



**fDi**  
IPA Innovation  
Awards 2013

**fDi's INAUGURAL INNOVATION AWARDS RECOGNISE THE  
WORLD'S MOST CREATIVE INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCIES**

**W**hen it comes to innovation, the Irish do it best. That is the finding of **fDi's** worldwide search for the most unique, ground-breaking and creative investment promotion techniques.

With fewer greenfield projects on offer and yet more viable investment destinations in the mix, attracting investment is only getting tougher. Among the most difficult tasks facing investment promotion agencies (IPAs) is finding ways to differentiate their locations from their competitors. This is where an innovative approach becomes essential. Just as companies must innovate to compete, so must economic developers.

Innovative strategies can be found the world over, as **fDi** discovered in this exercise, but they appear to be found in greatest density in Ireland, with IDA Ireland already well established as one of the world's savviest investment agencies, a new organisation, ConnectIreland, pushing the envelop with a novel approach to lead generation and even its recruitment firms getting enthusiastically behind the effort.

What marks out the Irish FDI initiatives is their combination of sound and thorough strategies – all bases are covered, from multimedia and traditional marketing to lead generation to aftercare – with a sense of fun. It is FDI, with a feisty Celtic flair, and it works.

**fDi** columnist Douglas Clark, director of site selection and FDI consultancy Location Connections, who assisted with the judging, was pleased to see locations using their smart-city development plans to leverage investment. “By using the ‘urban labora-

tory’ offer, they are tapping in to a huge emerging market of smart infrastructure investors and services providers,” he says.

He also noted the growing importance of tech start-ups as a key target segment for some locations but was surprised that only a few agencies are offering business matchmaking services, as many FDI projects in which he is involved are seeking a good local partner to help start up the business, “and this is an area where IPAs could add a lot of value”.

Likewise he was dismayed that many agencies crowded about their internal processes rather than how they were seeking out and capturing good market opportunities.

“Just because you have started using a new customer relationship management system doesn't make you instantly innovative – it is all about what you do with it to engage effectively with the market,” he says.

#### **Methodology**

In order to compile **fDi's** IPA Innovation Awards 2013, **fDi** invited those entities charged with FDI promotion to complete an online survey detailing their most innovative strategies. As investment promotion is a highly competitive and increasingly challenging endeavour, **fDi** wanted to identify those entities that stood out from the crowd. The aim was to identify those entities that offer more than just a ‘one-stop shop’ for FDI services.

**fDi** received 55 submissions. This information was then considered by **fDi's** editorial team, along with Jacqueline Walls, senior investment analyst for **fDi** Intelligence, and Douglas Clark.



**Overall winners**

**National**  
IDA Ireland

**Regional**  
Copenhagen

**City**  
Barcelona

**Free zone**  
Lodz

**Non-governmental**  
ConnectIreland

**Honourable mention**  
Morgan McKinley

**Aftercare**

**City of Hamilton**

The City of Hamilton’s economic development team is not afraid to work the phones to make sure existing investors are happy. As part of the ‘Hamilton Calling’ programme, staff members claim to have visited more than 1000 companies in the past four years, conducting detailed interviews. “This provides us with a means of assessing and responding to the needs, opportunities and trends of our business community in a pro-active manner – more importantly it enables us to understand the challenges and potential each company contributes to the future economy of Hamilton,” the city’s entry stated.

**Honourable mentions**

Aderly Invest in Lyon, Business Birmingham, Canada’s Technology Triangle Inc, Central Alberta: Access Prosperity, Copenhagen Capacity, IDA Ireland, Invest in Catalonia, Invest Ottawa, Moroccan Investment Development Agency, Sheffield City Region

**Ambassador programmes**

**Central Alberta**

Central Alberta’s investment agency, called Central Alberta: Access Prosperity, has corralled what it calls “a group of bright business leaders who are active in international trade, are members of established international networks and are proud promoters of trade and investment in Central Alberta” to be its international ambassadors. “Our international ambassadors will meet with you, host tours of their communities and operations, facilitate introductions and share best practices,” Central Alberta: Access Prosperity’s entry said.

**Invest Victoria**

The Victorian Connection programme is a professional networking group on LinkedIn that highlights, and builds on,

members’ connections with Victoria to support trade and investment outcomes. There are more than 3000 members in the parent group and 15 sub-groups have been created for each of Victoria’s international priority regions. Trade and investment managers from Invest Victoria’s international offices are designated as champions and responsible for their regions. But it is not just an online affair. Victorian Connection alumni events have been held in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Middle East to grow membership and generate new investment leads in collaboration with Victoria’s universities and their alumni.

**Honourable mentions**

Aderly Invest in Lyon, Invest Ottawa

**Best practice/exchange initiative**

**Investe São Paulo**

The investment agency for the Brazilian state of São Paulo sends carefully selected employees on exchange pro-

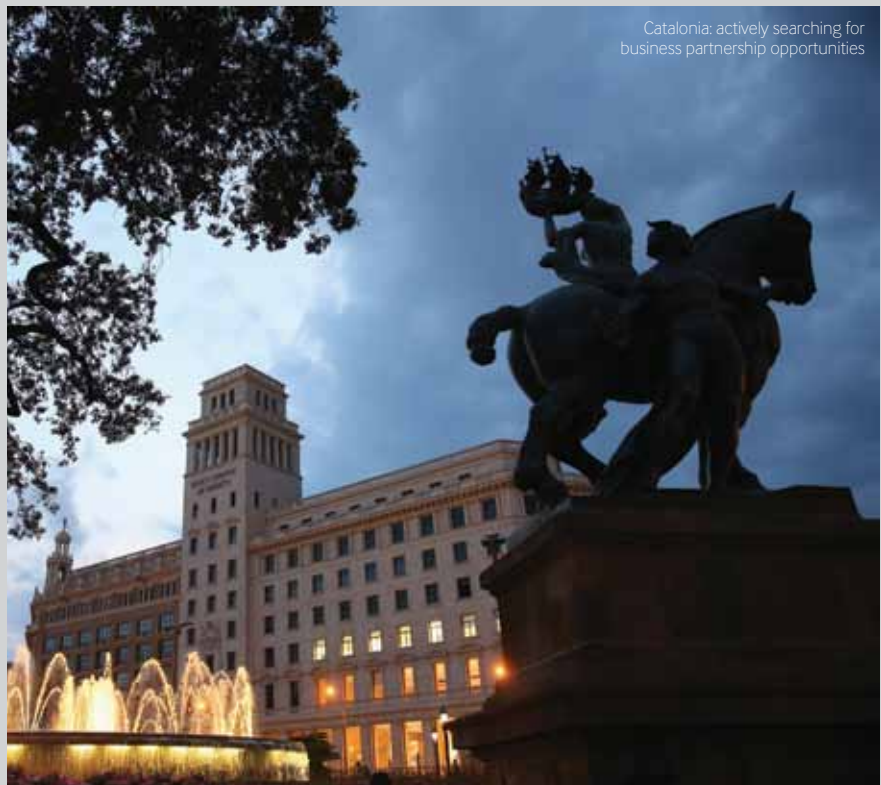
grammes abroad, giving them an opportunity to learn from their peers. The agency has established co-operation agreements with IPAs worldwide such as the UKTI in the UK, Kotra (Korea), Jetro (Japan) and Aicep (Portugal). The two-month stints, the agency wrote, helps share and benchmark best practices, promote São Paulo in other markets, encourage lead generation and, importantly, promote the personal and professional development of the professionals and organisations involved.

**Business matchmaking**

**Invest in Catalonia**

Through the Global Partnership Programme, Invest in Catalonia’s staff carry out active searches for business partnership opportunities and provide matchmaking assistance to foreign companies in order to facilitate joint venture and M&A agreements with Catalonia-based companies. “The incorporation of several programmes in the recent years,

Catalonia: actively searching for business partnership opportunities



such as the Global Partnership, has expanded the approaches that Invest in Catalonia has in terms of lead generation, since it has expanded our network greatly, and by providing more services we are able to reach more companies and attract more projects to the region," the agency said in its entry.

### Invest Victoria

Invest Victoria has adopted a private sector-style 'sales force' approach to economic development, which has allowed for a quadrupling of the number of business development managers in the department, and every company with more than 20 employees in the state being allocated a business development manager. This has enabled Invest Victoria to work more closely with individual businesses on developing joint venture proposals and helping international investors find a suitable local partner. This has culminated in a number of successful joint ventures.

## China strategies

### City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh's city council has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Culture, Sports and Tourism, an agency of the city of Shenzhen in China. The memorandum commits the two cities to working together to support the creative industries, uniting Edinburgh (a Unesco City of Literature) with Shenzhen (a Unesco City of Design). As part of this co-operation, the cities have agreed to jointly establish new International Creative Industry Incubation Centres. Each of the Incubation Centres will provide competitively priced accommodation for creative industries firms from the other city.

### Invest Victoria

Australian investment promoters are very 'Asia-aware' and keen to tap FDI opportunities in their neighbouring Asia-Pacific countries (even if those neighbours are relatively far away). Invest Victoria has sent 'super trade missions', which have involved up to 500 delegates from Victoria, around Asia. Meanwhile, a language and cultural immersion programme designed to help strengthen cultural awareness and business ties between Victoria and Asia currently operates in China, Japan, South Korea and Indonesia. But China is of particular interest: a China investment desk has been set up to promote Australia's Significant Investor Visa Programme; a roadshow in October



Shenzhen is to partner with Edinburgh to support the creative industries

Morgan  
McKinley



Morgan McKinley is the first and only recruitment consultancy in Ireland to appoint a dedicated Inward Investment Team championing the Irish labour market. Established in early 2011, the FDI team has built strong affiliations with the inward investment community including, IDA Ireland. "Recognising our role within the FDI landscape is to champion the Irish labour market we operate in a manner of providing support to IPAs. As we are not an IPA we see our role within FDI as providing insightful market intelligence based on live data that can assist potential investors in building their knowledge and confidence of Ireland's talent resources," the firm's entry said.

will further hype up this visa offering to Chinese businesspeople. And there are plans to employ a digital agency in China to assist with Chinese-language social media activities in the country.

## Diaspora initiatives

### ConnectIreland/IDA Ireland

The Succeed in Ireland initiative is all about channelling the power of the diaspora, one person at a time. ConnectIreland says it encourages individuals to look out for SMEs that would not normally know of the benefits of locating in Ireland as many of the global multinationals are already doing business in the country. It prides itself on encouraging 'connectors' from a variety of locations who set out to bring jobs to their own localities.



Multimedia



**Best app**

Landscape by IDA Ireland

🔗 <http://www.idaireland.com/app/landscape>



**Best georeferencing/mapping tool**

Barcelona City Council for Ubicat

🔗 <http://w141.bcn.cat/ubicat>

**Best videos**

**Most creative**

Brooklyn Partnership for "We'll Take Brooklyn"

🔗 <http://downtownbrooklyn.com/posts/arts-entertainment/new-video-showcases-downtown-brooklyn>



**Best star power**

Connect Ireland video featuring the Taoiseach (prime minister of Ireland) Martin Sheen, Michael Flatley and Saoirse Ronan

🔗 <http://www.connectireland.com>

**Best business power**

IDA Ireland's videos feature snippets of interviews with CEOs, COOs and other key contacts in companies such as Huawei, Dell, Citigroup and Facebook

🔗 <http://www.idaireland.com/news-media/videos>

**Most comprehensive**

Invest in Hamilton TV

🔗 <http://www.investinhamilton.ca/tv>

**Jampro, Jamaica Promotions Corporation**

In June 2013, Jampro partnered with the Foreign Affairs Ministry to host Jamaica's 5th Biennial Diaspora Conference. The programme focused on engaging the diaspora in discussions on trade and investment opportunities in Jamaica, and showcased the business opportunities available to the Jamaican diaspora and other investors. Jampro organised more than 200 business matchmaking sessions between project owners seeking investments through partnership or venture capital from the diaspora investors. Seven investors indicated interest in making equity investments in 17 local projects, Jampro said.

**Honourable mention  
ProBarranquilla**

Events

**Marketing Derby**

"We know Derby is not on the 'usual suspects' list of FDI target cities, so we need to be smart and innovate," Marketing Derby said in its entry. Its strategic approach centres around three key principles: to create, cultivate and convert an FDI enquiry. Events are a way to achieve these three Cs. The so-called Derby Embassy Club helps to create FDI enquiries by hosting a range of high-profile decision makers in the property and investment sector in prestigious venues outside the UK. With four events in Cannes and Monaco (with Chicago due in November 2013) the invitation lists are intelligence-led, as well as based on the business contacts of existing investors. The format ranges from private dinners to high-level receptions designed to encourage networking between target investors and Derby ambassadors attending.

Incentives

**Business Birmingham**

Business Birmingham offers well-tailored and flexible incentives to investors, with a particular eye for supporting job creation. The Mobile Investment Fund (MIF) provides £2000 (\$3200) per job created by overseas investors – one of the UK's most flexible investor funding schemes. An £8m Business Development Programme provides grant awards between £10,000 and £15,000, representing 45% of eligible project costs; and the Birmingham Jobs Fund for employing a young Birmingham per-

son aged 16 to 24 includes grants of up to £4550 per person. Business Birmingham says it has helped investors access more than £150m of public funding to support job creation.

Lead generation

**ConnectIreland/IDA Ireland**

ConnectIreland was launched in 2012 in a bid to entice the global diaspora to assist with Ireland's economic recovery by using their personal and professional connections. ConnectIreland offers a finder's fee to anyone who introduces a company to Ireland that creates sustainable jobs – a ground-breaking approach to lead generation. ConnectIreland has the backing of IDA Ireland, the agency responsible for inward investment in Ireland which manages the programme under the Succeed in Ireland Initiative and the Action Plan for Jobs. "In a very competitive global economy, countries are vying with each other for FDI and we have come up with a new angle whereby ordinary individuals can use their contacts and their networks to drive the campaign for investment and jobs in a unique and mutually beneficial manner," ConnectIreland's entry said.

**Greater New Orleans, Inc**

NOLAbound is an all-expenses-paid programme for 25 well-connected individuals within four targeted business sectors – arts-based businesses, biosciences, digital media and sustainable industries – to spend time in New Orleans, and either be sold on the city themselves or spread the word. San FraNOLA is a related series of events in San Francisco, targeting the digital industry, meant to promote the aggressive tax incentives that are offered in Louisiana for companies that do work in this industry and for angel investment in Louisiana start-ups. "More than three participants in NOLAbound have moved to the greater New Orleans region, one of which started a company in the area," Greater New Orleans, Inc reported.

Marketing

**ConnectIreland**

ConnectIreland leaves no stone unturned in its efforts to promote its programme. But perhaps the most interesting tactic is its quirky yet effective registration drive at Dublin Airport. As passengers transcend the longest escalator in the airport (which takes just over 1

minute) they hear audio of John F Kennedy's famous speech about Ireland and the benefits of doing business there. At the bottom of the escalator, passengers are met by a stand and a large picture of JFK. Two promotional staff talk to passengers about registering as a 'connector' and as they have tablets, they can also register people on the spot, online. "This has proven to be a hugely successful campaign as people who are travelling are in the space of making connections with people abroad and so we are getting to people at the optimum time," the group explained in its entry.

## Policy advocacy

### Copenhagen Capacity

Inno-MT, an environmental innovation network, was launched to promote innovation in the Danish environmental technology sector and to provide input to the legislative process and work of the Danish Minister of the Environment. The more than 100 members of Inno-MT count among them some of the most innovative cleantech companies and knowledge institutions in Denmark. An online crowdsourcing platform based on gamification principles was created with some overall themes and the members added their suggestions for adjustments to regulations affecting the sector. The knowledge and ideas created were collected and handed over to the Danish Minister of the Environment, who implemented some of the ideas and suggestions.

### ProExport Colombia

ProExport Colombia is placing itself at the heart of efforts to improve the country's business climate. It has taken over the National Secretary's Office of the System for the Simplification of Investment (SIFAI), a mixed public and private system designed to promote the enacting of reforms that impact economic sectors

directly. SIFAI is an electronic platform that allows the collection of basic data about improvement areas such as the background of the problem; the impact on investments; the impact on job creation; potential solutions; and other elements.

## Regional collaboration

### Copenhagen Capacity

Long accustomed to crossborder promotional efforts with nearby Malmö, Sweden, Copenhagen Capacity is also working on a joined-up approach within its own borders. Copenhagen Capacity and 15 municipalities in the capital region of Denmark have engaged in a

close partnership to attract international talent and investments and enhance innovation capacity. "Rather than seeing themselves as small administrative units competing against each other, [municipalities] need to see themselves as being part of a strong industry cluster," the agency's entry stated. Copenhagen Capacity also runs the international outreach of the Copenhagen Cleantech Cluster with the primary activity being the International Cleantech Network, a network of the world's leading cleantech cluster organizations that have pledged to work closely together to create international green growth across the member regions.

### Honourable mentions

Central Alberta, Hubstart Paris Region



Copenhagen is working to attract international talent and investments and enhance innovation capacity

## Lodz Special Economic Zone



The Polish government has announced that special economic zones (SEZs) in Poland will function until 2026 (previously their special status was due to end in 2020), and the regional state aid map will change in July 2014 according to the European Committee. So, according to Lodz SEZ, there is no time to waste. In 2013, 14 Polish SEZs launched a campaign

to convince the government that the extension will bring more investment to Poland and having succeeded in winning an extension, the SEZs are going to continue the campaign, but directing it at small and medium-size enterprises and other investors. "We want our investors to work together also. Hence, Lodz SEZ is thinking about introducing a common online platform for the investors where they could, among others, exchange good ideas and actions and co-operate in the field of production. The platform will also be a job portal—with investors looking for proper

employees and potential employees looking for a job," Lodz officials explained in their fDi entry. Among Lodz's other future plans is co-operating with the Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz trying to make an innovative combination of business and art which will deal with the economic side of design and its influence on the business success of the company. "Many investors need creative people to advertise for them and help them stand out from the crowd. Why not give a chance to students of one of the best art academies in Poland?", said Lodz's entry. A fine argument.

## SME support

### City of Leipzig

Before promoting small and medium-sized enterprises became trendy for economic development agencies, Leipzig's eyes were firmly on this segment of the market.

The city's Economic Development Office runs a subsidy programme for SMEs and awards microcredits – small, easily accessible loans for entrepreneurs and self-employed people in Leipzig – together with the Sparkasse Leipzig bank and Mikrofinanzinstitut KIZ GmbH. One of the project's aims is to grow commercial activity in economically disadvantaged areas.

### Honourable mentions

**Brainport Development NV, Belize Trade and Investment Development Service, Business Birmingham, City of Hamilton, Municipality of São José dos Campos**

## Start-ups support

### Coachella Valley Economic Partnership

In November 2011 the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CViHub) launched the Coachella Valley iHub for the purpose of attracting and mentoring entrepreneurs in the renewable energy space. The CViHub quickly attracted a compliment of companies that proceeded through the programme. "Recognising that proving a concept or a market is not sufficient to get the companies through the 'valley of death' CViHub soon launched the City of Palm Springs Accelerator Campus to continue the business support services through the early stages of manufacturing and operations," the organisation said in its entry.

### Invest Hong Kong

Invest Hong Kong launched a start-up initiative called "StartmeupHK" in 2013 intended to promote Hong Kong as a premier destination in Asia for entrepreneurs as well as to encourage collaboration between overseas entrepreneurs and Hong Kong-based start-ups. A virtual platform ([www.startmeup.hk](http://www.startmeup.hk)) helps to make it easy for entrepreneurs to set up in the city, but Invest Hong Kong has also taken its pitch out to market, with events in key start-up hubs such as the UK, Israel and the US. Meanwhile, a StartmeupHK Venture

Programme featuring a global competition for early to growth stage ventures should attract notice among the entrepreneurial class.

### Global City & Tourism Administration, Tel Aviv-Yafo

"One of the cardinal requirements for creating a true creative and growth inducing business hub is an environment which is conducive to creativity and has the ability to attract creative people and professionals," the Global City & Tourism Administration of Tel Aviv-Yafo wrote in its entry. "Such an environment must be based on values of diversity, individual freedoms and self expression. In this regard, Tel Aviv created the Startup City brand in order to promote its strengths globally – which, it says, includes its vibrant nightlife and thriving gay scene – and attract foreign entrepreneurs, investors, high-tech professionals and tourists. Among its many start-ups focused activities include TelAvivApp2U, a mobile app competition based on city databases; Open Startup, a municipal event during which start-ups throughout the city open their doors to the general public; and Start-Tel-Aviv, a series of competitions taking place simultaneously in 14 countries in which start-ups compete for the opportunity to win a five-day intense start-up experience in Tel Aviv.

### Honourable mention Sheffield City Region (Dotforge incubator)

## Urban planning

### Aderly Invest in Lyon

Aderly has launched an initiative to promote Lyon as an 'open lab' for experiments in the field of smart cities. This will include exploration of technologies related to mobility (traffic prediction, electric vehicle car sharing, multi-model GPS, etc), new services such as an open data platform, and smart grids. This initiative has led to the decision by NEDO (the Japanese organisation in charge of energy) to select Lyon as the site to develop an experimental smart-city project.

### Barcelona City Council

Barcelona set the bar for urban planning and regeneration decades ago with its stunning revival that was showcased so beautifully at the 1992 Olympic Games hosted in the city; and it has kept ahead of the curve since then. It has been a pioneer in the smart cities space, and will be hosting the first international Smart City

Expo and Congress in November. Barcelona has worked with leading multinationals to build a Smart City Campus; drawn up a City Protocol Society that lays out the criteria, challenges and management solutions for the smart cities of the future; and created the Barcelona Institute of Technology for the Habitat along with Cisco. Barcelona is also a world benchmark for the development, implementation and use of electric vehicles.

## Workforce training

### Cinde

Cinde, the Costa Rican Investment Promotion Agency, takes pragmatic steps to improve the local talent pool. These include: coordinating with companies and educational institutions to create new academic programmes and courses; setting up a junior achievement programme for high school students to increase the number of candidates in the most demanded vocational areas; promoting the merits of higher degrees (Masters and PhD) among the labour force; and offering a three-month IT training programme at Infosys facilities in India for 100 teachers and students. A Tools for Success programme for technical school graduates helps improve these graduates' English proficiency; 1000 graduates have been through the programme since 2010.

## Workspace creation

### Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

The Downtown Brooklyn Partnership is spearheading an initiative that will lease 1400 square metres of historically vacant space above a historic shopping centre to meet the needs of creative tenants and sublease to entrepreneurs and start-up firms seeking office space in this thriving part of New York. Taking a more creative tack, to revitalise an underutilised plaza located on a major traffic corridor into downtown Brooklyn, the partnership worked with 14 high school students in the robotics programme of a local high school, asking them to imagine what the space could be. Ideas to come out of this were to incorporate more advanced and intelligent features such as a green wall and a rain water catchment device. What better way to design tomorrow work spaces than to pick the brains of tomorrow's workers?