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An Roghchoiste um Fhiontar, Trádáil agus Fostaíocht
Breithniú ar Imleabhar Meastachán Athbhreithnithe (ATHBH), 2023 -
VÓTA 32
Feabhra 2023

Select Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Consideration of Revised Estimates Volume (REV) 2023 – VOTE 32

February 2023

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Reporting on REV consideration	2
Committee commentary on consideration of REV2023	3
The REV process	3
The 2023 Revised Estimate	3
Allocations and performance metrics	4
Other	4

Introduction

On 9 February 2023, the Select Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment held an engagement with the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment Simon Coveney T.D. to examine the spending allocations and associated performance metrics for the following Votes:

- **Vote 32 – Enterprise, Trade and Employment**

Standing Order 95(3) of Dáil Éireann states:

“The principal purpose of Committee consideration of matters of policy, governance, expenditure, and administration under paragraph (1) shall be— (a) for the accountability of the relevant Minister or Minister of State, and (b) to assess the performance of the relevant Government Department or of a State body within the responsibility of the relevant Department, in delivering public services while achieving intended outcomes, including value for money.”

Select Committees are tasked with consideration of the annual Revised Estimates for Public Services (or REV)¹ that fall within their remit. While Select Committees have no role in approving the Estimates, it is an ongoing opportunity for the Committee to examine Departmental expenditure, to make the budgetary process more transparent, and to engage in a meaningful way on relevant performance issues.

The Committee subsequently sent a message confirming completion of its consideration to the Clerk of Dáil Éireann on 9 February 2023 in accordance with Standing Order 101 of Dáil Éireann. Under Standing Order 100(2) of Dáil Éireann, this message is deemed to be the report of the Committee.

¹ The Revised Estimates (comprised of Ministerial Votes / Vote Groups) are included in the Revised Estimates Volume (or REV). REV2023 was published on 14 December 2022.

Reporting on REV consideration

Furthermore, Standing Order 215A of Dáil Éireann states:

Consideration of Estimates by Committees: Report of Committee on Estimate

215A. (1) Subject to Standing Order 215(2) and unless the Dáil shall otherwise order, Committees shall complete their consideration of Estimates referred to them pursuant to that Standing Order not later than 60 days after such Estimates have been so referred.

(2) Any report that a Committee proposes to make arising from its consideration of an Estimate shall be made within a further period of 14 days.

Under SO215A(2), this report summarises issues arising from the Committee's consideration and will be laid before the Dáil and sent to the Minister for consideration. This report will also be provided to the Committee on Budgetary Oversight which will examine all Select Committee reports, collate the information to identify any common issues or concerns, as well as examples of best practice, and make recommendations for the improvement of the consideration process.

This report comprises three sections as follows:

1. The REV process
2. Allocations and performance metrics
3. Other

Committee commentary on consideration of REV2023

The REV process

In a letter sent to the Minister from the Committee Cathaoirleach, a short, non-technical Departmental briefing was requested on 7 December and a reminder was sent on 18 January. The briefing was received on 1 February. The public hearing with the Minister was held on 9 February. There was good engagement with the Departmental officials. The briefing was comprehensive, ran to 77 pages, and was accessible to Members. The Committee concluded that there was sufficient time to prepare for the public engagement with the Minister.

The engagement with the Minister was substantial and the Committee was satisfied.

The 2023 Revised Estimate

In 2023, the Estimate for the Enterprise, Trade and Employment Vote is €1,549.492 million, an increase from €1,495.929 million (4%) in 2022. Appropriations-in-Aid are projected to be €71.921m. Appropriations-in-Aid are offset against expenditure and as a result, the net allocation for 2023 is €1,549.492million by current year provision.

The vote received a gross estimate of €1,558.325 million in 2022. The 2023 gross estimate is €1,621.413m.

The ETE Vote has three Programmes

- A – *Jobs and Enterprise Development* - €1,246.222m an increase of 3% from 2022
- B – *Innovation* - €258.700m an increase in 6%
- C – *Regulation* – €116.491m an increase in 10%

Appropriations in Aid - €71.921m an increase in 15%

Allocations and performance metrics

- Commentary on the usefulness and adequacy of the performance metrics

In terms of the financials, in the Committee's view, the usefulness and adequacy of the performance metrics provided in the REV would be improved with the addition of the following:

- A regional impact report should be included providing detailed targets, measures and metrics to provide meaningful data and deliver important data on how each scheme will affect each region across Ireland.
- A report should be included providing data on loan schemes. Details should be supplied relating to the performance, uptake and impact on the economy to provide insight and data on meaningful impact.
- The High Potential Start ups (HPSU's) should include a detailed breakdown of the number of jobs delivered within a period. This breakdown should track all HPSU's and not a top percentage, this data will help gauge policy impact in the area and inform on future changes delivering details on the outcomes of each HPSU both positive and negative.
- A report should be included on companies running into difficulty, detailing the impact of the small business rescue schemes, and whether companies are receiving reasonable accommodations from Departments to support the challenges faced in the current economic environment.

The Committee believes the addition of the above metrics will improve both the qualitative and quantitative data given in the REV and improve the quality reflected in the REV volume.

Other

In relation to the 2023 – Vote 32, The Committee believes improvements can be made to the Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme. This scheme has received an allocation of €650m in the 2023 Revised Estimate. Currently the application process is onerous for companies attempting to seek support. The Scheme could be further improved by enhancing the accessibility of the scheme, removing obstacles and improving the efficiency of the programme.