

Minutes of the first Meeting of the CSG Growth and Productivity Sub-Group

27th February 2019



Present

Ronnie Downes (Chair, DPER), Fionn Jenkinson (DPER), Christina Mohan (DPER), Kevin Daly (DBEI), Phil O’Flaherty (DES), Kathryn Meghan (RIAI), Áine Myler (SCSI), Diarmuid Mollin (Engineers Ireland), Liam Berney (ICTU), Sean Downey (CIF), Jeanette Mair (CIF)

1. Introductions

The meeting began by members introducing themselves.

2. Terms of Reference for consultancy engagement on industry productivity (IPPO)

Drawing on the findings of the Build Report, DPER briefly outlined the findings related to productivity. DPER outlined a proposal to commission a piece of research that will provide greater detail on productivity in the construction sector and that will assist in the development of recommendations to drive growth.

Members made a number of suggestions, including:

- The need to clarify what labour productivity does and does not capture in the construction sector (e.g. quality and environmental standards);
- The need to note any potential causes/differences in performance on public and private sector projects;
- The importance of the project management role for productivity;
- The importance of looking at the stages of project life cycle where productivity can be increased;
- Ensuring that consultants are mandated to take a qualitative / consultative approach to exploring the various issues, rather than simply rely on a desk-based exercise; and,
- Ensuring that any international comparisons are like for like.

DPER intend to build on the work already done in an Irish policy context but noted the importance of understanding what can be learnt from other jurisdictions. In terms of the research methodology, DPER confirmed that they envisage stakeholder engagement as a key element.

Action Points

- DPER to incorporate the feedback into the tender and proceed with commissioning the research.

3. Update on work of the Construction Research Forum (CIF)

CIF provided an update on their construction related Research Forum. It was noted that an inaugural meeting had taken place and that a Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for March to review a

mapping exercise of Irish construction research and to develop out the research agenda. CIF also indicated that their report on productivity is due to be published shortly.

Action Points

- CIF to provide details of their Research Forum and the mapping exercise to DBEI.
- CSG Growth and Productivity Subgroup members to take cognisance of scope for complementarity and synergy between the various parallel work streams.

4. Discussion on potential role of Centre of Excellence (All)

Referring to the concept note circulated on the 'Centre of Excellence' prior to the meeting, members discussed the core objectives and the actions required to move it forward. Particular reference was made to the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre, which focuses on four key support mechanisms: business innovation; product innovation; process innovation; and, service innovation.

It was agreed that further foundational thinking is required with regard to development of a 'Centre of Excellence' in the Irish context, including what it will look like institutionally, e.g. whether it should be a public sector model or could parallels be drawn from the Scottish model and other international approaches. In this context the view was expressed that it would important to maintain the private-sector sense of "ownership" of the Centre of Excellence, in whatever model is selected.

Action Points

- Industry members to work together to coordinate an initial proposal detailing key elements such as institutional structure, funding requirement and sources, and objectives of 'Centre of Excellence'. To report back to the Sub-Group in advance of the next meeting, and in light of feedback and guidance from the Construction Industry Council.

5. AOB

In summing up, DPER noted that the Build Report will be launched tomorrow, Thursday 28th February.

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday 30th April at 2 p.m. in DPER Merrion Street.