

## Terms of Reference – National Competitiveness and Productivity Council

### 1. Mandate / Mission Statement

- 1.1 The National Competitiveness and Productivity Council's (NCPC) Mission is to promote sustainable economic growth and quality employment so that living standards and quality of life improve for all of society.
- 1.2 The NCPC will do this by diagnosing and analysing productivity and competitiveness issues facing the Irish economy in order to advise and make recommendations to inform national policy making.
- 1.3 The NCPC provides advice to the Taoiseach and the Government, through the Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise, on key competitiveness issues facing the Irish economy and offers recommendations on the policy actions required to enhance Ireland's competitive position.
- 1.4 The NCPC is responsible for analysing developments and policies in the field of productivity and competitiveness in Ireland in accordance with the European Council recommendation of September 2016 on the establishment of National Productivity Boards by euro area countries.

### 2. Establishment

The National Competitiveness Council was established by decision of the Government on 2 May 1997. The Council's name was changed in October 2020 to the National Competitiveness and Productivity Council. The current Terms of Reference of the Council were revised and approved by Government in November 2020.

### 3. Independence

- 3.1 The Council is an independent body and shall carry out its activities free of any expressed ideology or political position.
- 3.2 The Council shall have functional autonomy vis-à-vis any public authority in charge of the design and implementation of policies in the field of productivity and competitiveness, which is essential in order to ensure credibility and contribute to the domestic debate.
- 3.3 The Council shall produce independent high-quality economic analysis of policy challenges and shall make this analysis available to the public in order to increase transparency in policy debates.
- 3.4 Members of the Council shall perform their duties in an objective, neutral and fully independent manner.
- 3.5 The Council shall be responsible for the management and direction of its own work programme.

### 4. Functions

Without prejudice to the generality of Section 1, the functions of the Council are:

**4.1** To prepare and submit to the Taoiseach and the Government, through the Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise:

- an annual report benchmarking the competitiveness of Ireland’s business sector against international peer countries, and
- an annual report outlining the main competitiveness challenges facing the business sector in Ireland over the medium term, and the policy responses required to meet them.

These reports shall be published following their noting by Government.

**4.2** To prepare and publish such other reports on competitiveness and productivity issues as the Council considers appropriate, with recommendations on measures required to improve competitiveness and productivity. The Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise shall be apprised of these reports prior to their publication.

**4.3** To undertake from time to time such other competitiveness and productivity related functions as the Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise may direct.

## **5. Membership**

**5.1** The membership of the Council shall consist of persons with relevant expertise in competitiveness and productivity:

- suitably qualified persons, (for example, economists, or individuals who have a direct experience of competitiveness and productivity issues from a business perspective or in academia), at an appropriately senior level
- representatives of employer and employee bodies;
- in an ex officio capacity, the Chief Executive Officer of IDA Ireland, the Chief Executive Officer of Enterprise Ireland, the Chairperson of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, and a representative of the Department which holds responsibility for business and enterprise.

**5.2** Council members shall be appointed by the Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise, who will also appoint a Chairperson from amongst the members. The Minister shall make appointments to the Council based on objective criteria, with due regard for the benefits of diversity on the Council, including on the basis of gender.

**5.3** The composition of the Council should be balanced, so that the views of members represent a diverse group of stakeholders.

**5.4** The number of members shall be at the discretion of the Minister.

**5.5** Representation at meetings shall, as a rule, be limited to Council members and nominated advisors from the Government Departments as outlined in 6.1 below.

**5.6** The Council may also, from time to time, invite external speakers to address the Council on specific issues.

## **6. Advisory Representatives**

**6.1** The following Departments make available representatives to attend Council meetings in an advisory capacity:

- Taoiseach
- Finance
- Public Expenditure and Reform
- Environment, Climate and Communications
- Transport
- Housing, Heritage and Local Government
- Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

- Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht
- Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Justice
- Social Protection

**6.2** The Council may invite additional representatives of Government Departments and Agencies to attend Council meetings in an advisory capacity where appropriate.

**6.3** When necessary, alternates may attend on behalf of advisory representatives, with the prior agreement of the Chair.

## **7. Term of Office**

**7.1** Members of the Council will be appointed by the Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise for a three year term, which may be extended for one further three year term at the discretion of the Minister.

**7.2** Ordinarily, no member shall serve on the Council for longer than 6 years in total, including any periods for which they were re-appointed as members. A member who has served on the Council for 6 years shall be required to retire on the 31 December of the year in which he/she completes 6 years' membership of the Council. An exception shall be made for ex officio members, who may serve on the Council for the duration of their term of office.

## **8. Meetings and Procedure**

**8.1** Subject to the requirements of this Section, the Council shall regulate its own procedures.

**8.2** The quorum for a meeting of the Council shall be not less than five members at the meeting.

**8.3** The Council will seek to reach decisions by consensus. Where this is not possible, decisions shall be determined by a simple majority of votes of the members present and, if voting is equally divided, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

**8.4** The Chairperson may at any time call a meeting of the Council or shall call a meeting of the Council at any time when requested to do so in writing by any five members of the Council.

**8.5** Views expressed by the Council in its publications or by individual Members of the Council speaking on its behalf, shall not be understood as representing the views of the Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise or any Member of the Government.

## **9. Information**

The Council shall keep the Minister who holds responsibility for business and enterprise informed of its activities on a regular basis and the Chairperson shall be afforded the opportunity to present the key findings and recommendations of its work to the Minister, at minimum on an annual basis.

## **10. Secretariat**

The Enterprise Strategy, Competitiveness and Evaluation Division in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment shall provide the Secretariat to the Council.

## **11. Confidentiality**

The disclosure of information, except in the exercise of their duties, obtained by any member of the Council or any committee or consultative group appointed by it, shall be prohibited.