Our ambition

As societies and economies across the globe respond, Ireland has the opportunity to execute an early strategy which can address the major structural challenges from both the present and past. Ibec’s Reboot & Reimagine campaign sets this strategy and a blueprint for a better Ireland.

The Reboot & Reimagine campaign aims to galvanise all stakeholders on a set of actions and aspirations to create a sustainable future for Ireland. It provides a decisive framework segmented into three phases; 100 days, end of 2020, end of 2023.

Business will champion and advocate for these actions and with courage and leadership from Government, this can chart not simply a recovery for society and the economy, but one which will deliver a more sustainable future for all.

Our recommendations

The recommendations to Reboot & Reimagine have been costed and combined to constitute an affordable and credible plan. If synchronised and phased, they will address the economic and business impact of COVID-19 as well as achieving a better Ireland by tackling the country’s acute and significant challenges, including Brexit, which existed prior to this current crisis.

To Reboot & Reimagine a better Ireland
Ibec prioritises six themes:

1. Engagement and crisis management
2. Fiscal policy and stimulus measures
3. Get people back to work
4. Use the National Development Plan (NDP) review to stimulate investment
5. Reimagine a better Ireland
6. Seize international opportunities and respond to Brexit
Engagement and crisis management

Establish a more extensive social dialogue model:
Government needs to reset Ireland’s engagement with trade unions and employers in a more structured consultation and engagement model which can support recovery and address long-term societal issues.

Extend the national risk assessment model to include stronger private sector role: This should be reflected in the response structures dealing with the ongoing aspects of the current crisis.

Fiscal policy and stimulus measures

Roll out a €15 billion reboot plan within the first 100 days of Government formation: Whatever it takes should be the mantra of Government policy to restore the economy and endeavour to offset the collapse in GDP with increased public spending, tax supports and investment.

Continue to enhance the suite of liquidity supports for business:
The scale of public supports provided to address the liquidity crisis remains far behind those in most other countries and further measures such as low or zero cost loans, export credit insurance and extended state guaranteed loans are urgently required.

Write down some debts and provide cash grants to SMEs:
Many businesses will need further support such as extended write-down of commercial rates debts; enhanced direct grant payments and State support to resolve commercial rents disputes.

Provide stimulus measures for consumers and impacted business sectors:
These should include tax changes to support employee voucher benefits, additional social welfare payments, grants to aid required social distancing investments and the reintroduction and expansion of the 9% hospitality VAT rate.

Establish a Commission on Taxation:
This should address both the immediate tax revenue challenges of the crisis and a range of other long-term issues such as environmental taxes and the sustainability of the wider tax base.
Get people back to work

Increase employment support funding through JobsPlus scheme:
This scheme is a proven way to get people back to work and supports should be increased and targeted at the most impacted sectors and regions.

Ramp up support for labour market activation programmes:
Building on the lessons of the last crisis, increased supports and new programmes should be provided to support jobseekers.

Reform the social welfare and social insurance systems:
Long-term reform will be needed for both the social welfare and social insurance systems.

Increase funding for training and up-skilling and safeguard the National Training Fund (NTF): In addition to funding available through the NTF, targeted training and learning programmes will be needed for SMEs and incentives required to support industry uptake of apprenticeships.

Substantially increase funding for higher education:
The wider higher education sector requires €400 million to support core, programmatic funding and infrastructure needs and to address the losses incurred as a result of the crisis. It must also see its long-term funding model put on a sustainable basis.
Stimulate investment with National Development Plan (NDP) review

Refresh the NDP and increase its lifetime budget by €25 billion:
A timely and effective review of the NDP can support a major investment stimulus across the economy and in all regions.

Deliver quality and affordable homes:
Fast track the legislative passage of the Land Development Agency Bill before the end of 2020 and develop a new public procurement strategy to accelerate the delivery of social housing and support innovation by using modern construction methods.

Reduce capital project delivery timelines by 50%:
Planning systems and timelines, procurement processes, and project delivery timescales need to be streamlined and improved to deliver projects rapidly and ensure that investment plans, such as the National Broadband Plan and the wider NDP, benefit the economy as quickly as possible.

Encourage non-Exchequer finance for infrastructure and publish a new Public Private Partnership (PPP) pipeline: The existing NDP is excessively reliant on Exchequer funding and fails to optimise the benefits of other financing options. The NDP review must include the publication of a new PPP pipeline to include major transport, housing, education and health projects.

Ramp up regional development investments:
The National Planning Framework should be fully delivered to support regional investment and a new €200 million annual town growth fund should be rolled out to support the revitalisation of town centres. Funding for urban and rural regeneration should also be accelerated.
Reimagine a better Ireland

Support remote working:
A combination of tax relief and other supports should be put in place in order to incentivise greater levels of home and remote working.

Develop a social progress indicator model to measure national well-being:
Ireland should be a global leader in seeking to supplement measures of economic prosperity with a wider social progress indicator model.

Improve quality and deliver greater funding for childcare:
The Early Learning and Care Services (ELC) needs to be put on a sustainable funding footing and requires a more effective and streamlined inspectorate model. These changes are essential in order to deliver a higher quality childcare service.

Prioritise and resource the digital opportunity:
A whole of Government approach, led by a new Minister for Digital Affairs, should prioritise cybersecurity, digital innovation, adoption of digital in education and public services, and include adequately resourced digital and AI roadmaps.

Step up our sustainability ambition:
The Climate Action Bill should be adopted immediately by the new Government and it should work with social partners to build consensus for an ambitious, cost-effective and equitable emissions reduction pathway. Through a new Circular Economy Action Plan Ireland should aim to become a world leader in resource efficiency and innovative value creation.

Roll out an ambitious national deep retrofit programme:
Deploy a new delivery and financing model, increase annual funding to €600m, and use the recovery phase to begin upgrading large sections of our building stock to B1 and A BER ratings.
Seize international opportunities and respond to Brexit

Advocate for open and progressive EU policies:
Further developing the EU Single Market, particularly for digital and other services, will be important to boost economic recovery.

Ensure flexibility in EU rules to support recovery:
This should include revisions to the EU fiscal rules in order to support investment and ongoing flexibility in the EU State Aid rules in order to facilitate targeted sectoral recovery plans.

Leveraging EU funding sources to finance recovery and growth:
Government must ensure business has clear pathways to the supports available through the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other funding sources.

Promote internationalisation and the benefits of free trade in a post-Brexit context: Key priorities must be a successful conclusion to negotiations on a Future EU-UK relationship and removing tariffs imposed on transatlantic trade.

Protect and develop the all-island economy:
Our post-Brexit relationship with the UK must facilitate both North-South and East-West trade.
Our Approach

How was Reboot & Reimagine developed?
This campaign is the culmination of input from a broad range of stakeholders across Ibec’s membership. Over 550 CEOs responded to an Ibec survey providing insights on the present and future impact of COVID-19 on the Irish business model. In addition, business of all sizes and activity engaged through the Ibec Board, National Council and policy committees. We also listened to the challenges and opportunities identified by Ibec’s 36 Trade Associations, sector by sector, who were actively engaged in the development of this campaign.

How can Ibec members support Reboot & Reimagine?
It is critical that business uses consistent messaging and language to influence the development of a better Ireland. The Reboot & Reimagine campaign provides a set of recommendations and a confident narrative for business to communicate. Ibec member companies are vital in ensuring these important recommendations are acted upon, and we encourage members to galvanise the Reboot & Reimagine campaign by sharing these recommendations within their business with employees and externally with those they seek to influence within the wider community.

What’s next?
Ibec will continue to leverage its position as Ireland’s largest lobby group to secure political and stakeholder support for the Reboot & Reimagine recommendations. This will be done through a series of events, media and strategic political outreach, digital and ongoing member engagement.

With great uncertainty ahead, the scale of the challenge cannot be underestimated but collaboration and confidence in addressing the problems through the Reboot & Reimagine campaign offers a significant opportunity for societal and economic sustainability for decades to come.
An Ibec Campaign

For more on Ibec’s campaign to Reboot & Reimagine go to www.ibec.ie/rebootreimagine