



# Directors critical of Government

**LAURA SLATTERY**

**MORE THAN** half of company directors say the Government "does not have sufficient understanding" of the economic crisis to fix it, according to a survey by the Institute of Directors in Ireland (IoD).

Three out of five directors said they believed the Government did not have the ability to lead the Irish economy out of its current predicament.

However, less than half of the 240 chief executives and other directors polled said they believed a change of Government would restore business confidence.

"On the one hand, directors are saying they do not have confidence in the political leadership, but on the other hand, it's not a very real endorsement for change," said Maura Quinn, chief executive of the IoD.

Asked who was responsible for the economic crisis, two-thirds of directors (67 per cent) cited the Government, while 60 per cent said the banks were responsible.

A quarter said they blamed regulators, while one in five (19 per cent) attributed responsibility to society as a whole. Some 16 per cent hold property developers responsible.

Company directors have themselves been identified by the Government as a contributing factor to the financial crisis.

Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan said last year that there was "too many incestuous relationships" in Irish corporate culture and indicated that he would ban certain practices, including cross-directorships.

Ms Quinn said the IoD had contributed to the wider corporate governance debate and that this did not have a bearing on directors' sentiment towards the Government.

"I don't think the message here is 'we feel harshly done by'. I think it's a stronger message about a lack of business confidence," Ms Quinn said.

Companies that had concentrated on keeping their costs down in 2009 have now moved on to addressing their competitive posi-

tion in the marketplace, she added.

The survey was carried out by researchers Behaviour & Attitudes.