



An Roinn Fiontar,
Trádála agus Fostaíochta
Department of Enterprise,
Trade and Employment

SME and Entrepreneurship Taskforce

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment,
Kildare Street, Thursday, 15 November 2023, 12.15-2pm

Attendees

DETE:

Minister Simon Coveney
Minister Dara Calleary
Minister Neale Richmond
Pauline Mulligan
Jean Carberry
Anne-Marie Finlay

Taskforce Members:

DC Cahalane
John Cunningham
Seamus Butler
Ciaran Murtagh
John Donoghue
Erik Jentetics
Carol Lynch
Veronica Murphy
Paula Fitzsimons
Oliver Tattan
Sharon Higgins
Tommy Gill
John Magee
Gina Quinn
Neil McDonnell
Alison Cowser
Elaina Fitzgerald
Oonagh O'Hagan
Leo Clancy
David Broderick
Anne Cusack
Brian Caulfield
Kevin Buckley

Other:

Des McCarthy, CEO, Microfinance Ireland
Darran Diskin, Head of Certification, NCSC

Secretariat:

Ross Church
Patrick Sinnott
Ashley Long
Hazel Carroll
Cecile Lhullier

Opening Remarks

Opening the final Taskforce meeting of the year, Minister Coveney began by noting the suite of measures announced in Budget 2024. The Minister thanked members and noted all the measures suggested by the Taskforce had received consideration before the Budget.

Minister Calleary gave a brief overview of the Budget measure which will impact areas under his remit. He then introduced Anne Marie Finlay who gave a presentation on the EU Late Payment proposal.

Presentation on the Late Payments Regulation proposal

Anne Marie Finlay gave a presentation on the proposal for a Late Payment regulation noting how the proposal will likely impact businesses. The deadline date on the public consultation process was brought to the attention of members.

Members had a lengthy discussion around the presentation and proposal. The discussion was focused on the positives and negatives of the proposal to businesses and how best to implement this change if it goes ahead.

The Minister noted the concerns of members and encouraged them to send written observations to Department officials.

Presentation on Microfinance Ireland

Des McCarthy gave a detailed overview of the remit and mandate of Microfinance Ireland. The need to enhance awareness of its services was noted and members were asked to bring the service to the attention of their stakeholders.

It was suggested that consultation with the Department of Social Protection could be had and the relationship arrangement between the Local Enterprise Offices highlighted to a greater extent.

Presentation by the National Cyber Security Centre

Darran Diskin outlined the role of the National Cyber Security Centre and spoke about the need for SMEs to be vigilant to ensure they are up to date with the quickly evolving cyber world. The need to be well educated on the subject was noted as key to keeping a business secure. Mr Diskin informed members about the upcoming public consultation on Network and Information Security (NIS2) directive.

In the discussion, members noted that the costs of cyber security are a huge silent cost to businesses, some business owners are experiencing difficulties obtaining insurance due to lack of cyber security.

AoB

Under AoB, the Unified Patents Court referendum was raised. Minister reaffirmed Government's intention to participate in the Unitary Patent system and the Unified Patent Court and to hold a related referendum. The timing of the referendum is a matter for Government to decide and it is anticipated a decision will arise in the coming months.

Closing Remarks

The Minister thanked members for their engagement and input. He asked members to consider the 11 priority areas of the Taskforce and invited members to email the Secretariat with their top 3 priority measures for 2024.

The next meeting will be scheduled in Q1 of 2024.