



Firms line up to help foreign entrepreneurs

AC from Dublin asks: "What business supports are available to Polish people starting companies in Ireland?"

Bernadette Tracey, Bank of Ireland's business sector manager, replies: "The 2006 census revealed that foreign nationals now account for 10% of the total Irish population, with more than 63,000 coming from Poland alone.



"In terms of entrepreneurial activity, it is estimated that between 6% and 10% of new businesses are now established by foreigners every year. Furthermore, a recent study carried out by Lifestyle Consumer Research found that 17% of the foreigners surveyed planned to start their own business in Ireland over the next three to five years. Research also indicates that access to translated information, legal support and advice are among their main concerns.

"Many companies, including some financial institutions and legal advisers, have recognised this trend and have researched this segment in detail. They now offer tailored propositions to cater for foreign business customers.

"Indeed, many businesses now communicate with foreign customers in their native languages, with translated advertising, documentation and dedicated foreign language sections on websites becoming increasingly popular.

"A number of organisations look to equip foreigners with the relevant information required to establish a business here.

"Emerge is a development partnership

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that aims to support non-EU nationals and members of the new accession countries in Ireland who have a desire to become self-employed and economically self-sufficient, specifically by identifying, addressing and removing barriers faced by ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

"The partnership itself comprises enterprise support (Partas and Base enterprise centres in Dublin); public bodies (Fas, South Cork Enterprise Board, Cork City Enterprise Board); a local development firm (Galway City Partnership); a business representative body (the Small Firms Association) and a representative of ethnic minority entrepreneurs (Metro Eireann).

"The Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship organises seminars in conjunction with Dublin Institute of Technology.

"The media has also picked up on these tailored foreign national propositions and organisations, generating a lot of interest and excitement among businesses and customers. With the number of foreigners growing, we can only expect more companies to follow and design products and services to cater for the needs of these upcoming business customers."

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