



**fDi**  
FREE ZONES  
OF THE YEAR  
2015

# Global Free Zones of the Year 2015 – Winners

**fDi'S GLOBAL FREE ZONES OF THE YEAR CELEBRATES THOSE ZONES THAT ARE BEST IN CLASS, BE IT WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE REGIONS, AT PROVIDING FOR A PARTICULAR SIZE OF CLIENT, OR IMPROVING THEIR OFFERING THROUGH REINVESTMENTS, EXPANSIONS OR UPGRADES. CATHY MULLAN REPORTS**

## Winners – global



### **Winner – Global**

DMCC Free Zone, United Arab Emirates

Featured in fDi's Global Free Zones of the Year awards in 2014, DMCC Free Zone has been crowned this year's global winner and also the winner in the Middle East region. Located in the most populous city in the United Arab Emirates, the free zone is home to nearly 10,000 companies and more than 85,000 employees.

Over 94% of new members are new to Dubai, welcomed to the zone with state-of-the-art offices and a wide range of assistance to help them set up quickly and start trading. The DMCC service centre offers an array of services, including licence registration, visa application, banking and insurance services.

The zone is in the process of a major

expansion of its Burj 2020 District, which is home to the world's tallest commercial building – Burj 2020. The expansion will add about 1.3 million square metres of capacity to the zone – a mix of commercial, retail and hotel facilities – all of which contributed towards DMCC winning a bespoke award for its facilities upgrades. DMCC was also named as the winner for SME tenants in the Middle East, with 70% of its tenants falling into this bracket.

### **Highly commended – Global**

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

Katowice Special Economic Zone, located in southern Poland, has finished the runner-up of all global zones in this year's awards. The winner in the Europe, and central and eastern Europe regions,

Katowice Special Economic Zone boasted more than 230 tenants in 2014, with SME tenancy rates rising by 16% and large tenants by just over 5%.

The zone, also commended for its skills and training, has several initiatives in place to increase tenant numbers and attract investors. Among these, the 'K2' project allows companies to manage their human resources, helping companies find appropriate graduates for jobs on offer, as well as helping improve technical education in the local region.

The past year has seen an additional 2.8 million square metres of space incorporated into the zone, which has been equipped with road, gas, water, sewage and electricity infrastructure, gaining the zone a bespoke award for infrastructure developments.

## Winners



### OVERALL WINNER

DMCC Free Zone, UAE

### Highly commended

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

### REGIONAL WINNERS

#### Winner – Africa

Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

#### Highly commended – Africa

Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

#### Honourable mentions – Africa

Lekki Free Zone, Nigeria; ZES NKOK, Gabon

#### Winner – Asia

Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines

#### Highly commended – Asia

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

#### Honourable mentions – Asia

ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

Astana – New City, Kazakhstan

#### Winner – Europe

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

#### Highly commended – Europe

Walbrzych Special Economic Zone, Poland

#### Honourable mentions – Europe

Klaipeda Free Economic Zone, Lithuania

Alabuga SEZ, Russia

#### Winner – Latin America and Caribbean

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

#### Highly commended – Latin America and Caribbean

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

#### Honourable mentions – Latin America and Caribbean

Montego Bay Free Zone, Jamaica

ZIP Porvenir, Honduras

#### Winner – Middle East

DMCC Free Zone, UAE

#### Highly commended – Middle East

Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

#### Honourable mentions – Middle East

Ras Al Khaimah FTZ, UAE

TwoFour54, UAE

#### Winner – North America

FTZ No 74 Baltimore, Maryland US

#### Highly commended – North America

FTZ No 21 and No 38 South Carolina, US

#### Honourable mention – North America

Keystone Opportunity Zone,

Pennsylvania, US

Texas – No 68, US

New York – No 1, US

### SUB-REGIONAL RESULTS

#### Winner – north Africa

Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

#### Winner – sub-Saharan Africa

Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

#### Winner – central Asia

Astana – New City, Kazakhstan

#### Winner – south and south-east Asia

Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines

#### Winner – east Asia

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

#### Winner – western Europe

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

#### Winner – south-eastern Europe

Free Zone Pirot, Serbia

#### Winner – central and eastern Europe

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

#### Winner – South America

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

#### Winner – central America

ZIP Porvenir, Honduras

#### Winner – Caribbean

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

### SME AWARDS

#### Winner – SME – Africa

Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

#### Highly commended – SME – Africa

Lekki Free Zone, Nigeria

#### Winner – SME – Europe

Lodz SEZ, Poland

#### Highly commended – SME – Europe

Katowice SEZ, Poland

#### Winner – SME – Latin America and Caribbean

ZIP Porvenir, Honduras

#### Highly commended – SME – Latin America and Caribbean

Zona Franca de Iquique, Chile

#### Winner – SME – Middle East

DMCC Free Zone, UAE

#### Highly commended – SME – Middle East

TwoFour54, UAE

#### Winner – SME – North America

Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ), US

### LARGE TENANTS AWARDS

#### Winner – large tenants – Africa

Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

#### Highly commended – large tenants

– Africa Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

#### 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

Katowice SEZ, Poland

#### Winner – large tenants – Latam and Caribbean

Manaus Free Trade Zone, Brazil

#### Highly commended – large tenants – Latam and Caribbean

Zona Franca Romana, Dominican Republic

#### Winner – large tenants – Middle East

Dubai Industrial City, UAE

#### Highly commended – large tenants – Middle East

Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

#### Winner – large tenants – North America

FTZ No 74 Baltimore, Maryland US

## Winners – regional



### Winner – Africa

Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

Tanger Free Zone appeared just once in 2014's awards, winning a bespoke award for its facility upgrades. Those upgrades appear to have paid off, as the zone has gone on to be named the winning zone for Africa and north Africa, as well as picking up awards as best zone for SMEs in Africa and runner-up for large tenants in the region.

The zone increased its SME tenancy rates by 36.4% between 2013 and 2014, while large tenant occupancy increased by more than 19%, resulting in the crea-

tion of 12,000 jobs in the zone. Export turnover in the zone increased from €2.6bn to €4bn, with the main target markets for companies being the US, Europe and Africa.

The recently opened 150-hectare TetouanPark is dedicated to SME investment. The zone was also commended for its skills and training, following the opening of two training centres, ensuring the provision of skilled labour in the zone, with a particular focus on automotive and offshoring industries.

### Highly commended – Africa

Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

Ladol Free Zone has finished runner-up for the Africa region, as well as winning the sub-Saharan Africa region. The zone offers round-the-clock operating hours for its tenants with full services. Its close proximity to deep offshore fields has increased its attractiveness, particularly to large tenants, helping the zone to secure the award for large tenants in Africa – occupancy rates for which have increased 37.5% ▶

between 2013 and 2014. Samsung Heavy Industries recently partnered with Ladol to deliver a floating production storage and offloading vessel which, combined with docking and repair services available at the zone, now allow oil and gas companies access to services previously only available in Cape Town in South Africa. In addition, Ladol was given a bespoke award in honour of its self-sufficient policies. The final months of 2015 will see the opening of a \$50m power plant, which will allow Ladol to offer a dependable electricity supply to clients, independent of the national grid.

**Winner – Asia-Pacific**

Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines

Subic Bay Freeport has been crowned winner of the Asia region, as well as picking up the award for best zone in south Asia and south-east Asia. The zone has a vast and supportive infrastructure, including an international airport and seaport. Subic Bay Freeport has encouraged many of its companies to reinvest, leading the zone to be commended in this year’s awards for its reinvestment. Companies such as HHIC PHIL (increasing its workforce from 25,000 to 27,000) and Sanyo Denki (building a second manufacturing plant and increasing production capacity of cooling fans) have made major strides in increasing their operations in the zone in the last year. Subic Bay, also commended for its infrastructure developments, has

invested in two major projects, including the construction of two additional berths with a total capacity of 600,000 TEUs and the construction of a bypass road to a container terminal in Bataan province, allowing for easier export and import for clients.

**Highly commended – Asia-Pacific**

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Employing 264,400 people in its zone in 2014, Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone is home to many multinational companies, including Total and Shell Group. Runner-up in the Asia region and winner of the east Asia region in this year’s awards, Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone is home to more than 20,000 SME tenants, up nearly 40% between 2013 and 2014. A financial innovation system has been introduced to the zone, set to open up the financial service sector and attract foreign capital and help domestic companies ‘go global’.

**Winner – Europe**

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

**Highly commended – Europe**

Walbrzych Special Economic Zone, Poland

Located in southern Poland, close to the border with the Czech Republic, Walbrzych Special Economic Zone is the runner-up in this year’s Global Free Zone of the Year awards for Europe. Employee numbers in the zone ▶



Subic Bay has been commended for its infrastructure developments

**Methodology**

fDi’s Global Free Zones of the Year Awards 2015 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, 76 entries were received from free zones across the world. A panel of judges from fDi’s editorial and research teams studied each location. Judges nominated their winning and runner-up locations in each region, as well as their top zones for the SMEs and large tenant categories.

In addition, some locations that were particularly outstanding have been acknowledged with honourable mentions and bespoke awards. Judges’ votes were combined with data received from the entry forms to create final results, based on a weightings system.

**WEIGHTINGS FOR RESULTS\***

	<b>WEIGHTING</b>
% increase in occupied space 2013-14	10
Number of SMEs 2014	1.25
% increase in SMEs 2013-2014	2.5
Nominal increase in SMEs 2013-14	2.5
Number of large tenants	1.25
% increase in large tenants 2013-14	2.5
Nominal increase in large tenants 2013-14	2.5
Total number of employees 2014	2.5
% increase in number of employees 2013-14	5
Nominal increase in employees 2013-14	5
Total scores of judges’ results	55
SME ranking	5
Large tenants ranking	5

\*Excluding SME and large tenant categories

**WEIGHTINGS FOR SME/LARGE TENANTS AWARDS**

	<b>WEIGHTING</b>
Number of large tenants/SMEs 2014	15
Large tenants/SME % growth rate	15
Large tenants/SME nominal growth rate	15
Judges’ rank (large tenants/SMEs)	55



Jebel Ali Free Zone has finished runner-up for the Middle East region in this year's awards

soared past 40,000 in 2014, a 10% increase on 2013's figures. Reinvestment projects also increased – from 17 reinvestment projects in 2013 to 33 in 2014, including reinvestments from major companies such as 3M, Colgate, Electrolux and Bosch. The zone offers a wide range of services for investors, including the construction of production floors for SMEs, coordination with local authorities and assistance in dealing with administration and utilities providers. Walbrzych Special Economic Zone was also recognised for its infrastructure developments and facilities upgrades, thanks in part to the construction of two new industrial storage facilities, and plans to construct two more (much larger) facilities.

**Winner – Latin America and Caribbean**

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Zona Franca Santiago has been named winning zone for the Latin America and Caribbean region, as well as the winning zone for the Caribbean sub-region. Located in the third most populous Caribbean country of Dominican Republic, nearly 20,000 people were employed in 2014 with the zone home to 57 SMEs and 20 large tenants. A specialised training centre is offered to clients, as well as an innovation and professional development centre, developing training programmes and tailoring employee specialisms specific to clients' needs. The zone was also recognised for its infrastructure developments, following the addition of a new park measuring 230,000 square metres, which included

a further 20 buildings. A housing development project is also under way, which will provide homes for 1500 employees in the zone.

**Highly commended – Latin America and Caribbean**  
Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

Zona Franca Santander has come runner-up in the Latin America region for this year's awards, also winning the award for best zone in the South America sub-region. Employee numbers in the zone increased by more than 85% in 2014, corresponding to an 84% increase in SME tenants in the same year. Zona Franca Santander was also commended for its skills and training efforts, having introduced two universities with training departments, with training programmes tailored to suit the requirements of the zone's clients. Zona Franca Santander was also in receipt of a specialism award, for its BPO and outsourcing investments. Zona Franca Santander Offshoring and Outsourcing Park, a new business park measuring 32 hectares, is the first of its kind in Colombia, dedicated solely to the global services industry.

**Winner – Middle East**  
DMCC Free Zone, UAE

**Highly commended – Middle East**  
Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

No stranger to fDi's Global Free Zones of the Year awards, Jebel Ali Free Zone has finished runner-up for the Middle East region in this year's awards, as well as taking the runner-up spot in the region

for large tenants. The zone is home to more than 2800 large tenants and some 4800 SME tenants, in total employing more than 160,000 people in 2014. The zone has attracted investments from major multinational companies, including Sony, Toshiba and Unilever. In total, 511 companies reinvested and expanded their existing presence in 2014, leading to a commendation for Jebel Ali Free Zone for its reinvestments. Judges were also impressed with the infrastructure developments the zone has undertaken in the past year, including a major road redevelopment programme, an entry gate project facilitating 16 lanes of entry traffic, and a major convention centre complex. Jebel Ali Free Zone was also commended for its start-up support programme, having established an incubation centre for SME companies from Japan, in addition to existing centres set up for companies from China, South Korea, Ukraine and Brazil.

**Winner – North America**  
FTZ No 74 Baltimore, Maryland US

Located close to the port in Baltimore, Maryland, FTZ No 74 has been crowned winner of the North America region, as well as best zone in North America for large tenants. Connectivity is key in the zone, with direct access to Baltimore port, one of the top 25 ports worldwide, and access to major rail and road lines of transportation. Importing and exporting to and from the zone thus becomes much easier, helping to attract tenants. A new auto berth at the port is longer and wider than its predecessor, and is also equipped to handle rail transport. The zone operators have undertaken a programme of awareness and education for potential investors, which has resulted in five new companies pledging to invest there.

**Highly commended – North America**  
FTZ No 21 and No 38 South Carolina, US

With more than 20,000 employees, FTZ No 21 and No 38 are runners-up in this year's Global Free Zones of the Year awards for North America. Multinational companies such as BMW, Fujifilm and Boeing have all located in the zone. Clients can benefit from the state of South Carolina's permanent foreign offices in Shanghai, Tokyo and Munich, as well as training and apprenticeship programmes customised for clients in the zone. There are plans to construct a dual intermodal rail yard, as well as a large budget which has been set aside to dredge the harbour, making it the deepest such facility on the east coast of the US. ▶

Winners –  
sub-regional



**Winner – north Africa**

Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

**Winner – sub-Saharan Africa**

Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

**Winner – central Asia**

Astana – New City, Kazakhstan

Winner of the central Asia sub-region award, and gaining an honourable mention in the Asia region, the Astana – New City special economic zone, in the capital of Kazakhstan, boasts more than 2.1 million square metres of occupied space and is home to over 2500 employees. Judges were impressed by the incentives offered by Astana, which has a focus on 18 ‘priorities’, compared with the average of three elsewhere in Kazakhstan. These priorities include furniture production, aircraft and space craft, and railway locomotives and rolling stock. Among the multinationals located in the zone, France-based Alstom (a rail infrastructure company) and Talgo (a Spain-based rolling stock company) are planning to develop a manufacturing cluster in a public-private partnership with local company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, earning Astana – New City a commendation for new investment.

**Winner – south and south-east Asia**

Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines

**Winner – east Asia**

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

**Winner – western Europe**

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Shannon Free Zone, has been crowned winner of the western Europe sub-region. Located close to Shannon Airport, the zone has the highest concentration of FDI in Ireland outside of Dublin, according to its awards submission. Companies in the zone, including Emerson, GE Capital and Intel, account for more than €3bn in trade annually. Shannon Free Zone has successfully tailored its incentives and offerings towards the aviation sector, resulting in a specialism award for this sector. The zone is also a globally recognised centre of excellence for aerospace. Its International Aviation Services Centre was established in 2014 to support a community of start-up businesses in the aviation sector, as well as providing other services such as R&D, education and training. This helped the zone to win a commendation for its start-up support.

**Winner – south-eastern Europe**

Free Zone Pirot, Serbia

In 2014, Free Zone Pirot’s 113 tenants enjoyed a range of benefits. The zone offers excellent infrastructure conditions for its investors, with a logistics centre completed there last year, enabling companies to move goods via road and rail, and also leading to a commendation in this year’s Global Free Zone awards for infrastructure developments. The construction of the Pan European Corridor X, which will connect Belgrade to Istanbul, is a mere 300 metres from Free Zone Pirot. The zone also recently expanded its free zone area by up to 400 hectares, an expansion that also enjoys links to highway infrastructure. Its tenants benefit from tax holidays of 10 years when investments exceed €8.5m and job creation surpasses 100.

**Winner – central and eastern Europe**

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland

**Winner – South America**

Zona Franca Santander, Colombia

**Winner – central America**

ZIP Porvenir, Honduras

Gaining an honourable mention for the Latin America and Caribbean region, ZIP Porvenir has also been crowned winner of the central America sub-region. More than 5500 people were employed in the zone in 2014, by its solely large tenants. Aiming to improve its attractiveness for SME tenants, ZIP Porvenir is undertaking a programme of modifications on existing facilities to accommodate smaller companies. Rental units, due to be completed in 2015, will measure 56 square metres at most, and tenants will have access to all the zone’s benefits.

ZIP Porvenir’s marketing department is also on hand to offer its services to smaller tenants. These initiatives helped the zone become the most attractive zone for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean in this year’s awards. The zone was also commended for reinvestment, following an expansion of Myron Corporation’s call centre. The zone prides itself on Myron’s investment, which was the first call centre in Honduras and led to a specialism award for the zone in BPO/outsourcing.

**Winner – Caribbean**

Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic

Winners –  
SMEs



**Winner – SME – Africa**

Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

Between 2013 and 2014, the number of SME tenants in Tanger Free Zone increased by more than 36%, to 341 in 2014. A new park – TetouanPark – was opened in 2014, dedicated to SMEs. Since opening, 50 new industrial projects have taken place there.

**Highly commended – SME – Africa**

Lekki Free Zone, Nigeria

Lekki Free Zone is keen to attract more SME tenants to its zone. In 2014, management at the zone began a programme of site clearing – clearing and levelling sites for prospective SME tenants, so preliminary site work would be completed for them, saving time and cost for clients.

**Winner – SME – Europe**

Lodz SEZ, Poland

While Lodz SEZ also attracts a large number of large tenants, the zone impressed judges with its efforts to accommodate and attract more SMEs, whose tenancy rates increased by 13% between 2013 and 2014. The zone has begun to develop office space, dedicated to SMEs and the BPO sector. There are also plans for the zone to develop production space specifically for SME tenants.

**Highly commended – SME – Europe**

Katowice SEZ, Poland

This year’s global runner-up, the Katowice SEZ proved attractive to SMEs with tenancy rates increasing 16% between 2013 and 2014, rising to 139 companies. The zone recently developed its ‘4S’ (‘For Silesia’) strategy, designed to attract developers and SMEs to underdeveloped parts of the region, to boost economic prosperity and employment.

**Winner – SME – Latin America and Caribbean**

ZIP Porvenir, Honduras

SME tenants have not always flocked to ZIP Porvenir, and the zone is making moves to rectify this. An existing facility in ZIP Porvenir is currently being modified to accommodate smaller companies. Due to be completed in the coming year, the facility will provide smaller units with all the free zone benefits. In ▶

addition, the marketing department at the zone is in place to fully support SME tenants with marketing strategies to improve their business.

**Highly commended – SME – Latin America and Caribbean**  
Zona Franca de Iquique, Chile

Zona Franca de Iquique is home to a huge number of SME tenants, more than 2100 in 2014 – which accounts for 99.7% of all its tenants. The government provides subsidies to SME companies hiring local workers in the zone, in amounts of up to 17% of the minimum income.

**Winner – SME – Middle East**  
DMCC Free Zone, UAE

This year's global winner, DMCC's SME tenancy rates increased nearly 30% between 2013 and 2014, with a total of 6720 SME companies resident in the

zone in 2014. In total, 70% of all DMCC's tenants are SME companies, and the zone was named the Global Free Zone of the Year for SMEs in last year's awards. Companies are drawn to the zone by the service centre on site, which quickly and efficiently processes companies so they can start operations.

**Highly commended – SME – Middle East**  
TwoFour54, UAE

As a media zone, tenant's units tend to be for SME companies with offices in TwoFour54. The zone is home to nearly 300 SME companies, making up over 91% of all its tenants. It offers flexible pricing options, as well as providing venture capital to select start-up companies.

**Winner – SME – North America**  
Keystone Opportunity Zone, US

By 2014, Keystone Opportunity Zone had 130 SME companies in operation, up nearly 7% from 2013. Several programmes are in place to encourage and assist SMEs and start-ups, and these are backed by Philadelphia City. The zone also has a programme in place to assist SME companies whose growth has accelerated quickly. If these companies outgrow their original facility, they can move to a larger space with no financial penalties. ▶



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## Winners – large tenants



### Winner – large tenants – Africa

Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

Large tenants in Ladol Free Zone increased some 37.5% between 2013 and 2014, due in part to the zone's close proximity to deep offshore oil fields. These attract large industrial companies, such as Samsung Heavy Industries, who typically require larger facilities for their operations.

Ladol's target sectors include oil and gas, maritime and engineering. The zone has also taken steps to increase support services for oil and gas companies, in particular.

### Highly commended – large tenants – Africa

Tanger Free Zone, Morocco

In total, 465 large tenants were operational in Tanger Free Zone in 2014 – an increase of nearly 20% from 2013. The zone aims to develop main industrial sectors in the zone, including automotive, aeronautics, electronics and textiles.

Investment incentives are available to companies in the automotive and textile sectors, with companies eligible for funding of up to 30% of total set-up costs. Trade events are also becoming popular in Tanger Free Zone, with Automotive Meeting Tanger Med being held in September 2014.

### Winner – large tenants – Asia

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone, China

Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone had 649 large tenants operating by the end of 2014, an increase of nearly 5% from 2013. Some large multinational companies are present in the zone, including Microsoft, Fiat, Shell, Sony, Total and Amazon.

There is also an interest in companies establishing regional headquarters, and with more than 60 companies' regional Asia headquarters in Shanghai (more than any other city on the Chinese mainland), Waigaoqiao Free Trade Zone is in a strong position to welcome these projects.

### Highly commended – large tenants – Asia

ModernCikande Industrial Estate, Indonesia

At the end of 2014, all 232 tenants in ModernCikande Industrial Estate were large tenants, employing 50,000 people. This represented an increase in overall tenancy rates of nearly 19% between

2013 and 2014. 'Built to meet your industrial needs' reads the marketing slogan, with a clear focus on industry, usually attracting large tenants. The zone is home to some big investors, including Cargill Indonesia, Mitsuba Indonesia and Indonesia Nippon Seiki.

### Winner – large tenants – Europe

Alabuga SEZ, Russia

Of Alabuga SEZ's 47 companies in 2014, nearly 90% of these were large tenants – with tenancy rates increasing nearly 24% from 2013 to 2014. The zone caters for production facilities, and is home to investors such as Ford and Air Liquide. Indeed, in 2014, Ford invested \$100m in a new production line for its Transit commercial vehicle model. Two industrial parks are operational in the zone, and have equipped facilities ready to receive investors.

### Highly commended – large tenants – Europe

Katowice SEZ, Poland

In 2014, more than 62% of the companies operating in Katowice SEZ were large tenants. Major investments in 2014 came from companies opening larger industrial operations, including European Packaging Solutions, which opened in the Gliwice sub-zone; Tenneco Automotive group, which made plans to establish a production facility, creating 700 jobs; and General Motors Manufacturing, which begun to construct its new engine plant in the Tychy sub-zone.

### Winner – large tenants – Latin America and the Caribbean

Manaus Free Trade Zone, Brazil

Manaus Free Trade Zone attracts a slew of international investors, including big names such as Samsung, Honda, Procter & Gamble and Coca-Cola. The majority of investment in the zone is in production, and close negotiations with companies surround facility expansions. These expansion projects are approved in conjunction with the development of new projects, for example, Semp Toshiba was approved to expand to allow for the production of tablet computers.

### Highly commended – large tenants – Latin America and the Caribbean

Zona Franca Romana, Dominican Republic

More than 6600 people are employed in Zona Franca Romana's 10 companies,

nine of which are large tenants. In 2014, two major expansions occurred in the zone, adding 9000 square metres to each facility.

Tabacalera de Garcia, which manufactures cigars, and Bridesshore, which develops art materials, both expanded their presence in the zone in the past year.

### Winner – large tenants – Middle East

Dubai Industrial City, UAE

Large tenant occupancy rates in Dubai Industrial City increased nearly 39% between 2013 and 2014, with 244 large tenants operational in the zone by the end of 2014.

Dubai Industrial City's well-integrated and comprehensive infrastructure is a bonus to large manufacturing and logistics operations.

The zone will also be home to a halal cluster – dedicated to manufacturing and logistics operations, and in line with Dubai's goal of becoming a centre of the Islamic economy. The cluster will serve companies in the food and beverage, cosmetics and personal care sectors.

### Highly commended – large tenants – Middle East

Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE

Jebel Ali Free Zone was home to more than 2800 large tenants in 2014. Major multinationals are among investing companies, including Panasonic, LG, ExxonMobil and Unilever. Many multinationals have gone on to establish regional headquarters in the zone, in order to serve key markets in the Middle East, as well as African and Indian markets. In 2014, the development of a halal zone was also announced, and is intended to increase the opportunities for investors, attracting new clients in the growing Islamic market.

### Winner – large tenants – North America

FTZ No 74 Baltimore, Maryland, US

Large tenants increased 10% between 2013 and 2014 in FTZ No 74 Baltimore. The zone attracts a number of companies from the automotive sector, including Michelin, Mercedes Benz and BMW. Well connected, with close proximity and access to the Port of Baltimore and inter-modal infrastructure within the zone, goods can easily be imported and exported, attracting large companies in production and logistics. ▶

**Bespoke awards**



**Ones to watch**

ZES NKOK Gabon, Gabon  
Zona Franca Tayrona Santa Marta, Colombia  
Maine – No 186, US  
Kedainiai SEZ, Lithuania  
Togliatti, Russia  
Smederevo, Serbia  
Misurata Free Zone, Libya

**Commended for self-sufficiency**

Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria

**Commended for marketing slogan**

Taiwan Sea Port Free Trade Zone, Taiwan

**Commended for global outreach**

Freeport of Ventspils, Latvia  
Inhdelva EPZ, Honduras

**Commended for local co-operation**

Klaipeda FEZ, Lithuania

**Commended for CSR policy**

Pomeranian SEZ, Poland  
Zona Franca Tayrona, Colombia

**Commended for China strategy and engagement**

Lodz SEZ, Poland  
Aqaba Industrial Estate, Jordan  
Lekki Free Zone, Nigeria

**Commended for ease of access to zone**

SOHAR Port and Freezone, Oman

**Commended for encouraging excellence**

Ras Al Khaimah FTZ, UAE

**Commended for start-up support**

Zona franca de Vigo, Spain  
Tubitakmam Technology Free Zone, Turkey  
Shannon Free Zone, Ireland  
TwoFour54, UAE  
Dubai Silicon Oasis, UAE  
Ras Al Khaimah FTZ, UAE

Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE  
Zrenjanin FTZ, Serbia

**Commended for facilities upgrades**

Freeport of Ventspils, Latvia  
Walbrzych Special Economic Zone, Poland  
Lodz SEZ, Poland  
Alabuga SEZ, Russia  
Shannon Free Zone, Ireland  
DMCC Free Zone, UAE  
Ras Al Khaimah FTZ, UAE  
Dubai Silicon Oasis, UAE  
Salalah Free Zone, Oman  
Aqaba Industrial Estate, Jordan

**Commended for skills/training**

Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland  
Starachowice Special Economic Zone  
Lodz SEZ, Poland  
Zona Franca Santander, Colombia  
Tanger Free Zone, Morocco  
TwoFour54, UAE

**Commended for reinvestment**

Shannon Free Zone, Ireland (GE)  
Rezekne Special Economic Zone, Latvia (LEAX)  
Lodz SEZ, Poland (Fujitsu)  
Alabuga SEZ, Russia (Ford)  
Free Zone Subotica, Serbia (Siemens)  
FTZ No 74 Baltimore, US (Mazda)  
Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines (HHIC PHIL)  
Taiwan Sea Port Free Trade Zone, Taiwan (Kaochun)  
TwoFour54, UAE (Ubisoft)  
Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE (various)  
Mauritius FreePort, Mauritius (Sun Packaging Systems)  
ZES NKOK Gabon, Gabon (Sogamatec)  
ZIP Porvenir, Honduras (Myron)

**Commended for infrastructure improvements**

Freeport of Ventspils, Latvia  
Walbrzych Special Economic Zone, Poland  
Katowice Special Economic Zone, Poland  
Alabuga SEZ, Russia  
Free Zone Pirot, Serbia  
Zona franca de Vigo, Spain  
Rezekne Special Economic Zone, Latvia  
Keystone Opportunity Zone, US  
Taiwan Sea Port Free Trade Zone, Taiwan  
Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines  
Zona Franca Santiago, Dominican Republic  
Gazeda, Mozambique

Ladol, Nigeria

Mauritius FreePort, Mauritius  
Sohar Port and Freezone, Oman  
Jebel Ali Free Zone, UAE  
Dubai Industrial City, UAE  
Aqaba Industrial Estate, Jordan  
ZES NKOK Gabon, Gabon

**Commended for new investment**

Astana – New City, Kazakhstan (Alstom and Talgo)  
Ras Al Khaimah FTZ, UAE (Streit Group)  
Dubai Silicon Oasis, UAE (various)

**Commended for financing scheme**

ZES NKOK Gabon, Gabon

**Specialism awards**

Aviation – Shannon Free Zone, Ireland  
R&D – Tubitakmam Technology Free Zone, Turkey  
BPO/outsourcing – Montego Bay Free Zone, Jamaica  
Zona Franca Santander, Colombia  
ZIP Porvenir, Honduras  
Media – TwoFour54, UAE  
Tourism Baikal Harbour, Russia

**Ones to watch**



**ZES NKOK Gabon** signed an agreement with Ecobank Gabon in April 2014, which provides finance to investors, for up to 80% for land acquisition and 60% for plant construction. **Zona Franca Tayrona Santa Marta** in Colombia made improvements in infrastructure to provide investors with secure and stable utility connections, including electricity, water and sewerage connections. **FTZ No 186** in Maine, the US, reorganised its operating structure in 2014, introducing the Alternative Site Framework. This allows companies to be incorporated much more quickly, without physically having to move into the designated zone.

**Kedainiai SEZ** in Lithuania is a rela-

tively new zone, having only begun operations in April 2014. Boasting plentiful transport links and a brand new infrastructure, clients can import and export goods via port and rail links, and a project has begun to link factories directly with the railway line.

Employee numbers in **Togliatti Special Economic Zone**, Russia, increased by some 33% between 2013 and 2014, coinciding with a 29% increase in SME tenants and 17% increase in large tenants in the same time period. Seven companies have plans to start production in the zone in 2015, supported by a new subsidy for training, which will be offered to investors in the coming year. **Smederevo**

zone in Serbia has impressed judges with its commitment to infrastructure upgrades in 2014, which saw the completion of more than 4 kilometres of roads, a distribution gas pipeline and a distribution substation, water lines measuring 3 kilometres and the installation of an electrical substation.

The construction of a customs terminal is also under way, helping streamline companies' export and import times. **Misurata Free Zone** in Libya is in the process of developing a secondary site, Site B, which will measure 1500 hectares and contain a new port. The existing port will also be automated, helping to modernise the zone and attract new tenants. ▶



### **Ladol Free Zone, Nigeria**

Ladol Free Zone has been **commended for self-sufficiency**, following the construction of a \$50m power plant, due to come online in late 2015. The plant will reduce tenants' reliance on the national grid, and ensure a steady and uninterrupted provision of power.

### **Taiwan Sea Port Free Trade Zone, Taiwan**

"Taiwan Sea Port FTZs, your anchorage in Asia and springboard to the world." **Commended for its marketing slogan**, this message helped Taiwan Sea Port Free Trade Zone increase its SME and large tenant occupation rates by more than 8%, while its employee numbers increased by more than 40% between 2013 and 2014. The zone was also **commended for infrastructure developments**, as it undertakes a project to build an express highway connecting the free zone to the main national highway, bypassing the urban area. In addition, 194 hectares of free zone is to be added, including a new terminal and offshore logistics and warehousing facility.

### **Freeport of Ventspils, Latvia**

The Freeport of Ventspils, on the banks of the Ventariver in western Latvia, was the winner of three bespoke awards. **Commended for its global outreach**, Ventspils Freeport recently completed three marketing campaigns in a range of countries, including Germany, Sweden, Russia and China. The zone is a frequent participator in the world's largest worldwide exhibitions and conferences, and partakes in roadshows and trade missions. Its website is available in English, Russian and Chinese, as well as its native Latvian. In 2014, \$27m was invested in upgrading facilities and infrastructure, resulting in the zone being **commended for facilities upgrades and commended for infrastructure developments**. Its biggest projects involved the building and reconstruction of access roads, a new bulk dry terminal and cargo berth, as well as the reconstruction of port infrastructure.

### **Inhdelva EPZ, Honduras**

With 30 investing companies in the zone, employing more than 2000 people in 2014, Inhdelva Export Processing Zone in Honduras has been **commended for its global outreach**. Inhdelva EPZ claims to be the only free zone in Central

America to have established an industrial park in another country, namely Uman Industrial Park in Mexico. The zone also aims to expand into Nicaragua, El Salvador and Costa Rica over the coming five years.

### **Klaipeda Free Economic Zone, Lithuania**

With an **honourable mention** for the Europe region, Klaipeda Free Economic Zone in Lithuania saw its large tenants occupation rate increase by 50% between 2013 and 2014, while the number of people employed in the zone increased by nearly 20%. The zone was also **commended for local co-operation**, following an agreement with a local university to establish a certification centre for glass and plastic products. A community centre is currently under construction, and will open in 2015 complete with catering, conference and leisure facilities.

### **Pomeranian SEZ, Poland**

Pomeranian Special Economic Zone, located in the north of Poland, has been **commended for its CSR policy**. The zone offers a labour market re-entry programme for women, with special working conditions for pregnant women and young mothers. Scholarships are offered for young scientists, while support is also offered to local communities and a kindergarten facility is provided on site.

### **Zona Franca Tayrona, Colombia**

Zona Franca Tayrona in northern Colombia has been **commended for its CSR policy**, as well as being listed as **one to watch**. While also committed to the environment and sustainable development, the zone embarks upon projects dedicated to improving the living conditions for disadvantaged people. Zona Franca Tayrona is also supporting a local neighbourhood, with incentives for children's education.

### **Lodz SEZ, Poland**

Home to more 32,000 employees and nearly 140 investing companies, Lodz Special Economic Zone has been **commended for its China strategy and engagement**. The past 12 months have seen the zone place an increasing importance on attracting investors from China, hosting five delegations from various Chinese regions.

A Lodz-China cargo train connection has been heavily promoted by the ►

Lodz SEZ, helping investors to export their products to this ever-important market. The special economic zone was also **commended for skills/training**, thanks to its 'HR-Zone meetings' which have been set up with human resource departments of investing companies, in order to establish trends in employment and challenges investors are facing in an effort to solve these problems. In 2014, two investment sites were fully equipped with utilities and facilities, ready to be invested in. The zone is also making preparations to deliver further office space to potential investors in 2018, leading to Lodz SEZ being **commended for facilities upgrades**.

#### **Aqaba Industrial Estate, Jordan**

Aqaba Industrial Estate, located in the south of Jordan, has been **commended for its China strategy and engagement**. The zone sits on part of the ancient sea route from east Asia to the Mediterranean, which the Chinese government is targeting in its 'One Belt, One Road' policy, designed to encourage Chinese equity along these ancient trade routes.

#### **Lekki Free Zone, Nigeria**

Receiving an honourable mention for the Africa region, Lekki Free Zone was also **commended for its China strategy and engagement**. The zone is the result of a Chinese-Nigerian joint venture, and 60% of all equity belongs to Chinese parties, with the remaining 40% belonging to the Lagos state government. Chinese investors are particularly forthcoming, with investments from Yulong Pipe, a steel pipe company, and China Glass, which established a production line in the zone.

#### **Sohar Port and Freezone, Oman**

Sohar Port and Freezone, which is approximately 200 kilometres from Oman's capital of Muscat, has been **commended for ease of access to the zone**, following a wide range of developments to the infrastructure in the zone. Gates to the facilities were upgraded, adding automated entry controls and a new Gate Pass app, which allows companies and visitors to increase the speed of access. Roads and roundabouts were also upgraded, and highways designed to



A view of Ras Al Khaimah. The emirate's free trade zone is expanding with a 55% increase in employee numbers in 2014

ease congestion are under construction, which will make the zone more accessible to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. These developments also helped the zone to win an award for **infrastructure developments**.

#### **Ras Al Khaimah FTZ, UAE**

Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone's star is rising, following an increase of nearly 55% in employee numbers between 2013 and 2014. The zone, with an **honourable mention** once again for the Middle East region, was home to more than 1300 companies in 2014, and was **commended for encouraging excellence** in this year's bespoke awards. The annual RAK FTZ Business Excellence Award was created to recognise and acknowledge particularly enterprising companies within the zone, improving their profile and reputation. The zone also launched a competition targeted at start-up companies, with the winner receiving the cost of setting up in the zone and business support services.

#### **Commended for start-up support**

Start-up businesses are particularly attractive to free zones, typically bringing with them high growth and high profit potential. Judges were impressed by several zones in this year's awards, which offered a nurturing and encouraging environment in which start-ups could thrive. **Zona Franca de Vigo** in ►

Spain offers three Business Incubator Centres, each of which has its own sector specialisation and allows start-ups to test the market and the location, before committing to an investment.

**Tubitakmam Technology Free Zone** in Turkey offers a similar programme for new companies, with an incubation centre that can accommodate up to 45 entrepreneurs at one time. The offices are fully furnished, with internet, phone and fax access free of charge for up to one year.

Winner in the western Europe region, **Shannon Free Zone** has much to offer start-ups, particularly in the aerospace sector. An International Aviation Services Centre was established at the zone in 2014, which aims among other things to support a dynamic community of potential start-up aviation businesses, creating a hub of support and investment services.

Also receiving an **honourable mention** for the Middle East region,

**TwoFour54** in the United Arab Emirates was of particular interest to the judging panel in its approach to start-ups. The zone offers new companies funding, mentorship and community support to help them get off the ground.

**Dubai Silicon Oasis**, a zone in the UAE, offers its tech entrepreneurs innovative co-working space, as well as funding, mentoring and business tools. **Ras Al Khaimah Free Trade Zone** gives start-ups the chance to win the cost of setting up in the zone, and offers free business support to the winners. **Jebel Ali Free Zone** in the UAE was commended for the recent addition of an incubation centre for Japanese companies in the zone, to add to already existing centres for China, South Korea, Ukraine and Brazil. **Zrenjanin Free Trade Zone** in Serbia offers a wide range of support to new businesses, including training seminars, assistance with business plans, marketing and market research assistance, as

well as obtaining necessary certification, all as part of its Business Incubator Zrenjanin programme.

#### **Commended for facilities upgrades**

Several free zones in this year's batch of nominees attracted judges' attention with a slew of upgrades to facilities available to potential and existing investors. **Freeport of Ventspils** in Latvia invested heavily in facility upgrades in 2014. A new dry bulk terminal was completed in February, the result of a \$7.7m investment.

Construction on an industrial centre commenced in Ventspils High Technology Park, with works due to be completed in 2015, the \$7.7m investment will result in the addition of two large industrial buildings. **Walbrzych Special Economic Zone** in Poland added four production halls to the zone in 2014, including production floors set aside solely for SME tenants. New storage

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industrial halls were completed, with plans in place to construct another two industrial halls with areas of 5600 square metres and 10,000 square metres.

In 2014, Lodz SEZ in Poland completed two new investment sites, fitted with all utilities connections and facilities, so investors could start to operate. The zone also started an ambitious office space development programme, which will see the addition of office space for companies in the BPO and IT sectors come online in 2018.

**Alabuga SEZ**, which also received an **honourable mention** for the Europe region, made great strides in 2014 to upgrade its facilities. Two new parks were put into operation in the zone – ‘Synergy’ and ‘A Plus Park Alabuga’, as well as a ‘cottage complex’, which contains an International Baccalaureate school for children of employees in the zone, housing developments for managers and specialists and a sports complex.

An initial phase of development is due to begin at **Shannon Free Zone** in Ireland in the coming year, with a new office block, an advanced manufacturing unit, a warehousing distribution centre and a new aircraft hangar all due to come online by 2017. These facilities will be valued at €26m once completed.

**DMCC Free Zone**, global winner for 2015, impressed judges with the expansion of the Burj 2020 district, featuring the world’s tallest commercial tower – the Burj 2020 – at its heart. The mixed-use district will add some 1.3 million square metres to capacity at the zone. **Ras Al Khaimah FTZ** in the United Arab Emirates saw many developments to its zone in 2014.

A district cooling plant was opened, which uses chilled water to control the air temperature in the zone. In total, 100 new warehouses were opened in the Technology Park, including reinforced flooring, suited to industrial buildings.

A new business centre was opened, providing a range of services including company support and government services. The ‘Academic Zone’ is in the process of development, with the aim of becoming an international hub for learning and research.

**Dubai Silicon Oasis** is due to bring its ‘Silicon Park’ smart city project online in the course of 2015, after the construction of the Middle East and north Africa region’s largest entrepreneurship centre. **Salalah Free Zone** in Oman is in the process of establishing a new administrative building, due to open in 2016, as part of a wider infrastructure and facilities development agreement to which the zone has committed.

Jordan’s **Aqaba International Industrial Estate** is in the process of adding an additional 1 million square metres of space, which will be located next to the new port facilities the zone will complete in the coming year. ▶

# ZRENJANIN

## Free and Industrial Zones

Free Zone of Zrenjanin is open for new investments, offering its users benefits, favourable locations and business environment. Operating since 2005, and covering 98 hectares on three locations around the City of Zrenjanin, 70 km north from Belgrade.

Key advantages: doing business, including production and sale of goods free of payment of customs and VAT.

The principal current users: DRAEXLMAIER, German producer active in automotive industry, KOLPA, Slovenian producer of bath vans and shower cabins, and LK ARMATUR, Swedish steel tubes producer. They altogether employ over 3500 employees.

Free Zone of ZRENJANIN, the City of ZRENJANIN and Government of Serbia strongly support foreign investments here, currently offering to foreign investors over 40 hectares of space suitable for industrial use and fully equipped with needed infrastructure at its location Southeast / ECKA.



City of ZRENJANIN  
Surface: 1.326 km<sup>2</sup>  
Inhabitation: 122.714  
Over 100.000 hectares of arable land  
Sophisticated and largest industrial centre in Banat region of Serbia  
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Over 20 nations live here for centuries together



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**Commended for skills/training**

This year's global runner-up, **Katowice Special Economic Zone**, established a new 'competence centre', which operates as a training facility with a particular focus on hydraulics, pneumatics and sensorics. Its 'K2' project manages all aspects of human resources in the zone, one aspect of which is to match graduates with the right companies and jobs in the zone.

Poland's **Starachowice Special Economic Zone** was commended for the establishment of its Regional Cluster of Vocational Education, which partners with schools, businesses and support institutions to ensure that graduates have the skills that companies need to hire them.

**Lodz SEZ** places a high importance on vocational education also, ensuring that companies' hiring needs can be met with local talent. To this end, the zone works closely with human resources departments of companies in the zone to discuss their needs, and how these can be best met.

**Zona Franca Santander** in Colombia went a step further, installing two universities at the zone. These universities include training departments, which work with businesses to train and prepare graduates for roles in these companies.

Winner of the Africa region, **Tanger Free Zone** in Morocco, has established two training centres to ensure companies are provided with qualified staff. These centres are focused on automotive and offshoring industries.

Themar Academy, which operates in **TwoFour54** zone in the United Arab Emirates, is a specialist training academy which provides companies with

skilled staff. In 2014 the facility was expanded by 140 square metres to include more training rooms.

**Commended for reinvestment**

■ Shannon Free Zone, Ireland – GE – 3159-square-metre expansion of existing facility

■ Rezekne Special Economic Zone, Latvia –LEAX – new 1000-square-metre production facility

■ Lodz SEZ, Poland – Fujitsu – investing €3.75m and expanding with 250 new staff

■ Alabuga SEZ, Russia – Ford – \$100m investment in a new production line and engine plant

■ Free Zone Subotica, Serbia – Siemens – production area from 28,000 square metres to 42,000 square metres

■ FTZ No 74 Baltimore, US – Mazda – added 10% to expand capacity

■ Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines – HHIC PHIL – added more than 2000 staff

■ Taiwan Sea Port Free Trade Zone, Taiwan – Kaochun – \$8.3m investment in lease of 3.5 hectares

■ TwoFour54, United Arab Emirates – Ubisoft – expansion of 465 square metres

■ Jebel Ali Free Zone, United Arab Emirates – 511 companies expanded in 2014

■ Mauritius FreePort, Mauritius – Sun Packaging Systems – 1700-square-metre expansion

■ ZBS NKOK Gabon – Sogamatec – expanded with two new operations: a Ferro recycling facility and an industrial oxygen bottling plant

■ ZIP Porvenir, Honduras – Myron – expansion of offices and addition of staff

**Commended for infrastructure developments**

The past year has seen many zones develop their infrastructure, helping to attract new companies and make doing business easier for those already present. In total, \$57m was invested at the **Freeport of Ventspils** in Latvia in infrastructure development. Access roads were reconstructed, while a new cargo berth was established following the dismantling of the older Mooring No 1. The protective wall at the northern breakwater was also repaired.

**Walbrzych Special Economic Zone** in Poland saw a series of internal roads constructed in 2014, in the subzones NowaRuda and Sycow. Polish winners **Katowice Special Economic Zone** spent 2014 incorporating an additional 2.8 million square metres of space in the zone, all of which was equipped with roads, gas and water lines, sewerage systems and electricity.

**Alabuga SEZ** guaranteed its clients uninterrupted power supply in 2014, meaning that companies could invest safe in the knowledge that their production operations would continue without interruption.

**Free Zone Pirot** has extended its overall space to 400 hectares, while also adding a logistics centre in the free zone that allows companies to import and export goods by rail, thanks to the new intermodal terminal.

**Zona Franca de Vigo** invested more than €45m between 2014 and 2015 in upgrading infrastructure and facilities. The zone improved water and electricity networks, while energy efficiency was ▶

Zona Franca Tayrona, está ubicada a 12 kilómetros del Puerto de Santa Marta, a 10 de Bogotá, a solo 4 horas de Venezuela y a 48 de cualquier puerto en E.E.U.U. Cuenta con un clima seco, una humedad relativa promedio del 70%, la más baja de toda la costa norte Colombiana, es la única con más de mil metros de zonas de aproximación y cuenta con la posibilidad de acceso directo al ferrocarril, facilitando la conexión con el puerto y con el interior del país.



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also upgraded and new access to the zone meant better logistics.

In 2014, **Rezekne Special Economic Zone** provided water, lighting, heating and electricity to 1.8 kilometres of streets in the zone. Further developments are also planned for the period between 2016 and 2019, with help from EU financing. Roads and utilities will be developed, while a high-pressure gas pipeline is planned for the Maskavas-Noliktavu streets, and is due to be completed in 2015.

Also gaining an honourable mention for the North America region, **Keystone Opportunity Zone** in the US has begun the first stages of its Navy Yard Energy Master Plan, which includes new buildings and new roads being developed around the Central Green Park. There are also plans in place to extend the subway line from south Philadelphia right to the zone.

**Taiwan Sea Port Free Trade Zone** is in the process of constructing a highway to connect the port and free zone to the urban area, reducing transportation costs and time for investors.

**Subic Bay Freeport Zone** is in the

process of investing approximately \$54m to support a range of infrastructure improvement projects, including road upgrades and drainage facility improvements.

**Zona Franca Santiago** made some improvements to energy efficiency and green power in 2014. Water recollection systems were introduced, while the option of solar panels were considered for buildings positioned favourably. A wastewater treatment plant was also constructed, and tree-lined boulevards were constructed for cycling routes.

Mozambique's **Gazeda** modernised Nacala Port and rehabilitated Nacala Dam, while also starting operations at Nacala International Airport in December 2014. A water supply project aims to increase the supply capacity for investors, and was financed by the World Bank.

A new \$50m power plant is set to open in **Ladol Free Zone** in late 2015, reducing the zone's dependence on the national grid and ensuring uninterrupted power supply for investors.

**Mauritius FreePort** is set to upgrade its logistics infrastructure, following the signing of a memorandum of

understanding by two multinational companies to develop the infrastructure to support the expansion of the freeport zone.

A specialised cargo airport was opened at **Sohar Port and Freezone**, while highways connecting the zone to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are close to completion. There are also plans to connect the zone to the new Gulf Co-operation Council rail network.

Early 2014 saw the opening of **Jebel Ali Free Zone's** Gate 4 project, which put in place a 16-lane entry system, facilitating entry and exit at the zone. The project also included a flyover that enables traffic to move more seamlessly between container terminals and investors.

**Dubai Industrial City** invested heavily in key infrastructure in 2014, upgrading electrical networks, telecommunications and storm water drainage networks in the zone. A 10-kilometre road was also constructed, linking the north and the south areas of the zone.

Jordan's **Aqaba International Industrial Estate** added two kilometres

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of streets in 2014, 70% of which are now serviced with necessary infrastructure, including power, water, telecommunications and sewerage drainage systems.

In November 2014, ZES NKOK Gabon started to develop its own cargo handling port to alleviate congestion at Libreville port near the zone. A second phase of expansion is in the planning phase, 576 hectares of the zone are yet to be developed.

**Commended for new investment**

- Astana – New City, Kazakhstan – Alstom and Talgo – development of a transport manufacturing cluster
- Ras Al Khaimah FTZ, United Arab Emirates – Streit Group – construction of a new armoured glass factory total-ing Dh30m (\$8.17m)
- Dubai Silicon Oasis, United Arab Emirates – many new noteworthy invest-ments in 2014

**ZES NKOK Gabon, Gabon**

Located in the west of the Gabon, ZES NKOK Gabon was **commended for its financing scheme** by judges. In a part-nership with Ecobank Gabon, investors can apply for finance, covering 80% of land acquisition costs and 60% for the facility construction.

This financing is available at rates lower than those available in other banks. For companies not planning to acquire finance from banks, the zone offers a 12-month holiday period on site payments, while construction is going on. After this, amounts can be paid in six- or 12-month increments.

**Specialism awards**



**Specialism award**

Aviation – Shannon Free Zone, Ireland

Shannon Free Zone has become a big player in the aviation sector. With direct links to Shannon Airport, and some buildings right beside the run-way, the zone offers excellent air con-nectivity. An international aviation cen-tre was established in 2014, helping to support start-up companies in the avia-tion sector, as well as providing train-ing and R&D facilities – providing a place where researchers, academics and businesses can meet.

Netherlands-based commercial air-craft engine leasing company AerCap; Germany-based Lufthansa Technik, which provides civil aviation mainte-nance and repair services; and US-based Servisair, which provides aviation and ground handling services, all call Shannon Free Zone home.

**Specialism award**

R&D – Tubitakmam Technology Free Zone, Turkey

Tubitakmam Technology Free Zone in Turkey goes a long way to attracting R&D activities to its zone. Revenues from soft-ware development and R&D are exempt from taxes (both income and corporate), while salaries of any employees engaged in R&D are also tax-exempt. In its sub-mission, Tubitakmam Technology Free Zone said that Marmara Research Centre, ▶



Heavy maintenance at Lufthansa Technik's workspace in Shannon

Gregor Schläger/Lufthansa Technik



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- 70% foreign labor permitted automatically
- No withholding tax on dividends to foreign investors
- Duty free input of all raw materials/ machinery & equipment
- Training support



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located in the zone, is Turkey's primary research facility. The zone also houses the Informatic and Information Security Research Centre.

General Electric and Turkish Aircraft have signed a partnership agreement to co-operate in the design of aircraft engines and have established an R&D facility at the zone, while Turkcell and Ibttech have also established R&D operations.

**Specialism award**

BPO/Outsourcing – Montego Bay Free Zone, Jamaica; Zona Franca Santander, Colombia; and ZIP Porvenir, Honduras

Montego Bay Free Zone described itself as “the nucleus of the business environment within [Jamaica’s] outsourcing sector”, and is home to such tenants as customer relationship management software company Gateway Solutions, outsourcing company Teleperformance and Jamaica’s own BPO company, Island Outsourcers.

Colombia’s Zona Franca Santander has the dedicated Offshoring & Outsourcing Park within its zone, with plans for 10 office blocks in the 32-hectare park upon completion.

Offshore operations are among the target sectors for ZIP Porvenir. One of the zone’s biggest clients, Myron Corporation, has begun plans to expand its call centre. When the call centre was established in 2008, it was the first such facility to have been installed in Honduras.

**Specialism award**

Media – TwoFour54, United Arab Emirates

TwoFour54 was home to more than 320 companies in 2014, over 90% of which were SME tenants. The zone’s aim is to establish itself as a premier media hub in the Middle East, and it is well on its way – with major media clients such as Bloomberg, CNN, BBC, National Geographic and HarperCollins, among many others.

TwoFour54 has many initiatives in place to attract media companies, with a 30% cash rebate on film and TV production costs, world-class studios and on-site training offering media courses and tailored training solutions to its tenants.

**Specialism award**

Tourism – Baikal Harbour Tourist and Recreational Special Economic Zone, Russia

Baikal Harbour, located in the south of Russia, is aiming to profit from the growing Asian tourist market. The Republic of Burytia borders Mongolia and is not far from China, and the zone is receiving interest from Chinese companies.

Favourable conditions are provided in the zone for tourist and recreational activity, with preferential tax rates, financial support for the provision of infrastructure and a ‘one stop shop’, providing streamlined support for administration. ■



BBC: one of TwoFour54’s major media clients, along with Bloomberg and CNN



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