



Building Better Boards

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Executive Summary

- ▶ A carefully planned approach to board appointments can lead to more strategically focused boards and enhance board performance, which will in turn deliver better outcomes for stakeholders.
- ▶ The Board Secretary is ideally placed to ensure the nominations process results in well composed Board which will steer delivery of the strategic objectives of the entity.
- ▶ Governance Codes have enhanced the tools available to the Board Secretary in the quest to build and shape better boards.

It is what you know.....



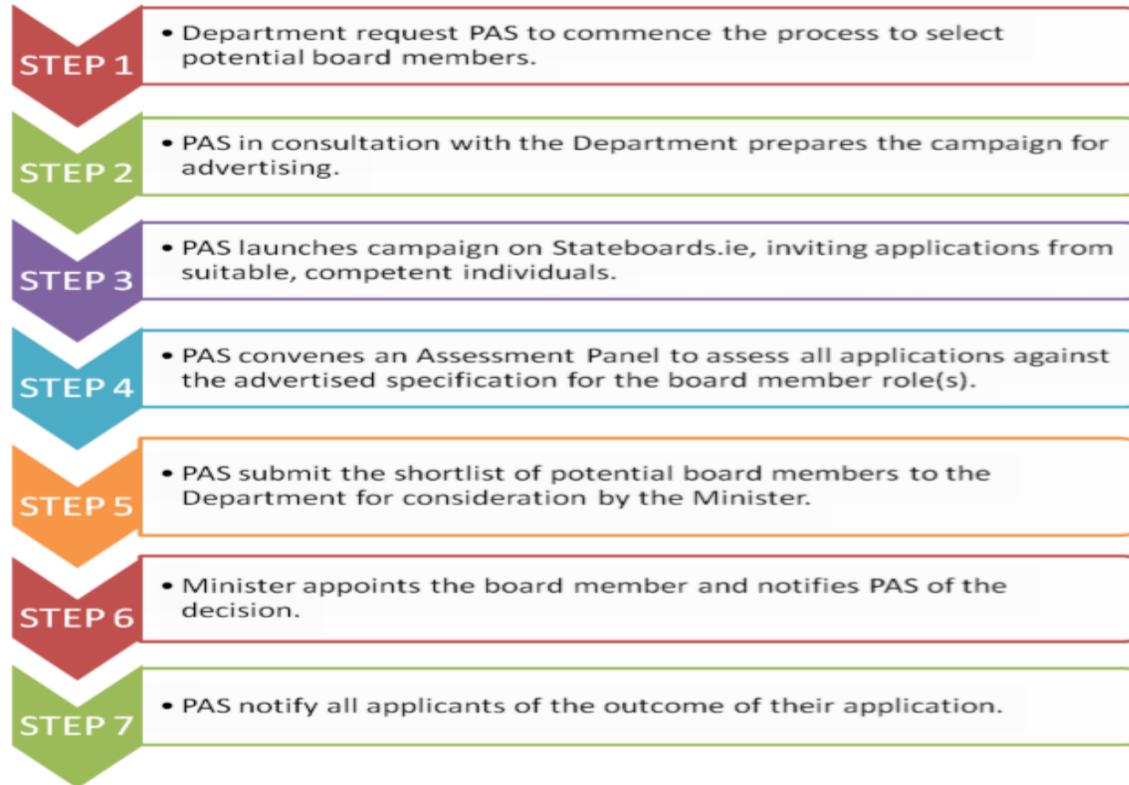
- ▶ The nominations process has come a long way since the old jobs for the boys mentality but it requires strategic planning and robust scrutiny to ensure that progress continues.

Not who you know.....

- ▶ Guidelines issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2014 required that all* appointments to State Boards should:
 - a) be advertised openly on the State Boards portal operated by the Public Appointment Service ("PAS");
 - b) meet specific and detailed criteria determined by the relevant Minister as necessary for the effective performance of the relevant role(s); and
 - c) be processed by way of a transparent assessment system designed and implemented by PAS to support the relevant Minister in making appointments to State Boards under his/her remit.
- ▶ The object was to yield candidates who were accomplished, experienced and qualified and who wished to make a commitment to public service that might not have been previously identified as available for appointment to State Boards.

*ESB, Eirvia, EirGrid, Irish Water, Board na Mona and Coillte are exempt.

Getting there.....



The brightest and best.....

- ▶ The specification provided to PAS must set out key requirements for the board role(s) including:-
 - necessary skills, knowledge and expertise;
 - breadth of experience and required sectoral/stakeholder expertise;
 - other desirable skills of existing Board members(s);
 - diversity, geographical balance, international membership;
 - personal attributes.



This is our moment.....

- ▶ The Board Secretary can assist with the nominations process by helping to ensure the role specification supplied to PAS captures the relevant skills so that the Board is composed of the requisite talent to execute against the strategic objectives of the organisation in the short, medium and longer term and uphold the right culture at Board level.
- ▶ A key tool in selecting the right candidate is development of a comprehensive skills matrix which is clearly linked to the vision and strategic plan for the entity.
- ▶ The skills matrix should be reviewed and refreshed as the organisation evolves.
- ▶ Board members skills should be documented within the matrix and gaps identified to prepare role specifications for recruitment and to feed into succession planning for key roles e.g. Board Chair.
- ▶ Having the right skills matrix is crucial so that the short list of candidates submitted by PAS to the department will deliver the required skills, knowledge and attributes.

Are we there yet.....

- ▶ The Board Secretary can facilitate a board evaluation process which is linked with the board skills matrix and is in a position to highlight considerations regarding Board tenure and diversity to the Board through the Chair.
- ▶ Along with making sure nominations and succession is on the Board agenda, the Board Secretary will also be able to advise on emerging best practice.
- ▶ With scrutiny of public expenditure and board level oversight and accountability continuing to receive more and more focus the Board Secretary can and should be a guardian of good governance in the nominations process.

Thank you.