

PRESS RELEASE

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Ireland can become a global games hub for the 21st century- Forfás

Major new report highlights actions to drive growth in Ireland's games sector

Forfás has today (10 October 2011) published a major new report on the games sector entitled, *The Games Sector in Ireland: An Action Plan for Growth*.

The report highlights the potential for Ireland in the video and electronic games sector and identifies issues fundamental to its future success and competitiveness. According to the report, the games industry globally is expected to grow to \$82.4 billion by 2015, driven by the continuing transition to online and mobile distribution channels and a widening player demographic. It states that Ireland has the potential to more than double its employment in core games activities to 4,500 people if actions are taken to position Ireland as one of the most progressive and digitally advanced business environments.

The study was prepared at the request of Richard Bruton, TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise, and Innovation and in coordination with Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland.

Launching the report, Minister Bruton said:

“This government has identified digital games as a target with particularly high potential for jobs growth in the coming years. The global industry is predicted to be worth \$82 billion by 2015, and we in Ireland could create jobs in the sector for an extra 2,500 within three years.

“That is why I asked Forfás to prepare a plan outlining specific actions that government can take to ensure that we take full advantage of this potential. I am determined to work hard with my colleagues across Government to deliver on this plan and ensure that the digital games sector can make a real contribution to growing jobs again”.

Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive, Forfás commented “The potential for this sector is immense with potential job gains of 2,500 by end 2014 across a range of activities including games servicing and development. Games can also be a catalyst for growth in a host of other related activities in the digital economy including social networks, search engines, animation, film and video and e-learning. Success for Ireland in the games sector, however, is not a given and will require a step-change in policy and decisive action. The digital economy, of which the games sector is a pioneering force, is different: the sheer pace of change within it, the confluence of creativity, technology and commercial acumen, the revolutionised business models and novel monetisation strategies, the integral role that the customer plays in innovation, and the shifting dynamics through partnerships, mergers and acquisitions. It demands a more anticipatory, agile and responsive approach to meet its future needs. Effective implementation of the actions outlined in our report will provide companies with the right environment not just for the games sector but in the wider digital economy.”

Also speaking on the launch the Chief Executives of Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland both welcomed the report.

Frank Ryan, Chief Executive, Enterprise Ireland said, “Ireland has not only attracted some of the sector’s major global players but we have also home grown companies that have achieved global recognition including Havok, Demonware and Jolt Online, along with a new strong cluster of content related games start-ups. With a truly connected digital cluster and the right business environment we can tap into the commitment and energy of innovative enterprises to maximise the potential of this exciting digital sector.”

“In addition to a worldwide reputation for innovation, creativity and technology there are many tangible reasons why Ireland will succeed further in the games sector. The depth of our competencies in areas such as software engineering, wireless and internet technologies, global customer relationship management, localisation and analytics allied with a pro-business environment means that Ireland has all the key ingredients for growth,” commented Barry O’Leary, Chief Executive, IDA Ireland.

The report identifies opportunities for Ireland in a number of areas, including creative game development, advanced game services, enabling software and technology solutions and the exploitation of intellectual property (IP). Actions to support this potential focus on six key areas:

1. **Developing an International Cluster** - stimulating connectedness between related sectors, nationally and internationally.
2. **Enhancing Skills and experience** - addressing short term needs and building a continuous feed-stock of creative, technological and commercial capabilities.
3. **Accelerating growth in creative content development** - attracting and developing the talent pool - creating the dynamic environment.
4. **Building International Visibility** - raising Ireland’s visibility as a vibrant location for the games sector.
5. **Driving R&D and Innovation** - incentivising innovation within Irish based firms, anticipating future needs.
6. **Delivering Next Generation Broadband** - underpinning future growth with the provision of widely available, competitively priced advanced broadband services to homes and businesses.

The full report is available on the Forfás website www.forfas.ie

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The following sets out an initial plan of action based on the recommendations outlined in the report.

Ref	Action
Developing an International Cluster	
1.1	Establish dedicated cluster development team
1.2	Develop and implement an industry-led short term talent exchange between companies

Enhancing Skills and Experience	
2.1	Maintain a competitive tax wedge
2.2	Review the Special Assignment Relief Programme and/or alternative tax policy options
2.3	Progress the measures in the forthcoming Action Plan to Address High Level ICT Skills Recruitment Needs
2.4	Ensure the HEA Skills Conversion Programme Review is cognisant of the needs of the game sector
2.5	Promote a coordinated approach to CPD
2.6	Increase HEI/industry collaboration in design and modification of courses
2.7	Introduce a pilot game development/publishing Hothouse Initiative for undergraduate & PLC courses
2.8	Promote games as a career option through roadshows/fairs, working collaboratively with other relevant bodies (e.g. ICT Ireland)
2.9	Promote awareness at primary & secondary school
2.10	Consider introduction of game-based learning in schools
Accelerating Growth in Creative Content Development	
3.1	Determine the scope, rationale and benefit of introducing a new financial instrument/ relief to incentivise creative content development
3.2	Review & expand the EI Competitive Start Fund
3.3	Enhance mutual understanding of games industry & VC perspectives
3.4	Establish a games specific International Advisory Panel
Building International Visibility	
4.1	Develop & promote a coordinated marketing proposition for the sector
4.2	Host international games events in Ireland
Driving R&D and Innovation	
5.1	Increase awareness of R&D supports - guide & workshop
5.2	Review the role of social sciences in games industry RD&I
5.3	Promote academic /games industry engagement & collaboration in research
5.4	Address inefficiencies & costs of litigation in relation to copyright
5.5	Promote reform of copyright law at EU level
Delivering Next Generation Broadband	
6.1	Facilitate the availability of & access to competitively priced next generation broadband network

For further information

Aideen Fitzgerald, Forfás

Tel: 01 607 3020

Mobile: 087 2432140

About Forfás

Forfás is Ireland's policy advisory board for enterprise, trade, science, technology and innovation. It provides independent and rigorous research, advice and support in the areas of enterprise and science policy. This work informs the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and wider Government. Forfás works with IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Science Foundation Ireland to ensure the coherence of policies across the enterprise development agencies.

The published advice of Forfás in 2010 is available at www.forfas.ie

Forfás manages the work of and provides research and analytical support to:

- Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation www.sciencecouncil.ie
- Expert Group on Future Skills Needs www.skillsireland.ie
- National Competitiveness Council www.competitiveness.ie

Forfás manages the national awareness programme, Discover Science and Engineering (DSE), the accreditation services of the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) and hosts the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser to Government.

An overview of INAB is available at www.inab.ie

An overview of Discover Science and Engineering is available at www.discover-science.ie