	Remove from IOL
6146	Senior Care Workers – In Disability Services	Remove from IOL
8113	Textile Process Operatives	Remove from IOL
8121	Wood Machine Operatives	Remove from IOL
8129	Saw Doctor / Wood Machine Mechanic	Remove from IOL
8131	Armature Rewinder	Remove from IOL
9111	Pig Farm Assistants	Remove from IOL
9112	Forestry Workers/ Speciality Harvesting Technician	Remove from IOL

Annex 2 Quota Provisions for roles to be removed from IOL

Remove an occupation from the IOL without Quota restrictions		
2229	Play Therapist – In Disability Services	
3219	Genetic Counsellor	
3231	Family Support Workers – In Disability Services	
3239	Project Officer, Disability	
3563	Guide Dog Mobility Instructor for the Visually Impaired	
3563	Autism Assistance Dog Instructor	
5241	Electrical contractor	
5241	Electrical engineer	
5241	Electrician	
Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a level one quota (50)		
5211	Smiths and forge workers	
5212	Moulders, core makers and die casters	
5214	Metal plate workers and riveters	
5232	Vehicle body builders and repairers / Body Shop Panel Beaters	
5234	Vehicle Paint Technicians	
5412	Upholstery and Furniture Operatives	
5414	Tailors and Dressmakers	
5442	Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers	
8113	Textile Process Operatives	
8121	Wood Machine Operatives	
8129	Saw Doctor	
8131	Armature Rewinder	
Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a level two quota (100 – 200)		
1242	Residential Day and Domiciliary Case Managers – In Disability Services	
3239	Support Worker	
6146	Senior Care Workers - In Disability Services	
5250	Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades supervisors	
Remove an occupation from the IOL subject to a level three quota (200)		
5111	Pig Managers	
9111	Pig Farm Assistants	
5432	Baker	
9112	Forestry Workers/ Speciality Harvesting Technician	
5231	Car mechanic, Motor mechanic, Auto electrician, Motor vehicle technician	
5231	HGV/Bus mechanic	
Extension of currently established quotas		Recommended Quota
5431	Butcher/ Boner (meat)	350
9111	Dairy Farm Assistant	350
9119	Horticulture Worker	1,000

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8111	Meat Processing Operative	1,000
5231	Vehicle Roadworthiness Tester	200

Annex 3 The Employment Permits Review Process

In accordance with our EU obligations, our economic migration policy is calibrated to encourage the meeting of general labour and skills needs from within the workforce of the European Union (and other EEA countries). Ireland's labour market is part of a much greater EEA labour market which affords a considerable supply of skilled workers. However, where specific skills prove difficult to source within the State and the EEA, the employment permits system offers a path into the Irish labour market for non-EEA nationals who possess those in-demand skills. The system is intended to act as a conduit for key skills which are required to develop enterprise in the State for the benefit of the economy, while simultaneously protecting the balance of the labour market.

A list system for in-demand, highly skilled occupations and those for which a ready source of labour is available (ineligible occupations) is in place, namely the Critical Skills Occupations List (CSOL) and the Ineligible Occupations List (IOL). As demand grows or recedes, the orientation of economic migration is adjusted accordingly through changes to these lists of critically skilled and ineligible occupations.

In order to maintain the relevance of these lists to the needs of the economy, they undergo evidence-based review involving a public consultation, guided by available research undertaken by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), and the Skills and the Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS. Account is also taken of educational outputs, sectoral upskilling and training initiatives and known contextual factors and their impact on the labour market. Evidence is sought during the review process demonstrating that recruitment difficulties are solely due to genuine shortages across the EEA and not to other factors such as salary and/or employment conditions. Sectors are also required to engage structurally with the public employment service of the Department of Social Protection.

Since their commencement in October 2014, the Employment Permit Regulations have periodically been amended to adjust the eligibility of occupations on the lists, demonstrating a dynamic employment permits regime that is responding to an ever-evolving labour market.

The Occupations Lists

Occupations listed on the CSOL are professional roles that require significant skills that are in high demand and are not always available in the domestic labour force. Occupations on this list are eligible for a Critical Skills Employment Permit (CSEP) and include roles in fields such as medicine, ICT, sciences, finance and business.

Ineligible occupations are those where there is evidence that there are more than enough Irish/EEA workers to fill such vacancies. Ineligible occupations are generally lower skilled occupations such as personal services and operatives and employment permits are not granted for these occupations.

All other jobs in the labour market, where an employer cannot find a worker, are eligible for an employment permit. For these occupations, the employer is required to undertake a Labour Market Needs Test (LMNT) (i.e., advertise the job for four weeks in Ireland and across the EEA) and if no suitable candidate applies for the job, the employer is free to apply for an employment permit. Occupations such as these may require skills of a more general nature and are eligible for a General Employment Permit (GEP).

Main Employment Permit Types

Where an occupation is provided with access to employment permits, a range of criteria established under the employment permits legislation will apply to applications depending on the permit type. These include minimum remuneration thresholds, the qualifications of the non-EEA national, the tasks required to undertake the role and testing of the local labour market prior to application.

Of the nine permit types available, the CSEP is designed to attract highly skilled people into the labour market in those roles identified on the CSOL with the aim of encouraging them to take up permanent residence and employment in the State. Where the remuneration is at least €32,000, the non-EEA national is required to hold a relevant degree in the field, or, where the remuneration on offer is over €64,000, relevant experience is taken into account. Special “fast-track” conditions attach to this permit-type including the eligibility to apply to the Department of Justice for immigration permission allowing family members to accompany the permit holder immediately; and after two years to apply for permission to work without the requirement for an employment permit.

The General Employment Permit (GEP) is the primary vehicle used by the State to attract third country nationals for occupations where it can be demonstrated, following the application of a range of criteria including the LMNT, that the employer was unable to fill the position from the Irish and EEA labour market and the occupation does not feature on the IOL. There is a range of minimum remuneration thresholds for this permit-type up to €30,000. This permit-type is renewable and after five years the applicant may apply to the Department of Justice for long-term residency permission.

Annex 4 Public Consultation Submitters

Submissions received from		
(i) Coral Berry Ltd (ii) SoundAdvice Consultancy	Federation of Early Childhood Providers ISME	Mayas Retail Ltd.
(i) Irish Producers Organisation (ii) Killybegs Fishermen's organisation (iii) Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation (iv) Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (v) Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation	Financial Services Ireland (FSI)	McCloskey's Bakery
Adare Recruitment	FODO (The Association of Eye Care Providers of Ireland)	Met Éireann, Dept Housing/LG&H
AHEAD	Food Drink Ireland (IBEC)	Migrant Nurses Ireland
Aidan Walsh Opticians	Frank Keane BMW	MII
Amazon Ireland	Freight Transport Association Ireland (FTAI)	MJ Quinn ULC
Apple	Gaetec Utilities	Musgrave
Argent Equipment	Glenveagh	National College of Ireland (NCI)
Arrow Group	Global Professional Consultants	National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers

Association of Optometrists Ireland T/A Optometry Ireland	Grid Team Services	Nugent ETS Ltd T/A Euro Tachograph Solutions Ltd (c/o Pinnacle Public Affairs)
Athlone Chamber of Commerce	H & MV Engineering	Overseas Healthcare & Home Care's In Ireland
Ballinlough Refrigeration	Hair and Beauty Industry Confederation, (HABIC)	PLÉ Ireland
Benetel	Horse Racing Ireland (HRI)	Powerteam Electrical Services Ltd trading as Omexom Ireland
Bus Éireann	Iarnród Éireann Irish Rail	RGDATA
Céile Care	ICTU	Road Safety Authority (RSA)
Chambers Ireland	IFA Aquaculture	Rockwood (Harris Group)
Childhood Services Ireland IBEC	Irish Aerial Creation Centre	Safara Ltd T/A Sheppard Opticians
Circet	Irish Bakers Association (IBA)	Setanta Vehicle Importers
Coach Tourism & Transport Council of Ireland (CTTC)	Irish Dental Association	SIMI
Coillte	Irish Exporters Association	SIPTU
Construction Industry Federation	Irish Farmers Association (IFA)	SIRO

Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies Ireland (CCAB-I)	Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind	Specsavers
County Kildare Chamber	Irish Hotels Federation	St James's Hospital
Crewit Resourcing	Irish Planning Institute	Submissions also received from private individuals
DAA	Irish Road Haulage Association	Suir Engineering Ltd
Dawn Meats	Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC)	Sun Source Natural Foods (c/o Immigration & Visa Services Ireland Ltd.)
DCEDIY	Irish Tyre Industry Association (ITIA)	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
Deloitte	Irish university Association	Tech and Inclusion Advocates Ireland
Dublin Bus	JJ Burke Car Sales	Technology Ireland (IBEC)
Dublin Chambers	Joe Barbers	The Zip Yard Franchising Ltd
Dublin Simon Community	KDM Hire	Thunders Bakery
Energoinvest Reach Active Ltd	Keelings	TLI Group
ERF (Employment & Recruitment Federation)	Kirby Group Engineering	We Are Chefs Ltd
Ernst & Young (EY)	KTL	Westward Scania
ERS Group Ltd.	Laois Chamber Alliance	Whole Village Hiring
Farm Tractor & Machinery Traders Association (FTMTA)	Licensed Vintners Association	

Annex 5 IDG Membership

Members IDG 26th October 2023

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Economic Migration Policy (DETE)

Emily De Grae (Chair)
Dermot Mulligan
Jamie Kennedy
Miriam Tracey
Garth Clerkin
John Wheatley
Bryan Walsh

Labour Market Skills Unit (DETE)

Marcus Breathnach
Linda Kane
Harry Williamson

SOLAS

Joan McNaboe

Department of Social Protection

Fiona Ward
Eimear Hayes
Anne Keeley

Department of Justice

Andrew Jones
Jensen Byrne
Barbara McKelvey
Kevin Kavanagh

Members IDG Subgroup

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Economic Migration Policy (DETE)

Emily De Grae (Chair)
Jamie Kennedy
Miriam Tracey
Garth Clerkin
John Wheatley
Bryan Walsh

SOLAS

Joan McNaboe

Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage

Eoin Corrigan

Department of Health

Evelyn Hickey,
Jennifer Greene
Grace Tansey

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Michael Thornhill

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

John Finnegan

Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine

Charlie Brophy

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Michelle O Mahony

Department of Transport

Liam Hawkes

Labour Market Skills Unit (DETE)

Marcus Breathnach
Linda Kane
Harry Williamson
Linda Kane
Harry Williamson

Department of Social Protection

Fiona Ward
Eimear Hayes
Anne Keeley