

IRISH SPORT CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO INVEST IN SPORTING JOBS

- **Submission asks Government to invest ONE Euro for every citizen in fund to create jobs.**
- **Sport seeks €4.58 million – but notes €1.5 million will go back to Exchequer in taxes.**
- **Fund to create jobs and deliver participation programmes**
- **Sport confident that 150 jobs can be created immediately**

Irish sport has appealed to the Government to invest a total of €4.58 million – one euro for every citizen – in a fund specifically designed to create jobs in sport. The appeal is at the core of a pre-budget submission by the Federation of Irish Sport, the representative body for the governing bodies of all of the major sports in Ireland. Copies of the submission were delivered to the Government earlier today, Wednesday 25th September 2013.

The submission makes the case for more investment in sport – but investment specifically targeted at creating jobs and using those jobs to generate more participation in sport. The Federation notes that Government funding for sport has been cut by 33% over the past five years. It calls on the Government to reverse this process and to invest in sport – but to invest specifically in creating more jobs in sport. The Federation argues that a combination of these jobs with funding to create more participation programmes in sport will be an investment for the future. This ties in with the stated objective contained in the “Programme for Government 2011 - 2016” which provides:

“In future sports funding should prioritise projects which further greater participation in sport on a local and national level.”

The Federation points to the fact that over 2,000 young people graduate annually with a sports related qualification but that currently few, if any, of those graduates can find work in Ireland due to the continuous cuts. This is despite the fact that in the UK sport & leisure is a significant source of employment for young people with 21% of all 16 – 25 year olds working in sport.

The Federation goes on to point out that research amongst the 100 plus organisations they represent has shown that over 150 jobs could be created immediately if there was funding available.

In calling for the Government to stop cutting sports funding and to invest in the jobs initiative the Federation has looked for a specific sum - €4.58 million, which the Federation points out is the equivalent of just ONE euro for every person in the country. The submission details that government investment in sport currently amounts to €9.42 per citizen.

Speaking of the submission, Sarah O'Connor, CEO of the Federation of Irish Sport, said that the Federation had decided to concentrate on a single issue in its submission. “The cuts of recent years have hit sport hard. Sport was very much an emerging sector when the recession hit and Irish Sport now stands on a knife edge. Further reductions in funding could send Irish Sport backwards fast.

We are aware of the need to create jobs and know that sport as a growth sector not just in Ireland but across the EU, with real capacity to develop other niche sectors of the economy,

can contribute to this effort at a relatively low cost to Government. This has been recognised by the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU which is prioritising sport stating that they intend to put forward proposals for adoption relating to sport as an impetus for economic growth and employment. Therefore, whilst we continue to work on other initiatives which we feel will help sport maximise the potential return it can make to Ireland, this year we have made jobs the focus of our submission.”

“We are confident that sport can create jobs and also sustain them in the long term. The additional funding sought should be viewed as seed capital for what is an indigenous industry. The Federation has identified that in the area of development officers alone sport could create up to 150 jobs almost immediately. We are conscious that these need to be sustained – hence our call for one third of the fund to be invested in participation programmes that will go along with the jobs. We believe these programme can become self-funding over time and will also help generate revenue to help ensure the jobs become permanent.”

“We specifically asked for €4.58 million as that represents an investment of ONE euro per citizen. And the good news for the Government is that an estimated €1.5 million of the fund will go straight back to the Exchequer in PRSI, PAYE and VAT. The estimated cost per job is therefore €25,000 which, compares very favourably with €167,000 per job in the “Infrastructure Stimulus” announced in July 2013.”

While the jobs fund is at the heart of the submission the document also points out the overall importance of sport to Ireland as an industry. It notes that:-

- Irish sport supports 40,532 jobs.
- Sport contributes €2.4 billion to the Irish economy (EU Study).
- Sport is a growth industry. There has been a 27% increase in the number of people working as professional athletes since 2006 (compared to an 18% growth in the number of accountants over the same period)
- 5,722 people are now employed as professional athletes and sports officials compared to the 6,093 people working as authors, writers and journalists
- Sport delivers 938 jobs for every million invested by Government compared to 443 in the Arts and 381 in the Horse and Greyhound industries.
- Irish sports clubs spend €818 million annually.
- 19% of all The Gathering events were sports related.
- Sports Tourism generates returns of more than €850 million annually
- 254,000 Irish residents travelled domestically to sports events in 2012 with a total expenditure of €49.4 million

A copy of the submission is attached. It can also be downloaded at www.irishsport.ie