

## **GROUP – Agency Clients Advisory Group – IDA Ireland**

**18<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

### **Note of Meeting**

**Chair: An Tánaiste and Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Frances Fitzgerald T.D.**

#### **Group attendees**

- Catherine Giblin, Eli Lily
- Mark Gantly, Hewlett Packard
- Paul Walsh, McAfee
- Pat O’Leary, Liebherr Container Cranes Ltd.
- Liam Butler, Northern Trust
- Paul Phelan, Optum Ireland
- Ruth Beadle, Sanofi
- Eugene Kirwan, SGS
- Eoin O’Sullivan, Uber
- Annrai O’Toole, Workday
- Colum Twomey, Zendesk

The Tánaiste welcomed the attendees, set out the background for APJ 2018 and outlined the process. She set out the need for both sustainable jobs and job creation and thanked the group for their ongoing partnership with the Department, mentioning the forthcoming invitation for the Farmleigh High Level Consultation Forum. Minister Breen introduced his portfolio of responsibility and his interest in hearing the attendees’ views.

The Tánaiste invited each of the IDA Ireland client companies to outline their top 5 issues. This was followed by a general discussion.

#### **Key issues identified:**

- Supporting talent development is essential for future employment growth. The priorities mentioned were: the implementation of second level educational reforms to meet contemporary skills needs, particularly digital skills and foreign languages, increase funding for third level institutions to prepare “work-ready” graduates, increasing the number of apprenticeship and internship programmes.
- Attracting talent at a senior level needs to be supported with tax incentives, a more accommodating regime for spouse work permit.
- Attracting and retaining females in the labour force is a challenge. Shared parental leave would contribute to levelling the playing field between male and female. More initiatives are required

to reduce the cost of childcare and the facilitate return to workplace. Establishing a good practice working group and/or award for good practices should be considered.

- The cost of maternity and parental leave, particularly significant for small businesses. Payments made to employees need to become tax deductible.
- The shortage of office space and housing accommodation, including high end accommodation, is becoming a business issue, particularly in Dublin and Cork. The scarcity of housing accommodation impacts negatively on recruitment. Combined with the high level of personal taxation, it increases pressure on wages.
- The group emphasised the ongoing need for infrastructure investment to further support regional growth. Improved road connectivity and air access. The benefits of regional clusters were mentioned.
- A new area of potential growth at the juncture of ICT, pharma, medical device with advanced manufacturing was mentioned. EI's support for a new advanced manufacturing centre in Rathcoole was welcomed. With numerous initiatives taking place, the need for coordination is increasing.
- Delayed regulation or poor regulation can impact the ability to exploit new market opportunities.
- Initiatives to encourage exports should be rolled out.

**Also in attendance:**

- Pat Breen T.D, Minister for Employment and Small Business
- Dr Orlaigh Quinn, Secretary General, DBEI
- Declan Hughes, Assistant Secretary, DBEI
- Gary Martin, Principal Officer, APJ Unit, DBEI
- Anne Ribault O'Reilly, Katherine Griffin, APJ Unit, DBEI
- Leo Clancy, Head of Technology and Consumer Business Services, IDA Ireland
- Richard Scannell, IDA Liaison Unit
- Marie Bourke, DBEI
- Mary Clare O'Sullivan, D/Taoiseach