

Reuters 15th September 2010

UPDATE 1-InterQuest results boosted by financial sector demand



[ITQ.L](#) 58.00 +3.00

[LSE.L](#) 689.00 -11.00

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- * H1 pretax profit up 16 pct
- * H1 revenue rises 12 pct
- * To pay interim dividend of 0.5p vs 1p last year
- * Sees insurance sector demand holding through rest of yr
- * Sees FY trading in line with expectations (Adds details)

Sept 15 (Reuters) - British IT staffing firm InterQuest Group posted a 16 percent rise in first-half pretax profit, helped by growth in banking and finance services sectors, and forecast demand in the insurance sector holding through the year.

The company, which saw a drop in net fee income from the public sector, said it would pay an interim dividend of 0.5 pence, compared with a maiden payout of 1 pence last year.

"We look forward to meeting the challenges ahead and expect full-year trading to be in line with expectations," InterQuest's key shareholder and Chairman Gary Ashworth said in a statement.

British public sector job opportunities in IT have fallen markedly since the start of the year, in a sign that the government's austerity drive is already affecting the labour market.

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For the January-June period, InterQuest reported a pretax profit of 1.1 million pounds (\$1.71 million), compared with 913,000 pounds a year ago.

Revenue rose 12 percent to 55.3 million pounds, while that from banking and financial services were up about 48 percent.

InterQuest had net debt of 2.7 million pounds at end-June.

The company's shares, which have gained more than 16 percent since the beginning of the year, closed at 59.5 pence on Tuesday on the London Stock Exchange (LSE: [LSE.L](#) - [news](#)). (\$1=.6438 Pound) (Reporting by Aditi Samajpati in Bangalore; Editing by Maju Samuel)