



Firms encouraged to apply for Tech Tour

CIARA O'BRIEN

IRISH COMPANIES are being invited to apply for a place in an event that helps match growing IT companies with leading venture capital and global corporate firms which have potential investment capital of €10 billion at their disposal.

The European Tech Tour 2010, takes place in Dublin between April 27th and April 29th.

President of the Britain and Ireland Tech Tour Victor Basta said the tour had a specific focus.

"There's quite a lot of funds that have moved on to investing in later-stage growth companies," Mr Basta said, "and so we're trying map that, reflect the market.

"We're doing less focus on pure start-ups and very early stage companies, again because the investment climate is such that investors are focused on companies that are already built and developed - growth companies rather than start-ups."

The event has already attracted significant interest, including from Irish firms. Applicants will be reviewed and reduced to a short list of about 30 firms.

These candidates will have the chance to present to the audience, which includes executives from blue-chip technology companies, venture capital firms and investment bankers.

Mr Basta said the tour was particularly interested in companies from the Republic and Northern Ireland, with the opportunity to find less well-known companies that offer future potential.

Merrion Pharma took part in the Tech Tour in 2004.

Chief executive John Lynch said it was an important move for the firm and one that enabled it to make useful contacts.

"It was one of the first things we got involved in of an international nature," Mr Lynch said. "It was early in our progress to be given that sort of exposure, but I think it was useful. We've progressed an awful long way since then."

He said the experience of pitching to the tour was invaluable.

"You really have to capture people's attention in that period of time, so you have to funnel down your offering into something

pretty pithy and deliver it with some gusto and enthusiasm," he said.

"You have the opportunity to follow up with some of them afterwards and make more detailed presentations."

However, firms who want to apply to take part have less than two weeks to get their names in as applications close on February 15th.

For more information see <http://www.techtour.com>