



**Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
via website**

Date: 15th March 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Public Consultation- Development of a National semiconductor Strategy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

County Kildare Chamber is the business organisation in Kildare, proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic and sustainable growth. Representing an employer base of 400 businesses and over 42,000 employees across the county, County Kildare Chamber is the largest business organisation in the mid-east region of Ireland.

Given the significant breadth and depth of our membership, and our representation on various bodies at local and national level, County Kildare Chamber constitutes the representative voice for business in Kildare.

2.0 SUBMISSION

The Semiconductor industry in Ireland has deep roots tracing back to Analog Devices' establishment in Limerick in 1976. However, it wasn't until 1989, when Intel's European manufacturing & technology Headquarters, in Leixlip, Kildare came into being, that Ireland truly asserted itself as a key player in the global semiconductor landscape.

Over nearly four decades since the inception of 'Silicon Ireland,' the industry has flourished into a dynamic ecosystem of innovation and collaboration. This ecosystem encompasses seasoned engineers, skilled graduates, researchers, and a mix of multinational and indigenous companies, actively engaged across every stage of the semiconductor value chain, from initial design to fabrication.

Furthermore, bolstering this ecosystem is the steadfast support of local, regional and national stakeholders, which champion the semiconductor industry's growth and development. With their backing, Ireland is well-positioned to capitalise on the European

Commission's ambitious investment plans for microchip production and R&D. This strategic initiative not only presents an unprecedented opportunity for the industry's expansion but also underscores Ireland's pivotal role in driving semiconductor innovation on a global scale.

In February 2023, County Kildare Chamber wrote to the Minister of Enterprise, highlighting the significant opportunities presented by the European Chips Act. This ambitious plan, announced by the European Commission, aims to invest in microchip production, research, and development within the semiconductor sector. The timing of this initiative was crucial, given the concerns across member states, including Ireland, regarding the lack of secure microchip supply within the Union.

Under the European Chips Act, a substantial fund exceeding €45 billion is earmarked for member states. The objective is to double chip production by 2030, positioning Europe as a formidable competitor against key players such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. This initiative is particularly timely amid geopolitical tensions, notably between China and Taiwan, underscoring the importance of securing a resilient supply chain.

Opportunities and Challenges:

A secure supply of semiconductor chips is integral to Europe's digitalisation and green strategies, impacting various sectors ranging from transportation to healthcare. Microchips play a pivotal role in driving technological advancements, including artificial intelligence, 5G/6G communications, and the Internet of Things. County Kildare Chamber advocates for maximising Ireland's participation in the funding stream to bolster research, innovation, and workforce development within the semiconductor industry.

Kildare is strategically positioned to emerge as a key player in Europe's semiconductor landscape. The success of Intel in the northern region of the county, supported by an ecosystem of sectoral service contracting industries, underscores Kildare's potential. With abundant zoned land and a skilled workforce, Kildare is poised to establish advanced chip design and production facilities, leveraging its proximity to a world-class university in Maynooth.

Establishing Ireland as a semiconductor manufacturing powerhouse requires collaborative efforts among governments, technology owners, manufacturers, and end-users. Kildare stands ready to capitalise on its existing expertise, available land, and talent pool to drive innovation and economic growth within the semiconductor industry.

3.0 CONCLUSION

County Kildare Chamber is the largest business organisations outside of our cities. Our membership base is diverse and unique as Kildare is a growing county with a talented

population that is attractive for foreign direct investment and indigenous companies to locate/relocate to.

Our proximity to Dublin, its port and airport ensures Kildare continues to welcome investment. This ensures that the Chamber along with all key stakeholders in the region continue to work and collaborate, meaning business has every opportunity to thrive and success in Kildare.

County Kildare Chamber emphasises the imperative of seizing the opportunities presented by the European Chips Act to propel Ireland, and particularly Kildare, to the forefront of semiconductor manufacturing in Europe. Through strategic investments and partnerships, Ireland can solidify its position as a leading member state in semiconductor innovation, with Kildare serving as a key beneficiary of this transformative endeavor.

County Kildare Chamber looks forward to working with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to deliver a successful outcome for Kildare and the country, and we are available at all times for consultation, discussion and support.

Yours faithfully,



Sinéad Ronan
Chief Executive
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