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The Drinks Industry Group of Ireland (DIGI) has published a new report, Beverage Exports 2000-2011, by Anthony Foley of Dublin City University Business School, detailing the value of Irish alcohol drinks exports at over €1 billion.

The report shows that the impact of beverage exports on the domestic economy far outweighs other products manufactured in Ireland for international markets, due to the high level of locally sourced inputs. The report also shows that while the United Kingdom and North America continue to be the main markets for Irish beverages overseas, that there is major potential for additional sales to China, India and other major emerging markets.

In this regard, DIGI said that given that the Government has identified exports as central to our economic recovery, the industry will work closely with them to build on current successes, identify new markets for its products, and remove any barriers to trade that exist in some of these emerging economies.

The Chairman of DIGI, Kieran Tobin, said that he was very pleased that the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Shane McEntee TD, was in attendance at today's event at the Old Jameson Distillery, Smithfield, to officially launch the report.

Mr Tobin commented, 'This report details the extent to which the Irish drinks industry is responsible for some of Ireland's most celebrated and internationally recognised brands which are available in over 100 markets overseas. For a small country such as Ireland, to be in the top 12 global drinks exporters is something of which we should be extremely proud.

'Our drinks exports are therefore a major national success story, with a current value in excess of €1 billion. While there was a modest slowdown in export performance in 2011, according to initial CSO data, following a strong 11% growth in 2010, current estimates for 2012 and beyond are very encouraging.

'The challenge for the industry is to continue to build on this success and constantly identify new target markets for our products. We look forward to doing so along with Minister McEntee and his colleagues in Government.'

The author of the report, Anthony Foley, added, 'Ireland continues to over-perform in terms of beverage exports. In terms of international position Ireland is ranked 11th in order of size of alcohol exports compared to 33rd for overall merchandise exports. The Irish share of world alcohol exports is 2.4% compared with 0.8% for overall merchandise exports.'

'The value of these exports increased each year from 2000 to 2003 when it reached €1 billion in value for the first time. This peaked in 2007 when over €1.3 billion worth of products were exported, and while there have been declines in recent years due to the international recession, the future remains positive given the wider success of Irish food and drink products in key global markets.'

Mr Tobin concluded, 'It is important to remember that the success of Irish drinks exports is founded on a solid domestic market that provides over 60,000 jobs in the manufacture, distribution and sale of alcohol. The drinks industry is also a major contributor to tourism - a further strong earner of overseas revenue - through its pubs, its brands and visitor centres. We should therefore seek to support this important sector of the national economy to the greatest extent possible to assist our much-needed export-led economic recovery.'

For full report follow link: <http://www.drinksindustry.ie/easyedit/files/DIGI%20Exports%20Report%20APRIL%202012.pdf>