BORD PLEANÁLA
DATE 1530 BY IDA RL West
22 JAN
ATTACHED DM. FROM
RA0033

IDA Ireland West Region
Submission to An Bord Pleanála Oral Hearing for Galway Port Extension
Submission by Catherina Blewitt

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you here today. Briefly, to introduce myself and the organisation I represent, my name is Catherina Blewitt and I am IDA Ireland's West Regional Manager.

Role of IDA Ireland

IDA Ireland is the State Agency appointed with the responsibility of winning and fostering Foreign Direct Investment ('FDI') for Ireland. These investments span across a full spectrum of activities including manufacturing, research development and innovation, and services which result in significant capital investment and the creation of sustainable employment by the FDI client companies. As Ireland's inward investment promotion agency, we partner with established companies, both, large and small, working with them every step of the way to achieve a smooth, fast and successful set-up of their operations in Ireland.

Impact & Importance of FDI

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been a major contributor to Ireland's economic development over the past 30 years and FDI has a significant impact on the wider economy. At the end of 2014, there are 1,195 IDA firms who employ 174,488 people – This is the highest number of companies and highest number of people employed in FDI companies EVER. There were over 10,000 jobs in construction in 2014 as a result of FDI activity. Foreign multi-national client companies in the IDA portfolio account for over 70% of Irish exports at €124.5 billion annually in goods and services with an expenditure of €22.4bn in the Irish economy (up 8% on 2012) and supporting 300,000 jobs. FDI companies spend €8.5billion on payroll and c.66% of corporation tax in Ireland is paid by IDA client companies. Overseas companies also provide significant benefits to the Irish economy in terms of productivity, management skills development, and general skills development. Furthermore, the presence of world class companies in Ireland boosts the momentum of innovation, not just in our third level institutions but also with our indigenous entrepreneurs who take advantage of the ecosystem that these firms create.

Galway & FDI

Galway as a location has been very successful over the last few years especially when one considers these to have been the most challenging from a global economic perspective and 2014 was a very buoyant year in terms of FDI investment in Galway. Currently, there are over 60 IDA supported companies in Galway, employing almost 14,000 people in permanent and contract employment. The number of FDI companies has increased from 50 in 2009 to over 60 currently, with employment rising in these companies each year in that period which is significant, considering the challenging circumstances, both nationally and internationally, that we have been operating in during these years.

The FDI sector is contributing to the regeneration of the Irish economy nationwide and here in Galway through export-led growth based on innovation. However, with the current and anticipated levels of international competition for FDI, a key component of IDA's and Ireland's future success is the ability to respond flexibly and effectively to the changing strategic needs of international investment. Inward investment can continue to make a substantial contribution to Ireland's economic development if we continue to create the right conditions and environment that meet the needs of today's globalised businesses.

A pervasive trend globally is the accelerating 'young economy' dynamic: companies are mobile at a much earlier stage in their lifecycle and need multi-territory presence for growth. Entrepreneurs are searching for the optimum start-up location from which to grow global businesses and want to be part of an ecosystem that provides access to skills, finance, innovative suppliers and customers. The phenomenon of the 'tech hub' has become well established and cities internationally are vying for the attention of fast growing young firms, entrepreneurs and talent. And it is not just about the fast growing young firms; well established MNCs are drawn to technology hot-spots to access talent and the ideas emerging from innovative start-ups. Availability of talent features strongly in location selection. It is essential that Galway develops so that it will be an attractive place for FDI companies to locate in and also to attract internationally mobile talent to live in. There is a strong interdependency between the creation of an attractive environment and enterprise development. Another requirement for IDA to ensure we remain competitive and attractive to mobile FDI is the need for the availability of quality property solutions within an infrastructure rich environment, which forms a vital component of Irelands National Value Proposition. For these reasons we strongly support this proposal as we want to ensure that Galway can continue to compete for world class mobile FDI and talent and we want to ensure that this area in Galway City Centre which will emerge when the extended port is opened and the commercial shipping leaves the inner dock area will become a thriving district, a revitalised "Harbour Village" which will create employment opportunities because of it's attractiveness as a "Tech Hub", high quality property solutions, home to both foreign and domestic investors, with an International reputation for innovation, while also accommodating dynamic mixed uses, commercial, residential and community needs consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

IDA Ireland & Enterprise Ireland made a joint submission in favour of the development of Galway Port as we consider that the approval of the expansion of Galway Port will in our view

- Be an investment in Galway's future
- Strongly enhance the economic infrastructure for the West of Ireland
- Will help to act as a counter pull to the eastern side of the country and Support Regional Development which is a Government priority
- Currently, the working area of Galway Harbour is restricted in size and by tidal movements. Whilst Galway Harbour Company continues to operate the port on a commercial basis and several companies use Galway Port and find it an important element in their business operations, the existing constraints are seriously inhibiting the potential for the continued growth of the Port and the potential development of the City. We welcome the proposed extension of the Harbour which will allow Galway Port to sustain a competitive and viable port operation.
- Since the economic downturn started, Ireland has seen the importance of exporters to the country and in recent years, significant numbers of jobs have been created by these exporters. As an exporting nation, getting goods & services to international markets in a cost effective and timely manner is critical for future success.
- The proposed extension will facilitate the removal of all existing oil handling, storage and commercial port operations to a new location, away from the Inner Harbour, thus improving the visual amenity of the City thereby allowing the potential for potential modern mixed use re-development of the existing harbour frontage. The potential to redevelop the inner harbour area with high spec grade I office type developments required by indigenous and FDI companies located on the waterfront along with a mix of commercial, residential and tourism uses will make this a very attractive area and improve the vibrancy of Galway City. It will assist Galway's growth as a 'Tech Hub' allowing the development of the necessary modern infrastructure, office space, mixed dynamic environment in a city centre location.

- This development will underpin jobs in the local economy and help to act as a stimulus to further job creation across the region which is very important at this time

In conclusion, IDA Ireland & Enterprise Ireland consider the development of Galway Port, as complying with all appropriate planning requirements, see it as an important development for Galway as the Gateway to the wider West of Ireland and is one that we support fully. We consider that the Galway Harbour Extension will bring many significant benefits to Galway City and the wider West Region.