

## Orders of Reference of the Seanad Public Consultation Committee

That, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Oversight pursuant to Standing Order 98(2)(b) –

(1) A Select Committee, which shall be called the Seanad Public Consultation Committee (“the Committee”), shall be appointed to facilitate direct engagement and consultation between members of the public and Seanad Éireann on specific issues related to the legislative powers of the Seanad or an issue of public policy.

(2) The Committee shall consist of twelve<sup>1</sup> members including the Leas-Chathaoirleach who, *ex officio*, shall be Chairperson of the Committee<sup>2</sup> and the quorum of the Committee shall be five.

(3) The Committee –

(a) shall identify for examination specific issues related to the legislative powers of the Seanad or an issue of public policy;

(b) shall, for the purposes of sub-paragraph (a), have the power defined in Standing Order 72(1);

(c) shall, in respect of any issue it identifies for examination in accordance with sub-paragraph (a), exercise its power under Standing Order 72(1) by public notice which shall specify the issue on which written evidence in the form of submissions is invited and the date by which it must be received by the Committee: provided that the Committee may also invite written submissions directly from interested persons or bodies;

(d) shall review submissions received by it, determine whether or not such submissions are admissible in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraph (8) of this Order, reject any submissions which it rules to be inadmissible and consider what action, if any, to take in relation to submissions which it judges to be admissible; and

(e) shall, for the purposes of sub-paragraphs (a) and (d) of this paragraph, meet in private.

(4) The Committee may meet in public in the Seanad Chamber for the purpose of taking oral evidence.

(5) Paragraphs (2) to (6) inclusive of Standing Order 77 shall not apply to the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> [As amended by Seanad Éireann](#) on 14 December 2022 and [as further amended by Seanad Éireann](#) on 7 December 2023.

<sup>2</sup> [As amended by Seanad Éireann](#) on 22 March 2023.

(6) In addition to its obligation under Standing Order 77(1) to lay every report made by it before the Seanad, the Committee may refer any report made by it to the relevant Joint Committee.

(7) Written submissions to the Committee shall clearly indicate the name of the person or body making the submission and a postal or email address.

(8) A submission is admissible unless it –

(a) requests the Seanad to do anything other than the Seanad has power to do;

(b) does not comply with Standing Orders or is otherwise not in proper form;

(c) it contains any matter which is sub judice within the meaning of Standing Order 47;

(d) comments on, criticises or makes charges against a person outside the House or an official, in a manner which is not consistent with the Standing Orders and practices of the Seanad;

(e) contains language which is offensive or defamatory;

(f) is the same as, or in substantially similar terms to, a submission made by or on behalf of the same person or body during the lifetime of the Committee.