

## **APJ 2017 Agency Clients Advisory Group – IDA Ireland**

**6th September 2016**

### **Note of Meeting**

Chair: Minister Mitchell O'Connor/Minister Breen

#### **Present:**

- Viera Pastirova, Citi Group
- John Neilan, Cook Ireland
- Timmy O'Dwyer and Jim Jackson, Dell
- Malcolm Towlson, Elavon Financial Services Ltd
- John Fenton, Ericsson
- Ciaran Luttrell, eSentire Inc.
- Sandeep Suri, Fidelity
- Francis Bates, Forest Labs
- John McAuliffe, Pilz
- Susan Moran, SAP
- Domhnall Carroll, Siemens
- Caroline Cooney-Hurrell, Starwood Hotels
- Richard Hanlon, Vesta Corporation

#### **Key issues arising:**

- The Minister welcomed the group, set out the background to the APJ process and invited each of the IDA Ireland client companies to outline the top 5 issues for their business and the priorities for the Action Plan for Jobs 2017 to further support job creation. This was followed by a general discussion.
- Addressing skills needs is one of the top priorities to support employment growth – among the key issues highlighted were the need for a more structured approach to enhance the responsiveness and capacity of the education and training system to meet current and future skills needs; addressing skills shortages in specific sectors (e.g. ICT, data analytics, cybersecurity, fintech); a greater focus on developing “work ready” graduates; more apprenticeships and greater awareness of the employment opportunities, particularly among parents; upskilling of people in employment; enhancing career guidance services; and developing foreign languages and digital skills.

- A continued focus on ensuring Ireland is an attractive place to live and work to attract mobile talent is critical – key issues include the cost of living; personal taxation rates; the availability of rental accommodation/housing; and access to schools and healthcare.
- A key issue for regional businesses is attracting high skilled people who want to live in the main cities to work for them. Facilitating and promoting remote working can play a key role in supporting regional employment. Consideration needs to be given to developing regional eHubs.
- Given the importance of manufacturing, the group highlighted the need to ensure that Ireland is competitive in advanced manufacturing and proposed establishing an advanced manufacturing centre to develop and adopt new technologies across all sectors and businesses including SMEs and start-ups.
- The group also highlighted the need for more investment in infrastructure to support our growing economy – priorities include the delivery of high speed broadband, improved road connectivity between our main regional centres, addressing congestion in our cities and improving air access, particularly from Cork.
- Those attending were reminded that the Agency Clients Advisory Group is subject to the Transparency Code.

**Also in attendance:**

- Karen Hynes, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Mary Twomey, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Fran Atkinson, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Áine Maher, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Leo Clancy, IDA Ireland