

## **Terms of Reference of the Advisory Group on Small Business ( AGSB)**

### **Context**

Indigenous Enterprise is crucial to the economy, with Irish-owned enterprises accounting for over 90% of businesses in Ireland.

Ireland's active enterprise base is made up of:

- 238,249 companies and businesses,
- SMEs accounted for 99.8% of that total enterprise population They also accounted for 69% of total persons engaged,
- All small businesses (i.e. 0 to 49 employees) account for 98.7 % of all enterprises, 50% of private sector employment and approximately one third of value of the Irish economy, and
- Within this cohort of small businesses there are 219,880 micro-enterprises (less than 10 employees), which account for 92.3% of all the active enterprises in the State.

It is therefore vital that Government puts in place appropriate structures to ensure the voice of small business is heard in policy making.

### **AGSB Background**

The purpose of the Advisory Group on Small Business is to provide a platform for structured engagement between small business owners, their representative bodies, and the Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, with a view to influencing policy.

Thus, AGSB members use their experience and expertise in business to bring real issues to the table that require action from Government. They also advise on the impact of Government proposals on small business and assist government in identifying areas where further work may be required.

### **Functions**

- Provide information and views to the Minister of State for Trade, Employment, Business, EU Digital Single Market and Data Protection, Government Departments, Agencies and State Bodies on issues affecting small business;
- Provide feedback and/or input on certain consultations as required, for example the Action Plan for Jobs Process, the Regional Action Plan for Jobs process and the Budget;
- Review Ireland's performance following publication of the Small Business Act (SBA) Factsheet from the European Commission each year and suggest possible actions in order to ensure Ireland further improves its overall standing as compared to our EU colleagues; and
- Assist in promotion of relevant State led initiatives.

## **Accountability and Work Output**

The AGSB reports directly to the Minister. The Minister will, in turn, ensure that issues of relevance to the small business community are raised at Government level.

The AGSB does not have any authority to publish its own reports on issues, although any reports prepared by the Group can be considered by the relevant Departments/Agencies concerned.

Notwithstanding this, the AGSB does have authority to prepare its own submissions for the Budget process and Action Plan for Jobs process on an annual basis through the Secretariat.

The views expressed by the AGSB members do not necessarily reflect the views of the Minister or the Department.

## **Entrepreneurship and Small Business Policy Unit**

**03 August 2017**