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Global Free Zones of the Year 2016

OUR TOP PICKS
FOR THE BEST
AND BRIGHTEST
AMONG THE
WORLD'S FREE
ZONES

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fDi
FREE ZONES
OF THE YEAR
2016

Global Free Zones of the Year 2016 – Winners

DMCC OF DUBAI WINS THE OVERALL TITLE OF **fDi**'s GLOBAL FREE ZONES OF THE YEAR FOR 2016, BUT THE SUCCESS STORIES ARE SPREAD FAR AND WIDE. BY **CATHY MULLAN**

Winners – global



"DUBAI'S ECONOMY IS DYNAMIC AND ITS ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT UNRIVALLED – MUCH LIKE THE DNA OF OUR DMCC FREE ZONE. WE ARE PROUD TO BE RANKED THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE FREE ZONE TWO YEARS IN A ROW AND WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE OUR 12,700 MEMBER COMPANIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS SUCCESS EVERY DAY BY CONTINUOUSLY SEEKING NEW OPPORTUNITIES, WHICH IN TURN DRIVES GROWTH, DYNAMISM AND INNOVATION INTO DUBAI AND BEYOND"

Ahmed Bin Sulayem, executive chairman, DMCC

Winner – Global

DMCC Free Zone, United Arab Emirates

Triumphant for the second year running, United Arab Emirates' DMCC has been crowned global winner of **fDi**'s Global Free Zones of the Year for 2016, also picking up the top award for the Middle East region. DMCC offers investors state-of-the-art office space in developments such as its glass box-style building, One JLT, and other developments that are custom-made for investing companies. It is comprised of 66 mixed-use towers, which include five hotels, 92 education establishments and 500 retail outlets, meaning companies from a wide range of industries and sectors call DMCC home, including Modul University Vienna, which has opened its first and only overseas campus in the zone.

Future development plans include the Burj2020 district, which is part of DMCC's smart city strategy. As part of its digital transformation, all services have been put online, allowing investors to log on to any device anywhere across the globe to access its services. Setting up a business in the zone now takes just 15 days, down from 31, and business renewals are processed in just four days. All documents are digital, which means investors can get hold of relevant paperwork in hours.

In a further move to increase accessibility for investors, the DMCC Business Directory was launched in 2015, which enables all members to connect with each other to exchange goods and services, while an e-procurement portal allows companies to participate in tenders by or for the zone. As part of its 'Knowledge Series', a programme of lectures and professional development programmes are offered to DMCC members, including workshops, seminars, career fairs, tech training and exhibitions.



"RECEIVING THE GLOBAL FREE ZONE OF THE YEAR AWARD TWICE IN A ROW, OUT OF 60 FREE ZONES THAT TOOK PART GLOBALLY, IS A HUGE ACHIEVEMENT FOR US AND SHOWS THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH A STRONG STRATEGY AND A MEANINGFUL CUSTOMER OFFERING. WINNING THESE AWARDS IS ALSO TESTAMENT TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR MEMBER COMPANIES AND CONFIRMS, ONCE AGAIN, THAT THE DMCC FREE ZONE TRULY PROVIDES A CONNECTED MARKETPLACE ENABLING OVER 45,000 PEOPLE TO TRADE WITH CONFIDENCE AND GROW THEIR BUSINESSES"

Gautam Sashittal, chief executive officer, DMCC

Winners



OVERALL WINNER

DMCC, UAE

Highly commended

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

REGIONAL WINNERS

Winner – Africa

Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

Highly commended – Africa

Mauritius Freeport, Mauritius

Honourable mention – Africa

ZES NKOK-Gabon

Winner – Asia

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Highly commended – Asia

Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone,

Uzbekistan

Honourable mention – Asia

ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

Winner – Europe

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

Highly commended – Europe

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Honourable mention – Europe

Kaunas Free Economic Zone, Lithuania

Winner – Latin America and Caribbean

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Highly commended – Latin America

and Caribbean
Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Honourable mention – Latin America

and Caribbean
Mariel Special Development Zone, Cuba

Winner – Middle East

DMCC, UAE

Highly commended – Middle East

Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

Honourable mention – Middle East

Masdar Free Zone, UAE

Winner – North America

FTZ No 74 Baltimore, US

Highly commended – North America

FTZ No 38 Spartanburg County, US

SUB-REGIONAL RESULTS

Winner – North Africa

Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

Winner – Sub-Saharan Africa

Mauritius Freeport, Mauritius

Winner – Central Asia

Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone,

Uzbekistan

Winner – South and South-east Asia

ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

Winner – East Asia

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Winner – Western Europe

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Winner – South-eastern Europe

FZ Smederevo, Serbia

Winner – Central and eastern Europe

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

Winner – South America

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Winner – Central America

Parque Industrial Zeta Cartago, Costa Rica

Winner – Caribbean

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

SME AWARDS

Winner – SMEs – Global

DMCC, UAE

Highly commended – SMEs – Global

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Winner – SMEs – Africa

ZES NKOK-Gabon

Highly commended – SMEs – Africa

Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

Winner – SMEs – Asia

Dahej Special Economic Zone, India

Highly commended – SMEs – Asia

Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone,

Uzbekistan

Winner – SMEs – Europe

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Highly commended – SMEs – Europe

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

Joint winners – SMEs – Latin America

and Caribbean

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia;

Freeport Grand Bahama, Bahamas

Highly commended – SMEs –

Latin America and Caribbean

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Winner – SMEs – Middle East

DMCC, UAE

Highly commended – SMEs – Middle East

Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone, UAE

LARGE TENANTS AWARDS

Winner – large tenants – Global

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Highly commended – large tenants –

Global Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Winner – large tenants – Africa

Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

Highly commended – large tenants

– Africa Ladol Logistics Free Zone, Nigeria

Winner – large tenants – Asia

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Highly commended – large tenants

– Asia

ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

Winner – large tenants – Europe

Alabuga SEZ, Russia

Highly commended – large tenants –

Europe Starachowice Special Economic

Zone, Poland

Winner – large tenants – Latam and

Caribbean Ceara Free Trade Zone, Brazil

Highly commended – large tenants –

Latam and Caribbean

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Winner – large tenants – Middle East

Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

Highly commended – large tenants –

Middle East Masdar Free Zone, UAE

Honourable mention – large tenants –

Middle East Rakia, UAE

Winner – large tenants – North America

FTZ No 74 Baltimore, US

Highly Commended – large tenants –

North America FTZ No 127 West

Columbia, US

Editor's choice – Export Booster Award

Pirot FTZ, Serbia; Technological Industrial

Development Zone-Stip, Macedonia,

Highly commended

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Located in Shanghai, China's financial hub, Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone is the runner-up among all global free zones, as well as scooping the awards for best zone in Asia and best zone in east Asia. Big name investors have flocked to the first free zone to be established in China, among them Microsoft, BNP Paribas, Total, Sony Corporation and Amazon, to name but a few.

The zone is close to the Port of Shanghai, the world's largest port according to the World Shipping

Council, offering investors the opportunity to export and import their goods. Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone has been making efforts to streamline processes for investors and reduce the burden of red tape. To this end, an investment management system has been introduced to improve openness and transparency, and a trade supervision system has been developed to cut down on red tape. A regulatory system has been implemented to provide investors with a stable regulatory environment, and a financial innovation system is aimed at opening up the financial services sector and attracting foreign capital.

Winners – regional



Winner – Africa

Tanger Med Zones

Winner of both the African regional category and north African sub-regional category for a second year, Tanger Med Zones is home to hundreds of multinational companies, including Siemens, Renault and Yazaki. Located near the Strait of Gibraltar, the zone offers investors good access to maritime shipping routes only ▶

14 kilometres from European markets. A new gate has been created solely to meet the logistics needs of investors, supporting a simplified flow of imports and exports. Investors in the automotive and textiles sectors in particular can benefit from a subsidy of 30% of total capital expenditure, while a new 1200-hectare park opening in Ain Daillia-Tangier will be dedicated to industry (aerospace, automotive, electronics and renewables) and textiles. Its website allows users to have a virtual tour of the zone, while community exchanges connect suppliers and manufacturers. Gate access to the zone is now integrated into the IT infrastructure, allowing daily information on export turnover and an app for investors.

Highly commended – Africa
Mauritius Freeport, Mauritius

An exhibitor at international roadshows in Dubai, South Africa and Réunion Island, Mauritius Freeport has been highly commended in the African regional category of this year’s awards, and has been declared winner of the sub-Saharan Africa sub-national category. Investors establishing in the zone retain 100% foreign ownership while also paying no corporate tax. Mauritius Freeport offers excellent infrastructure for the storage of goods, including cold-room facilities for the storage of food and vault services for precious commodities, such as gold, silver and platinum. Located between Asia and Africa in the Indian Ocean, Mauritius is a member state of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and Southern African Development Community trading blocs, which work to encourage exports. The zone itself also offers a freight rebate scheme to encourage exports to the African mainland, Madagascar and Réunion. Future expansion is on the horizon for Mauritius Freeport, with the construction of a 24-hectare park already under way close to the country’s airport. Two multinational companies have already signed on as tenants.

Honourable mention – Africa
ZES NKOK-Gabon

Located just 27 kilometres from Gabon’s capital, Libreville, and comprising an array of commercial, industrial and residential facilities, ZES NKOK-Gabon has received an honourable mention in this year’s Africa regional category. Investors have access to the zone’s one-stop shop, which processes all necessary permits, customs and licences within 21 days. ZES NKOK-Gabon is well connected, with direct access to National Highway 1, the

Trans-Gabon railway and (via waterway) to the Owendo International Seaport, where a dedicated container yard is under construction. The zone is currently developing its own general cargo handling deep-sea port, while a dedicated toll road between the existing sea port and the zone is at the design stage.

Winner – Asia
Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Highly commended – Asia
Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone, Uzbekistan

Investors in Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone – highly commended in the Asia category of this year’s awards and winner of the sub-regional central Asia category – enjoy free trade access to other Commonwealth of Independent States member countries, meaning readily available large market access. The zone operates a one-stop shop service alongside a specialist investor relations department, to ensure that procedures are simplified and shortened for investing companies. Following the establishment of the investor relations department, in co-operation with the local chamber of commerce, production and sales in multinational companies increased 33% between 2014 and 2015. A financial centre is located in the zone, providing investors with access to preferable rates on bank loans and to funds for the development and expansion of companies.

Honourable mention – Asia
ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

Located just over 60 kilometres from the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, ModernCikande Industrial Estate has gained an honourable mention in the Asia regional category of this year’s awards, and has been named fDi’s best free zone for south and south-east Asia in 2016. Investors are attracted by the ready-to-build land available on site, where a company can begin to build through the zone’s immediate construction initiative, allowing construction to begin with a principle licence and before full construction permits are obtained. As the zone boasts, it is ‘built to meet your industrial needs’.

Winner – Europe
Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

A regular on the winner lists of fDi’s Global Free Zones of the Year awards, Katowice Special Economic Zone has picked up the top award for the Europe regional category, as well as winning

Methodology

fDi’s Global Free Zones of the Year Awards 2016 acknowledge the most promising free zones across the world. For this year’s awards, fDi invited free zones, government entities and investment promotion bodies to complete a short survey detailing their zone’s attractiveness, facilities and incentives offered to investors.

In total, 60 entries were received from free zones across the world. A panel of judges from fDi was appointed and studied each location. Judges nominated their winning and runner-up locations in each region, as well as their top zones for SME and Large Tenant categories. In addition, some locations which were particularly outstanding have been acknowledged with honourable mentions and bespoke awards.

WEIGHTINGS FOR RESULTS*

	WEIGHTING
% increase in occupied space 2014-15	10
Number of SMEs 2015	1.25
% increase in SMEs 2014-15	2.5
Nominal increase in SMEs 2014-15	2.5
Number of large tenants	1.25
% increase in large tenants 2014-15	2.5
Nominal increase in large tenants 2014-15	2.5
Total number of employees 2015	2.5
% increase in no. of employees 2014-15	5
Nominal increase in employees 2014-15	5
Total scores of judges’ results	65

*Excluding SME and Large Tenant categories

best zone in the central and eastern Europe category. The zone realises, and acts upon, the importance of integrating local education and investment, ensuring that foreign investors have a wealth of talent at their disposal to make their operation a success. This is at the heart of the K2 project, which involves co-operation with a number of key players, including schools, local authorities and investing companies. Skillsets required by investors are identified, and the zone works with local education institutions and local government to provide these. Katowice SEZ has set its sights on expansion, setting aside 9 million square metres of land for redevelopment, as part of the zone’s 4S project.

Highly commended – Europe
Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Also the winner of the sub-regional western Europe category, Shannon Free Zone operates as Ireland’s largest multisectoral business park and is the country’s largest FDI cluster outside of Dublin, offering ease of access to markets in Europe and North America. There are plans in place to develop its Enterprise and Incubation Centre, a 650-square-metres facility that will allow SMEs to hot-desk and access ►

shared office space with meeting facilities. Shannon Free Zone has attracted some major companies, particularly in the aviation and advanced technology sectors, including Lufthansa Technik, Emerson and Intel. Shannon claims to be the world's first free zone, inspiring the model to reach China in 1980.

Honourable mention – Europe
Kaunas Free Economic Zone, Lithuania

Located in south-central Lithuania, Kaunas Free Economic Zone offers many benefits to SMEs, including a special programme compensating up to 75% of the investment in facilities, up to a cost of €4m. Real estate developers will work directly with SME investors to build bespoke facilities, while a dedicated 500-square-metre office building and a 2000-square-metre prototype manufacturing lab have been constructed, all specifically dedicated to SMEs. However, the zone also has a track record of attracting larger companies, with logistics company DPD opening its largest Baltics logistics operation in Kaunas FEZ during 2015. The management authority works to ease the set-up stresses for investors, helping them to establish the company, register, open a

bank account and apply for EU structural funding. Companies also receive assistance with human resources, logistics partners and infrastructure works.

Winner – Latin America
Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Crowned the best free zone in Latin America, Zona Franca Santander is also the winner in the sub-regional South America category. The zone works closely with investment promotion agencies Invest in Santander and Procolombia to develop potential in the energy, health and global services sectors. Investors can take advantage of the '40,000 Jobs Programme', a government-backed initiative that aims to generate new jobs in the region and offers up to 50% of the cost of hiring young professionals. Training programmes are offered through SENA (the national learning service). In addition, the zone works to provide assistance with compiling business plans prior to setting up. A specialist in global services, Zona Franca Santander is starting to move towards attracting investment in manufacturing and logistics operations, with the development of an addition 21,000 square metres of facilities projected.

"IN ZONA FRANCA SANTANDER WE ARE VERY PROUD TO RECEIVE THESE AWARDS IN RECOGNITION OF THE GREAT TEAM THAT IS MADE UP OF SHAREHOLDERS, DIRECTORS, AND EMPLOYEES WHO ARE MOTIVATED BY THE TRUST OUR CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS HAVE PLACED IN US. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING RELENTLESSLY TO BUILD AND CONSOLIDATE A WORLD-CLASS PLATFORM FOR COMPETITIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATIONS"

Nivea Santarelli, CEO, Zona Franca Santander

Highly commended – Latin America
Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Lying in the heart of the Caribbean, offering direct access to major markets and benefiting from a variety of trade agreements with the US, the EU and Central America, Zona Franca Santiago (also winner in the sub-regional Caribbean category) offers investors a

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*"The SEZ "ALABUGA" has a **World-class infrastructure** and it is **real**"*

*Mark Ovenden
President and CEO,
Ford Sollers*

- FDI FREE ZONES OF THE YEAR 2016 WINNER EUROPE LARGE TENANTS
- FDI FREE ZONES OF THE YEAR 2016 HIGHLY COMMENDED: GLOBAL LARGE TENANTS
- FDI FREE ZONES OF THE YEAR 2016 COMMENDED FOR NEW INVESTMENTS
- FDI FREE ZONES OF THE YEAR 2016 COMMENDED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES
- FDI FREE ZONES OF THE YEAR 2016 WINNER EUROPE SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

FordSollers | Armstrong | HAYAT | AIR LIQUIDE | 3M | ROCKWOOL | SISECAM | SAINT-GOBAIN | kastamonu

wealth of benefits. Investing companies are rewarded with an improved power supply, telecommunications infrastructure and sustainable power generation, as well as practical on-site facilities, such as banking, a medical care centre and pharmacies. The zone offers recruitment services designed to work closely with companies and local education institutions to ensure the most qualified talent is available, and works with companies to obtain permissions from local authorities. A new website, brochure and catalogue have recently been developed to help extend the zone's reach to new potential investors.

Honourable mention – Latin America
Mariel Special Development Zone, Cuba

Established in only 2013, and a newcomer to fDi's Global Free Zones of the Year awards, Mariel Special Development Zone impressed judges with the progress and growth it has experienced in just 30 months. The zone has developed basic infrastructure, including secondary roads, water supply networks, electricity connections and ICT grids, as well as the Mariel Container Terminal, a modern deep-water port designed to receive Panamax ships. The zone is strategically located at the crossroads of major maritime shipping routes, and has multi-modal connectivity. Investors need only wait between 35 and 65 days for approval of projects, and benefit from a range of tax exemptions, including profit tax exemption, capital transfer abroad tax exemption and duty-free exports, among others.

Winner – Middle East
DMCC, UAE

Highly commended – Middle East
Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

Highly commended for the Middle East region once again, Jebel Ali Free Zone is home to more than 7000 companies, 96 of which are in listed on the Fortune 500. Investing companies are provided with an investor guide and welcome pack, while a multi-service professional from the investor services team helps with all aspects of setting up in the zone. A unified application form allows companies to register their business online, where all documents can be uploaded. Jebel Ali Free Zone Authority has attended 11 roadshows and business seminars in Asia, Europe and the US, creating awareness about the zone. In 2013, the zone contributed 20.6% to the GDP of Dubai (according to EY), and 28% of the emirate's total trade volume.

Honourable mention – Middle East
Masdar Free Zone, UAE

Located one hour from Dubai and next to Abu Dhabi airport, Masdar Free Zone has gained an honourable mention for the Middle East region. Authorities at the zone have an active marketing strategy, embarking upon a wide range of international promotional activities, including forums such as BIAT in Italy, and the Arab-German forum in Munich. A number of delegations have been welcomed to Masdar Free Zone, and several partnerships between the zone and business groups or embassies throughout UAE have been developed in order to promote commercial and trade networks. According to a recent survey carried out in the zone, 89% of resident companies are planning expansions in the near future, while 15% of companies in the zone expanded between 2015 and 2016.



Winner – North Africa
Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

Winner – Sub-Saharan Africa
Mauritius Freeport, Mauritius

Winner – Central Asia
Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone, Uzbekistan

Winner – South and South-east Asia
ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

Winner – East Asia
Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Winner – Western Europe
Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Winner – South-east Europe
FZ Smederevo, Serbia

Located in north-eastern Serbia, Free Zone Smederevo is well connected to the country's capital city, Belgrade, with excellent links to major roads, railways and the Danube River. Procedures are in place to simplify processing for investors to acquire permissions and construction licences, while local recruitment centres work closely with investors to ensure a ready supply of qualified labour. Each school term, the town's mayor briefs all the high schools in the area on which skills are required by incoming investors. The zone is assessing its capability for expansion and looking to the future,

"THE COMBINATION OF TAILORED INCENTIVES, IMPROVED MARITIME AND AIR LINKS, HIGH-BANDWIDTH CONNECTIVITY AND STATE-OF-THE-ART LOGISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE ARE ALL FACTORS THAT MAKE THE MAURITIUS FREEPORT ONE OF THE MOST COMPETITIVE IN THE REGION AND PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY FOR COMPANIES OF ALL SIZES TO START OPERATIONS"

Ken Poonoosamy, managing director, Board of Investment Mauritius

boosting its electricity supply with a new power station and the construction of a recycling centre.

Winner – Central and Eastern Europe
Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

Winner – South America
Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Winner – Central America
Parque Industrial Zeta Cartago, Costa Rica

Offering low-cost electricity and skilled labour for its tenants, Parque Industrial Zeta Cartago has been named best free zone in Central America in this year's awards. Following some major infrastructure developments, which included substantial improvements to the zone's drinking water treatment plant and the waste water treatment plant, the zone also acquired industrial buildings within the park, which were previously owned by third parties, allowing new local tenants to settle in.

Winner – Caribbean
Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic



Winner – SMEs – Global
DMCC, UAE

In 2015, DMCC was home to more than 8000 SME tenants, an increase of nearly 21% from 2014, and a sign of the zone's success in welcoming small companies and start-ups. DMCC launched the Google for Entrepreneurs Global Tech Hub with AstroLabs Dubai – a first in the Middle East region – to encourage ►

start-up companies to grow their companies in new markets.

Highly commended – SMEs – Global
Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, located in the UK's second most populous city, offers businesses a discount on business rates of up to 100%, worth up to £275,000 (\$350,000) per business over five years. An aftercare relocation service is offered to companies locating in the zone, which also houses the Innovation Birmingham Campus designed to house tech entrepreneurs and start-up companies.

Winner – SMEs – Africa
ZES NKOK-Gabon

ZES NKOK-Gabon has signed an agreement with the country's Ministry of Equality of Opportunity to offer land at affordable prices to small companies and start-ups that are interested in investing in manufacturing operations in the zone. Rent-free industrial sheds are offered to SMEs for periods of up to two years to allow smaller companies to explore opportunities in the country with more limited risk.

Highly commended – SMEs – Africa
Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

Tanger Med Zones has reserved 110 hectares in its Tetouan Park specifically for SME companies, which totalled 400 in 2015, an increase of 17.3% from 2014.

Winner – SMEs – Asia
Dahej Special Economic Zone, India

Dahej Special Economic Zone witnessed an increase of nearly 12% in its SME tenants between 2014 and 2015, following the zone's participation in several trade exhibitions and marketing initiatives. The zone provides a range of practical facilities for its tenants, including banking and medical facilities.

Highly commended – SMEs – Asia
Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone, Uzbekistan

Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone offers companies a one-stop shop, meaning all licences and permissions can be processed more simply. The zone was home to 16 SME companies in 2015, an increase of nearly 7% from 2014 and representing more than 53% of total tenants.

Winner – SMEs – Europe
Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Highly commended – SMEs – Europe
Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

Katowice Special Economic Zone is currently developing two projects specifically for SMEs, at Czestochowa and Zory. Both of these locations will be equipped with infrastructure to support SMEs and start-up companies. In Czestochowa, a production hall will be provided for SMEs, while office space for start-ups will be the focus of the Zory development.

Joint winner – SMEs – Latin America and Caribbean
Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Companies investing in Zona Franca Santander have access to professionals who will assist them in setting up their business plan. SMEs make up nearly 80% of the zone's tenants, with 39 SMEs registered with the zone in 2015, up from 35 in 2014.

Joint winner – SMEs – Latin America and Caribbean
Freeport Grand Bahama, Bahamas

Working with the Invest Grand Bahama Small Business Bureau, a business fair and various training workshops were held at Freeport Grand Bahama for all SME tenants to educate on improvements to business through effective strategy and marketing techniques. A licence fee waiver was offered to SMEs to join the Downtown Freeport Business Association.

Highly commended – SMEs – Latin America and Caribbean
Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Nearly three-quarters of all tenants in Zona Franca Santiago are SME companies, with SME tenancy rates increasing more than 7% between 2014 and 2015. The zone offers investors support with permits and licences, and helps to process all documentation that is required to set up in the zone.

Winner – SMEs – Middle East
DMCC, UAE

Highly commended – SMEs – Middle East
Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone, UAE

The UAE's Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone is home to more than 1300 SME companies, an increase of 5% from 2014. Investors are offered an easy payment plan, which allows companies to convert payments into smaller monthly instal-

ments, particularly helpful for smaller companies. Companies can access all services online on the zone's website, making the process of dealing with permissions and licences easier. Its annual Startup Champ Competition allows innovative start-up companies to win a business set-up package in the zone.

Winners – Large Tenants



Winner – Large Tenants – Global
Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Located in Shanghai, the Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone has access to the Port of Shanghai, the largest trading port in the world. The zone is working with the Chinese government as part of the national strategic plan to build Shanghai into an international trading and shipping centre, and the zone was home to 573 large tenants in 2015.

Highly commended – Large Tenants – Global
Alabuga SEZ, Russia

Alabuga SEZ boasted 40 large tenants in 2015, representing more than 83% of its total tenants. Investors including US-based automotive company Ford, France-based gas company Air Liquide and France-based construction materials company Saint-Gobain have a presence in the zone, with Ford investing \$100m in a new production line in March 2015.

Winner – Large Tenants – Africa
Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

More than 500 large tenants were housed in Tanger Med Zones in 2015, an increase of over 10% since 2014. A new gate was established in the zone dedicated to logistics trucks, with the aim of simplifying the import/export flow for companies in the zone. This is particularly attractive to investors in manufacturing and heavy industry operations.

Highly commended – Large Tenants – Africa
Ladol Logistics Free Zone, Nigeria

Ladol Logistics Free Zone is located on a 100-hectare site next to Apapa Port, and has the advantage of controlled access and operations around the clock. A 100-metre-high crane will be installed by the end of 2016, meaning Ladol will have the highest lifting capacity in Africa. A

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- Training support



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Editor's Choice – Export Booster Award

Investors settling in **Pirot FTZ** in Serbia enjoy the ability to export their goods to countries in south-east Europe and Russia on a tax-free basis. These locations will be more accessible upon completion of the Pan European Corridor X, which connects Belgrade to Nis and Sofia, and whose interchange will lie just 300 metres from the entrance to the zone. Major investor Tigar Tyres exported €295m-worth of products to Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Middle East in 2015, making its Pirot FTZ factory the third largest exporter in Serbia.

Goods produced in Macedonia's **Technological Industrial Development Zone-Stip** accounted for more than 36% of all Macedonian exports in 2015, which represented an increase of 26% from the previous year. With expansion plans in place for current tenants, including UK-based chemicals company Johnson Matthey and Italy-based steel pipe manufacturer Vitillo, authorities at the zone are confident that this rate of growth can be sustained.

50-megawatt power plant is also set to be delivered in two phases.

Winner – Large Tenants – Asia

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Highly commended – Large Tenants – Asia

ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

ModernCikande Industrial Estate is home to 220 large tenants, including Cargill Indonesia and Saint-Gobain. The zone's Investment Simplification for Immediate Construction initiative means investors can immediately start building their factory before receiving final construction permissions. The zone's marketing slogan – 'Built to meet your industrial needs' – highlights its efforts to attract large industrial tenants.

Winner – Large Tenants – Europe

Alabuga SEZ, Russia

Highly commended – Large Tenants – Europe

Starachowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

With a developed transport network offering close connections to airports and to the Trans-European Transport Networks, Starachowice Special Economic Zone offers logistics opportunities for investors. The zone is planning a major expansion, having recently completed the purchase of 910,000 square metres of additional land.

Winner – Large Tenants – Latin America and Caribbean

Ceara Free Trade Zone, Brazil

A modern seaport with the ability to accept post-Panamex vessels is located in Ceara Free Trade Zone, and is equipped with conveyor belts 6 kilometres in length, intended specifically to facilitate the transport of oil and coal. The free zone area is set to expand by more than

21 million square metres, and there will be upgrades to the supply of electricity and water for tenants.

Highly commended – Large Tenants – Latin America and Caribbean

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Zona Franca Santiago was home to 21 large tenants in 2015, all of which could benefit from the zone's direct logistical access with major markets, including the US. Tenancy rates for large tenants increased 5% between 2014 and 2015.

Winner – Large Tenants – Middle East

Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

Boasting nearly 3000 large tenants in 2015, Jebel Ali Free Zone has a track record of attracting major companies. The zone offers investors huge opportunity for importing and exporting goods, with volume trade in 2015 at 23.9 million tonnes. Plans are in place to construct 207,000 square metres of multi-storey warehouses at the zone, along with 455 thermally insulated light industrial units.

Highly commended – Large Tenants – Middle East

Masdar Free Zone, UAE

Masdar Free Zone, located in Abu Dhabi, is dedicated to the advancement of renewable energies and sustainable technology. The zone is home to some big name investors, including Siemens, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Lockheed Martin.

Honourable mention – Large Tenants – Middle East

Rakia, UAE

Rakia witnessed a 7% increase in large tenants in the zone between 2014 and 2015, with investors benefiting from developed infrastructure and a power supply guaranteed by the UAE's Federal Electricity and Water Authority. The zone is planning to extend new areas in Al Ghail, which will expand Al Ghail Industrial City. ▶

Bespoke awards



Supporting education and training

Alabuga SEZ, Russia
 Ceara Free Trade Zone, Brazil
 Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic
 Freeport Grand Bahama, Bahamas
 FTZ No 74 Baltimore, US
 Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Kaunas Free Economic Zone, Lithuania
 Lipetsk SEZ, Russia
 Lodz Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Panama City of Knowledge, Panama
 PIISA Parque Industrial, Dominican Republic
 FZ Smederevo, Serbia
 Starachowice Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Walbrzych Special Economic Zone, Poland
 ZES NKOK- Gabon
 Zona Franca de Occidente, Colombia
 Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Start-up support

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland
 DMCC, UAE
 Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia
 Masdar Free Zone, UAE
 Pirot FTZ, Serbia
 Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone, UAE
 Shannon Free Zone, Ireland
 Zagreb Free Zone, Croatia
 Zrenjanin FTZ, Serbia

Infrastructure upgrades

Alabuga SEZ, Russia
 Aqaba International Industrial Estate, Jordan
 Astana – New City, Kazakhstan
 Ceara Free Trade Zone, Brazil
 Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic
 Coyol Free Zone and Business Park, Costa Rica
 Dahej Special Economic Zone, India
 Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia
 Free Zone of Trieste, Italy
 FZ Subotica, Serbia
 FTZ No 74 Baltimore, US
 Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE
 Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Kaunas Free Economic Zone, Lithuania
 Ladol Logistics Free Zone, Nigeria
 ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia
 Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone, Uzbekistan
 Pirot FTZ, Serbia
 Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Starachowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

Zrenjanin FTZ, Serbia

Facilities upgrades

DMCC, UAE
 Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE
 Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone, UAE
 Salalah Free Zone, Oman
 Shannon Free Zone, Ireland
 Walbrzych Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Rakia, UAE

New investments

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK
 FTZ No 21 Dorchester County, US
 Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Kaunas Free Economic Zone, Lithuania
 Lipetsk SEZ, Russia
 Sohar Port & Freezone, Oman
 Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Expansions

Inhdelva EPZ, Honduras
 Alabuga SEZ, Russia
 Ceara Free Trade Zone, Brazil
 Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia
 Freeport Grand Bahama, Bahamas
 FTZ No 38 Spartanburg County, US
 Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland
 Klaipeda FEZ, Lithuania
 Masdar Free Zone, UAE
 Pirot FTZ, Serbia
 Shannon Free Zone, Ireland
 FZ Smederevo, Serbia

Ones to watch

Mariel Special Development Zone, Cuba
 Togliatti Industrial Zone, Russia

Port Infrastructure

Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia

Airport and port zone

Salalah Free Zone, Oman

Safe haven

Aqaba International Industrial Estate, Jordan

Contributing to national economic diversification

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic
 Freeport Grand Bahama, Bahamas

Railway access

Galati FTZ, Romania

Incentives to support infrastructure development

Free Zone of Trieste, Italy

Urban redevelopment

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Financial incentives

Pirot FTZ, Serbia

Visa-free access

Astana – New City, Kazakhstan

Export support

FTZ No 127 West Columbia, US

FTZ No 21 Dorchester County, US
 FTZ No 38 Spartanburg County, US

China strategy

Aqaba International Industrial Estate, Jordan
 Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, Poland

Aftercare

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Crossborder collaboration

Lodz Special Economic Zone, Poland

Soft landing for industrial investors

ZES NKOK-Gabon

Marketing slogan

DMCC, UAE

Ladol Logistics Free Zone, Nigeria

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

India strategy

Salalah Free Zone, Oman

Environmental responsibility

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Web strategy and marketing campaign

Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia

Development through difficult circumstances

Misurata Free Trade Zone, Libya

Cluster support

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Pirot FTZ, Serbia

SPECIALISM AWARDS

Advanced manufacturing

Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia

Automotive

Tanger Med Zones, Morocco

Aviation

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

BPO

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Digital services

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Education

Panama City of Knowledge, Panama

Headquarters

Salalah Free Zone, Oman

Pharmaceuticals and life sciences

Coyol Free Zone and Business Park, Costa Rica

Logistics

Lodz Special Economic Zone, Poland

R&D

Masdar Free Zone, UAE,

Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, Poland

Trade and commodities

DMCC, UAE

Wood manufacturing

ZES NKOK-Gabon



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- Duty free input of all raw materials/ machinery & equipment
- Training support



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Aqaba International Industrial Estate, Jordan

Aqaba International Industrial Estate has been commended for its **China strategy** in this year's Global Free Zone awards. The Chinese government's 'One Belt, One Road' policy is designed to encourage Chinese equity investment on historic Chinese trade routes, some of which run through Aqaba. In conjunction with the Shenzhen Chamber of Commerce and Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority market, the zone has opened an office in Shenzhen to exploit these Chinese opportunities, following trade missions to the city and throughout southern China. In an effort to further expand the zone's reach in the country, a private marketing company has been employed to navigate and determine the prospects in China. Aqaba International Industrial Estate has also been awarded the **safe haven** award, thanks to its efforts to market Jordan and the zone as a safe area in which investors can settle in the Middle East. Authorities in the zone are focusing on the relocation and expansion of Syrian and Libyan factories, in particular.

Astana – New City, Kazakhstan

Astana – New City has been commended for its **visa-free access**, with national agreements in place with 16 countries offering visa-free access. There also exists limited customs barriers to Russia, Belarus and Armenia for companies based in Kazakhstan, as a member of what was the Eurasian Economic Community, and is now the Eurasian Economic Union.

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

A newcomer to fDi's Global Free Zones of the Year awards, Birmingham Enterprise Zone has been commended for its **urban redevelopment**. The zone provides the Site Development and Access Fund, which is an £11m (\$14m) capital fund for companies that develop sites within the zone for the creation of jobs and new business. The 7600 square metres Garrison Data Centre was established in Digbeth on previously vacant industrial land and the £20m development will lead to the creation of 70 full-time jobs. Infrastructure developments have been carried out in the city-centre zone, including pedestrian routes to links within the enterprise zone, a planned extension of the metro transport system and works on the Ring Road Pinch Point schemes, allowing direct access to the zone from an effective road network. Companies relocating to the zone can take advantage of an aftercare relocation service, and the zone has also been commended for its **aftercare services**.

DMCC, UAE

Victorious in this year's Global Free Zones of the Year awards, DMCC has also been commended for its **marketing slogan**. 'DMCC – made for trade' conveys the message that the zone is active and specialised in trading in commodities, stocks and futures.

Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia

In total, \$32m has been invested in developments in the Free Port of Ventspils, contributing to its winning an award for **port infrastructure**. Access roads to the port have been established, a new berth was constructed that will accommodate a new general cargo terminal and a series of berths were repaired and strengthened. The port promenade was also renovated and two industrial facilities were brought online in 2015. Zone management has been commended for its international and targeted **web strategy and marketing campaign**, which has seen 6000 investors approached in Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and China through conferences, trade missions and roadshows. The zone also promotes itself via a dedicated website translated into English, Russian and Chinese.

Free Zone of Trieste, Italy

Long-term concessions are granted to investors investing in port infrastructure at Free Zone of Trieste, which has led to the zone being commended for its **incentives to support infrastructure development**. Investors can benefit from discounts of 50% when carrying out 'extraordinary maintenance of port facilities', 30% for investors warehousing timber and 20% to investors warehousing coffee.

Freeport Grand Bahama, Bahamas

Freeport Grand Bahama has been given an award for **contributing to national economic diversification**. Recognising itself as an industrial capital of the Bahamas, the zone is working to establish and expand investment in a range of other industries, including medical tourism, logistics, ICT and alternative energy. Canada-based Emera recently invested in an \$82m expansion of its power generation facility in the zone.

Galati FTZ, Romania

On the banks of the River Danube in eastern Romania, Galati FTZ offers strong links to a range of transport networks, presenting investors in manufacturing with plentiful opportunities to import and export both parts and their products. The zone has been commended for its **railway access** in this year's awards, ▶

with investors enjoying direct links to large gauge railways which run to former Soviet Union states, including Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan.

Ladol Logistics Free Zone, Nigeria

“Ladol offers limitless opportunities to limitless industries opening west Africa to a limitless future.” Ladol Logistics Free Zone has been commended for its **marketing slogan**, which delivers the hopeful message of growth and opportunity, which it aims to support throughout Nigeria. The zone claims that for each job created in the zone, five are created outside its base. The zone has the opportunity to decrease poverty in the country and give people access to skilled jobs.

Lodz Special Economic Zone, Poland

A co-founder in the LODZigistics cluster, a business logistic network cluster for central Poland, Lodz Special Economic Zone has been commended for its **cross-border collaboration** in this year’s awards. The cluster aims to coordinate the development of the logistics industry in the region, and will also collaborate with Logistics in Wallonia, the largest such cluster in Europe. The co-operation combines more than 300 companies, which will work together in the fields of logistics projects and in-common best practices.

Misurata Free Trade Zone, Libya

Given an award for its **development through difficult circumstances**, Misurata Free Trade Zone saw an increase in its employee numbers of more than 56% between 2014 and 2015. The zone has been expanded with the addition of Site B – a 3000-hectare space with infrastructure developments designed to attract new investors.

Pirot FTZ, Serbia

Commended for its **financial incentives**, Pirot FTZ offers investors a range of attractive options to encourage investment. Exports are tax free to countries in south-east Europe and Russia, while labour costs are competitive and corporation tax stands at 15%. For investments that create more than 100 new jobs and bring in capital investment of at least €8.5m, the zone offers a 10-year tax holiday on corporate profits. A support grant is offered to start-up companies of up to €8100 or 50% of the total investment, and grants of up to 25% are available for the purchase of equipment for SME companies, up to a value of €20,000. Pirot FTZ has also been recognised for its **cluster support** in this year’s awards, following the construction of 14,000 square



Galati lies on the Danube river in Romania. Its free trade-zone offers strong links to a range of transport networks

metres of facilities specifically intended for the warehousing of automotive tyres. Tigar Tyres, a subsidiary of France-based Michelin, is the zone’s anchor tenant, following a €215m expansion several years ago.

Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, Poland

Taking note of China’s growth strategies and the colossal opportunity that lies there, Pomeranian Special Economic Zone has been commended for its **China strategy** in this year’s awards. The zone is taking action to develop its logistics in line with the Chinese government’s New Silk Road strategy, creating an area in Biala Podlaska that will house a dry reloading port for cargo that will reach China by rail.

Salalah Free Zone, Oman

Commended for its **port infrastructure** in this year’s awards, Salalah Free Zone is among the top 20 transshipment ports globally, and is operated by AP Moller. A free-trade agreement offers market ▶



Gabon's dense forests (pictured) are a major factor behind ZES NKOK-Gabon's success, as is the soft landing it offers to industrial investors

reach to east Africa, Europe and the US. In 2015, Salalah Free Zone opened an office in India in order to tap into the increasing opportunities offered by the country. This led to the zone being commended for its **India strategy**.

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Winner of the western Europe category, Shannon Free Zone has also been commended for its **marketing slogan** and the **cluster support** offered to its investors. "The world's first free zone. Home of duty free. Home of aircraft leasing. Home of innovation. Why not call us 'home' too?" This slogan conveys the aim of the zone to establish itself as a major aviation hub. Dedicated facilities, marketing strategies and incentives are designed to boost the aviation sector in the zone, supported by direct air links to North America and throughout Europe.

ZES NKOK-Gabon

Commended for the **soft landing for industrial investors** existing at the zone, ZES NKOK-Gabon offers investors rent-

free industrial sheds within its furniture cluster for periods of between 18 and 24 months. This allows investors to establish business in the country and have a trial period with a low level of risk before committing to a longer term investment.

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

More than 1500m pesos (\$32.3m) are paid in local expenses from Zona Franca Santiagoto businesses throughout the rest of the Dominican Republic, which positively impacts a range of sectors, including local retail companies, transportation companies and local industry. This led to the zone receiving an award for **contributing to the national economic diversification**. The zone was also recognised for its **environmental responsibility**, reusing rainwater for maintaining green space in the zone, generating solar power and providing green space for the development of forestry land in order to offset carbon activity from industrial activity in the zone.

Commended for supporting education and training

■ In a move that will support the education and training aspirations of future investors, Russia's **Alabuga SEZ** has established the Alabuga corporate university. Last year the establishment offered unique training for 25 students in existing manufacturing operations, from a total of 1600 applicants.

■ The local government has worked with zone authorities in **Ceara Free Trade Zone** in Brazil to establish a vocational training centre close to the free zone.

■ Specialised training programmes are offered at the Center of Innovation and Vocational Training in **Zona Franca Santiago** in the Dominican Republic. Courses at the centre are developed in line with specific tenants' needs, and to date more than 14,000 people have been trained.

■ An expansion of the local college is planned for **Freeport Grand Bahama, Bahamas**. The Bahamas Northern Campus will provide skilled employ- ▶

ees to potential investors.

■ Programmes to train students in the marine, logistics and transport sectors begin in the high schools surrounding **FTZ No 74 Baltimore** in the US, and extend through post-secondary education. This ensures potential investors have a ready supply of sector-trained staff to support growth in their business.

■ Companies investing in **Katowice Special Economic Zone** in Poland cooperate with local technical and vocational schools, taking an active role in shaping the curriculum and offering practical classes to students in their facilities. In addition, the zone's Competence Centre is equipped with replica production lines to train staff effectively.

■ New courses have been added to the programme on offer from Kaunas University of Technology, upon consultation with **Kaunas Free Economic Zone** in Lithuania. Scandinavian language courses are now available for students, as well as maintenance and repair engineering and specialised ICT courses.

■ A new centre of excellence has been proposed at **Lipetsk SEZ** in Russia, to ensure that links between investors and educa-

tion institutions can be strengthened and internship programmes improved.

■ Located in central Poland, **Lodz Special Economic Zone** co-operates closely with the local Lifelong Learning Centre of New Technologies. The institution organises technical courses, including practical classes with investors. The zone was involved in the opening of the second school in Kutno, one of the sub-zones of Lodz SEZ.

■ **Panama City of Knowledge** is undertaking an international marketing campaign to attract more education institutions, offering special visas for students, professors and researchers.

■ A professional technical university is present in **PIISA Parque Industrial** in the Dominican Republic, where specialised education programmes are on offer.

■ Each term, the mayor of **Smederevo** in Serbia briefs local high schools on which companies have established themselves or developed in **Free Zone Smederevo**, and the particular skillsets these companies will require, with the aim of ensuring a readily trained employee base for investors.

■ In 2015, **Starachowice Special Economic Zone** in Poland established a

regional cluster of vocational education, which aims to bring closer local education institutions and investors in the zone, making sure any gaps in available skills have been plugged. The zone also supports English language lessons to make sure employees are prepared with necessary language skills.

■ Seven company-sponsored classes have been established in **Walbrzych Special Economic Zone** in Poland as part of the zone's Invest in EDU education cluster, which aims to adapt vocational education to the local labour market needs.

■ In 2015, furniture manufacturing specialist zone **ZES NKOK-Gabon** signed a partnership agreement with French school of design Ensad to give students in France the opportunity to complete an internship at the zone, exchanging ideas and competences with companies located there.

■ Training programmes are offered by local education institutions in collaboration with **Zona Franca de Occidente** in Colombia to ensure a ready supply of skilled labour to potential investors.

■ **Zona Franca Santander** in Colombia has an ambitious initiative for getting ▶



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young people back into the workforce – the ‘40,000 Jobs Programme’. The programme offers a 50% discount on wages for young professionals, with the aim of getting more young people into work for the first time. The zone also provides access to the government’s PTP English training programme to ensure staff are equipped for international investors with English language skills.

Commended for start-up support

■ The Middle East’s first Google for Entrepreneurs Global Tech Hub was launched with AstroLabs Dubai at DMCC, providing start-up companies with a place from which they can grow their companies.

■ **Free Port of Ventspils** in Latvia operates in close collaboration with Idea Studio, a pre-incubator that works to support the development of start-up companies.

■ In Zory, an area of **Katowice Special Economic Zone** in Poland, office space infrastructure is being developed specifically for start-up companies.

■ Hot desks are offered to start-up companies and SMEs in **Masdar Free Zone**, UAE, allowing these companies to establish a presence in the zone in a more affordable manner. The zone is also home to ‘the Catalyst’, a technology start-up accelerator aiming to drive forward the growth of clean technology and sustainability start-up companies.

■ A support programme is offered to start-up companies in **Piroć FTZ**, Serbia, where companies can benefit from a 50% subsidy of between €2500 and €8100 on their investment.

■ Laboratories, a conference centre and virtual office are on offer to start-ups and SMEs in **Pomeranian Special Economic Zone**, Poland, and the zone also helps with the cost of legal advice, tax and accounting training for investing companies.

■ **Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone** in the UAE runs its annual Startup Champ Competition, whereby start-up companies can present innovative business plans with the aim of winning a complete business set-up package. Other incentives to attract start-up companies include a free trading licence for two years, 20 hours of free use of the Boulevard hourly desk and the chance to win a one-kilogram gold bar.

■ The International Aviation Services Centre at **Shannon Free Zone** in Ireland has a dedicated start-up business accelerator programme, offering a ‘boot camp’ training workshop for companies in the aviation sector. The aim of the programme is to prepare the start-up companies for a successful entry into market.

■ Incentives are offered to micro companies in **Zagreb Free Zone**, Croatia, and in 2015 existing facilities were redesigned and modified to cater to new SMEs.

■ Start-up companies investing in **Zrenjanin FTZ**, Serbia, have access to free fully equipped offices in a business incubator to give them time to operate in the zone with more limited risk and capital investment.

Commended for infrastructure upgrades

■ A new distribution substation, water supply and gas pipelines are some of the development work that was undertaken in **Alabuga SEZ** in Russia throughout the first half of 2016, while the second half of the year will see the building of a new railway line and a new fire station.

■ **Aqaba International Industrial Estate** in Jordan has signed an agreement to acquire 1 million square metres of land in order to extend the zone. The land is located south of the city, and close to port facilities.

■ A second park is also planned for **Astana – New City** in Kazakhstan, where Park No 2 will focus on the development of machinery, chemicals and pharmaceutical sectors, among others.

■ **Pecém seaport**, located near Brazil’s **Ceara Free Trade Zone**, has been expanded to allow access to post-Panamex ships, and road access to the zone from the port has been improved.

■ **Zona Franca Santiago** in the Dominican Republic has invested in a range of infrastructure developments, including the design of a primary medical care facility, improved power supply, improved telecommunications designed to enhance wireless capability through the zone, and increased power from solar generation.

■ Electric power has been moved underground at **Coyol Free Zone and Business Park** in Costa Rica, connecting areas of the zone to the main electrical substation for a more stable connection. In addition, the zone has invested in increased water capacity, internal roads infrastructure and an LED lighting system throughout the park.

■ A new parking area has been constructed at **Dahej Special Economic Zone** in India, as part of a series of infrastructure developments that have also seen the construction of an additional underground sump for water storage, road upgrades and the development of a cargo port and jetty, to allow the transport of goods by sea.

■ In 2015, two new industrial buildings were brought online in **Latvia’s Free Port of Ventspils**. A new berth and general cargo terminal were also con- ▶



The free zone in Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE (pictured) has been commended for its support offered to start-ups

structed at the port, while a shipping channel in the River Venta was deepened to facilitate shipping.

■ A new logistics platform and multi-purpose terminal were inaugurated at the **Free Zone of Trieste** in Italy, and a new rail terminal next to the zone will improve transport efficiency.

■ Serbia's **Free Zone Subotica** expanded by more than 400,000 square metres in 2015, and nearly half has been equipped with infrastructure.

■ Plans have been implemented to develop Port Covington, a 105-hectare urban redevelopment project in **FTZ No 74 Baltimore** in the US, which will include the creation of new parks, new roads and improvements in access to the zone via road and rail.

■ More than 400 new light industrial units and warehouses are planned for **Jebel Ali Free Zone** in the UAE, and will cater to supply chain and logistics companies. Onsite residences, with retail space, recreation areas and restaurants will be constructed, in addition to multi-storey warehouses and a multi-storey car storage facility.

■ A new office building has been constructed in Tychy, part of **Katowice Special Economic Zone** in Poland, and a 9 million-square-metre expansion is planned for the zone as part of the K2 project.

■ An airplane taxiway has been constructed between **Kaunas Free Economic Zone** and Kaunas airport in Lithuania, while roadworks both in and around the zone have also improved connectivity, including entrance connected to the A1 road. A 5000-square-metre office block and a 2000-square-metre laboratory are due to be completed in 2017.

■ **Ladol Logistics Free Zone** in Nigeria has constructed a floating production storage and offloading fabrication and integration yard, and plans are under way to deliver a 50-megawatt power plant. By the end of 2016, a 100-metre-high crane will be installed at the zone, offering the highest lifting capacity in Africa.

■ A new toll gate is due to come online in **ModernCikande Industrial Estate**, Indonesia, during 2016, along with a new electricity substation and a water treatment plant. There are plans for a 1000-hectare expansion of the zone.

■ In 2015, a 478-megawatt power plant was built in Uzbekistan's **Navoi Free Industrial Economic Zone**, while its water dam has doubled in capacity. The telecommunications infrastructure in the park has also improved, following investment from South Korea's Hanjin Group.

■ An interchange to the Corridor X highway – a project connecting



Tychy (pictured), which plays host to part of Katowice Special Economic Zone in Poland, is an automotive hub

Belgrade with Nis, Sofia and Istanbul – has been established at the entrance to **Pirot FTZ** in Serbia, in addition to a logistics centre with an intermodal terminal and 35 hectares of space for warehouses and other facilities.

■ An extension has been planned for **Pomeranian Special Economic Zone** in Poland, with plans for an additional zone in Biala Podlaska, which will include a dry reloading port that will have railway access to China.

■ A water supply system and sewerage structure were developed in 2015 in **Starachowice Special Economic Zone**, Poland, to meet investor needs. Plans are also in place for a 910,000-square-metre extension to the zone.

■ The cargo airport Zrenjanin has been reconstructed, as part of development activity at **Zrenjanin FTZ** in Serbia, which has also seen the reconstruction on a port on the River Bega. Regional roads have been expanded for improved traffic flow, and the industrial railway has been extended for the transport of goods.

Commended for facilities upgrades

■ One JLT, a glass-box style building was completed in the heart of **DMCC** in the UAE, which also became home to Modul University Vienna in 2015, when its first overseas campus was opened in the zone.

■ Office space was added to **Jebel Ali Free Zone** in UAE, in the first phase of the Jafza One Tower expansion. The second phase will be ready by the end of 2016. In addition, existing facilities in the zone were retrofitted with more energy-efficient systems, reducing consumption by 30% in total.

■ The Gdansk Science and Technology Park, part of **Polish Pomeranian Special Economic Zone**, has been expanded to attract investment in R&D and advanced technology, while modern technical infrastructure has been introduced throughout the park. ▶

■ **Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone** in the UAE has upgraded the electrical infrastructure of its Technology Park, giving clients a permanent power supply. The zone has also inaugurated 100 warehouses with full connectivity to permanent water and electricity supplies.

■ Agreements have been signed by **Salalah Free Zone** in Oman to develop amenities in the zone, including rainwater drainage, sewerage and communications.

■ **Shannon Free Zone** in Ireland has completed many upgrades to its facilities, including addition office space and upgrades for several of its clients. The zone has developed the landscape across the site, including the demolition of 23,000 square metres of manufacturing facilities to make way for future developments.

■ New warehousing and production facilities have been established in Nowa Ruda, Boleslawiec and Klodzko, part of **Walbrzych Special Economic Zone** in Poland, and these were equipped with necessary infrastructure that SMEs could start their business. In the past year, four production floors have been constructed in the zone and are ready for lease or sale.

■ Street lighting is now installed across **Rakia** in Dubai, where 72 new warehouses will accommodate SMEs conducting light manufacturing or warehousing operations.

Commended for new investments

■ **Birmingham Enterprise Zone**, UK – HSBC – relocation of UK headquarters.

■ **FTZ No 21 Dorchester County**, US – Volvo – new plant will manufacture more than 150,000 vehicles and create 3000 jobs.

■ **Katowice Special Economic Zone**, Poland – Mubea Automotive – €50m investment in a new manufacturing facility, creating 350 jobs.

■ **Kaunas Free Economic Zone**, Lithuania – DPD (La Poste) – €6.5m investment in the largest and most modern parcel terminal in the Baltic states.

■ **Lipetsk SEZ**, Russia – Schlumberger – €58m investment in a manufacturing plant due to come online in 2018.

■ **Sohar Port & Freezone**, Oman – Jiangsu Changbao – a \$20m manufacturing plant from the Chinese company to produce 50,000 tonnes of special pipes annually. ▶

“DESPITE THE CURRENTLY LOW OIL PRICES AND ALL THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC VOLATILITY WE’VE BEEN SEEING, WE HAVE HAD A VERY GOOD RUN RECENTLY AT SOHAR. THROUGHPUT AT THE PORT CONTINUES TO INCREASE STEADILY AND RECENTLY WENT OVER 1 MILLION TONNES A WEEK FOR THE FIRST TIME... WE’RE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF THE FDI INVESTMENT AWARD AS WE HAD SOME KEY ANCHOR PROJECTS PUSH THROUGH”

Marc Evertse, executive commercial manager, Sohar Port & Freezone



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- \$2 billion of declared investments
- 3 000 ha of land

* National annual award founded by Vnesheconombank, the State Corporation for Development and International Economic Affairs, bestowed upon companies for outstanding accomplishments in running infrastructural projects and investment facilitation

More on Lipetsk SEZ at www.sezlipetsk.com

■ **Zona Franca Santander**, Colombia – IBM – established a Cognitive Health Center to become a centre of excellence for health innovation and research.

Commended for expansions

■ **Inhdelva EPZ**, Honduras – Crowley Logistics – 10,000-square-metre expansion of its logistics centre.

■ **Alabuga SEZ**, Russia – Kastamonu – a \$250m expansion increasing production capacity for MDF panels from 475 cubic metres to 837 cubic metres.

■ **Ceara Free Trade Zone**, Brazil – Vale, Dongkuk Steel and Posco (joint venture) – doubling of steel slab production, and expansion of facilities to more than 9.85 million square metres, from its current 5.3 million square metres.

■ **Free Port of Ventspils**, Latvia – Malmar Sheet Metal – \$6.3m expansion in its machinery engineering and metal-working operation.

■ **Freeport Grand Bahama**, Bahamas – Hutchison Port Holdings – a \$250m expansion of its container port.

■ **FTZ No 38 Spartanburg County**, US – BMW – German automotive company is investing in a \$1bn expansion in the coming two years, making its largest plant worldwide. It will produce 450,000 vehicles annually and employ 8800 people.

■ **Katowice Special Economic Zone**, Poland – NGK Ceramica – the company's initial investment has multiplied tenfold, and now employs 2500 people.

■ **Klaipeda FEZ**, Lithuania – Albright – will expand its presence in the zone with a €100,000 warehousing development.

■ **Masdar Free Zone**, UAE – 15% of all companies in the zone have expanded their presence since 2015, with 89% responding positively to a survey, indicating they were considering further expansion in the near future.

■ **Pirot FTZ**, Serbia – Tigar Tyres – investment of nearly €90m in the construction of new production and storage facilities.

■ **Shannon Free Zone**, Ireland – GE Measurement & Control – a 6200-square-metre extension to its 3000-square-metre facility.

■ **FZ Smederevo**, Serbia – PKC Group – expanded its workforce from 369 workers in 2014 to 973 in 2015.

Ones to watch



Established in only November 2013, and a newcomer to fDi's Global Free Zones of the Year awards, **Mariel Special Development Zone** in Cuba has been nominated on this year's list of 'ones to watch'. Employee numbers in the zone increased from 365 to more than 1900 between 2014 and 2015, and the number of SME tenants increased from one to nine. The zone has been working to develop basic infrastructure, including roads, telecommunications and electricity, and has constructed a smart building business centre.



Mariel Special Development Zone in Cuba has been nominated as 'ones to watch' among global free zones

Togliatti Industrial Zone in Russia has also been included in the 'ones to watch' list, with the first stage of the zone inaugurated in 2015. The area spans 181 hectares, and it is complete with communications and utilities. Construction on the second stage is already under way, with 246 hectares to develop before it is scheduled to come online in 2017.

Export support

- **FTZ No 127 West Columbia**, US
- **FTZ No 21 Dorchester County**, US
- **FTZ No 38 Spartanburg County**, US

These three zones benefit from South Carolina's state export incentive programmes, which have assisted companies in the state to sell their goods to more than 25 countries. The port authority works closely with its partners to promote and encourage exports.

Specialism awards



Advanced manufacturing

Free Port of Ventspils, Latvia
The zone is home to Ventspils High Technology Park, which was recently expanded to include an electronics centre, a technology centre and an interactive demo and science centre. The interactive demo and science centre will work as a showroom for products manufactured in the zone, while the electronics and technology centres will allow advanced manufacturing companies to operate with modern facilities.

Automotive

Tanger Med Zones, Morocco
Tanger Med Zones offers incentives to manufacturing companies in the automotive sector in an effort to support ►

investment attraction in these industries. Investors can take advantage of subsidies of up to 30% of the total investment capital.

Aviation

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

In receipt of the specialism award for aviation for the second year running, Shannon Free Zone has carved out an important niche for itself in the aviation sector. The zone's International Aviation Services Centre is responsible for the marketing and promotion of the cluster through a variety of means including events and publications. A start-up business accelerator programme is offered specifically for companies in the aviation sector and customs warehousing is offered to aircraft lessors in particular. Major investors include GE Measurement & Control and Magellan Aviation Group.

BPO

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Zona Franca Santander targets business process outsourcing companies explicitly, and has developed a business plan for global services, in collaboration with Invest in Santander and Procolombia. The zone offers access to training programmes in English, to ensure a supply of bilingual staff.

Digital services

Birmingham Enterprise Zone, UK

Birmingham Enterprise Zone puts a focus on the development of digital media, creative industries and ICT, which has been supported by the construction of the £35m (\$44.6m) i-Centrum building. This building is designed to house and support the development of start-up companies and tech entrepreneurs and is located at the Innovation Birmingham Campus.

Education

Panama City of Knowledge, Panama

Panama City of Knowledge has embarked upon an international campaign to attract highly ranked universities to establish themselves on-site. The zone offers special visas to technicians, researchers and professors, as well as students.

Headquarters

Salalah Free Zone, Oman

A new headquarter building will be opened at Salalah Free Zone in Oman by the end of 2016. The 20,000-square-metre facility will offer office space and a business centre to investors.

Pharmaceuticals and life sciences

Coyol Free Zone and Business Park, Costa Rica



Birmingham in the UK (pictured) is at the forefront of offering digital services among free zones

A range of companies from the life sciences and pharmaceutical sectors have established as Coyol Free Zone and Business Park, which is becoming something of a cluster for the industry. Abbott Vascular, St Jude Medical, Philips, CooperVision, Smith & Nephew and Cardinal Health all call the zone home.

Logistics

Lodz Special Economic Zone, Poland

Co-founder of LODZistics, a specialised logistics cluster, Lodz Special Economic Zone is dedicated to developing logistics and warehousing investment in central and eastern Europe. The zone also co-operates with Logistics in Wallonia, a cluster of more than 300 companies and the largest logistics cluster in Europe. Additional warehousing facilities are planned for the zone, and the first stage of 10,000 square metres of space will be available in 2017.

R&D

Masdar Free Zone, UAE

A new R&D centre is planned for Masdar Free Zone, which will increase the space available to develop innovations from Masdar Institute of Science and Technology. The zone has a partnership with the institute, offering access to education and research facilities.

R&D

Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, Poland

An expansion of the Gdansk Science and Technology Park in Pomeranian Special

Economic Zone offers research and advanced technology companies a place to invest where there exists a focus on R&D and where companies have the support of the zone. The constructor's park in Gdynia has been developed to house engineers, architects and specialists, and provides prototype workshops and design studios.

Trade and commodities

DMCC, UAE

Gold and diamond vaults are available to investors in DMCC, where trading platforms such as the Dubai Gold & Commodities Exchange and the Dubai Diamond Exchange are based. The zone offers a dedicated online platform for registering ownership of commodities stored in UAE-based storage facilities. The zone's tea centre handled 45 million kilograms of tea in 2015.

Wood manufacturing

ZES NKOK-Gabon

An established furniture cluster, ZES NKOK-Gabon offers investors in the wood production sector a wide range of benefits. Companies can access a log park and kiln dryer facility, both of which can limit set-up costs for wood industry investors. The zone has a partnership with Ensad, a furniture design college in France, whereby students can complete relevant internships in the zone. In addition, furniture manufacturers have access to a forest concession giving them free raw material and the country's government is in the process of establishing a wood exchange, similar to that of a stock exchange. ■