



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

# **SME and Entrepreneurship Taskforce**

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment,  
Kildare Street, Wednesday, 25 January 2023

## **Attendees**

### **DETE:**

Minister Simon Coveney  
Minister Dara Calleary  
Minister Neale Richmond  
Pauline Mulligan  
Jean Carberry  
John Hughes  
Gráinne O'Carroll  
Fiona Kilcullen  
Marcus Breathnach  
Céline McHugh  
Tommy Murray  
Stephen Walsh  
Robert Furlong  
Gary Ward  
Phyllis Kelly  
Mary Cullen  
Ross Church

### **Taskforce Members:**

Gina Quin  
Kevin Buckley  
John Cunningham  
Paula Fitzsimons  
Eoghan O'Meara Walsh  
Neil McDonnell  
Oonagh O'Hagan  
Ciaran Murtagh  
Tom Cusack  
Ian Talbot  
Oliver Tattan  
Tommy Gill  
Philip Noone  
Elizabeth Bowen

**Other Government and Agency Officials:**

Fergal Grogan  
Fiona Costello  
Liam Wallace

**Secretariat:**

Karen Hynes  
Patrick Sinnott  
Laura Byrne  
Hazel Carroll  
Tim Luby

## Opening Remarks

Minister Coveney welcomed the members of the Taskforce, noting their contribution to the development of the recently published White Paper on Enterprise.

Minister Calleary acknowledged the value of the Taskforce and his confidence that the Taskforce will support the implementation of the White Paper.

Minister Richmond introduced himself to the Taskforce and expressed his commitment to working on the challenges facing businesses in the current climate and looking towards the opportunities for small businesses.

## Presentation on the White Paper on Enterprise

John Hughes, Enterprise Strategy Unit provided a high-level overview of the White Paper on Enterprise and its relevance to the work of the SME Taskforce (presentation appendix 1 attached).

**Taskforce Commentary:**

The Taskforce welcomed the White Paper on Enterprise and looked forward to working with Government on some of the key elements including: owner/manager skills; reducing the administrative burden on SMEs' accelerating the adoption of digital technologies; transition to a low carbon and sustainable economy; scaling Irish-owned businesses; access to state supports, particularly for exporters. The Taskforce also noted a number of issues impacting on the competitiveness of Irish industry.

### **Discussion on the Current Priorities:**

- Access to Finance
- Digital Transformation
- Increasing first time exporters
- Enhanced assistance for high-potential businesses
- Clustering and Networks
- SME management skills
- Reducing regulatory burden on SMEs
- Delivery of a single portal for business information and assistance
- Ensuring a comprehensive agency coverage for SMEs
- Promoting SME participation in public procurement

It was agreed that the 10 priorities remained relevant for 2023 and that Climate action, SMEs, and the transition to a low carbon future would be added as a 11<sup>th</sup> priority.

## **Closing Remarks**

Ministers thanked the membership for their continued commitment to the Taskforce and for the frank discussion of the afternoon.

Minister Coveney proposed that the next meeting take place in April arising from the discussion, topics for the agenda should focus on access to finance and business scaling.

Minister Calleary commented that the Taskforce is now entering a third year since its establishment in September 2020. While expressing the wish for all members to continue in their role, the Minister acknowledged the members' individual busy schedules. Therefore, members who so wish could inform the secretariat of their wish to stand down in advance of the next meeting.

DETE will write to the membership shortly regarding their continued participation.

**Entrepreneurship and Small Business Unit**

**February 2023**