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ITAC Industry Insider Newsletter

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First ever women-led tech trade mission to Ireland huge success; leads to new approaches to assisting entrepreneurs in gaining business through EU

As part of our commitment to encouraging the development of international business development strategies, and to the exploration of new markets among ICT companies, ITAC supported a women-led mission to Dublin, Ireland, June 18-22, 2018. Participants were also able to attend the [2018 Inspirefest Dublin](#), as part of the mission.

The objective of the mission was to provide women-led companies with a first-hand introduction to doing business in Europe (the European Union/ EU) and how to meet potential partners and customers. Participants met with influential European companies and contacts, to expand their international business prospects. Only female CEOs or Co-CEOs qualified.

ITAC received financial support from Global Affairs Canada's Global Opportunities for Associations (GOA) program. Nine participants, along with ITAC's Vice President of Industry Development, Denise Shortt, met with leaders in the European ICT ecosystem in Dublin, Ireland.



Participants with His Excellency Kevin Michael Vickers, Ambassador of Canada to Ireland.



Participants receive a tour of Dogpatch Labs in Dublin, Ireland.

Participants visited: the Accenture Innovation Centre (The Dock), Dogpatch Labs, Trinity College Dublin, the Ambassador's Residence for a networking session; an information session about doing business in Ireland at the Embassy of Canada and a Girls in Tech event. This was followed by Inspirefest and included an investor event.

"We had a solid program and gained valuable insights into the market opportunities," explained trade-mission participant Janice McDonald, The Beacon Agency (Ottawa, ON). "It was expertly led by Denise Shortt who was tireless in her efforts to ensure positive outcomes for all participant, and I personally made important connections that I believe will prove to be invaluable as I work to expand into this market and the rest of the EU."

Having the Ambassador host us at the Residence offered additional networking that was beneficial. Finally, the leadership of ITAC to offer this trade mission is so vital to the increased success of women-led companies."

Agreeing, Dafne Canales Lees, CEO of Spartan Spark Inc. (Calgary, AB), said that the mission to Dublin was extremely beneficial to her business. "I was able to connect with various entrepreneurs who have moved my company further already. The conversations with venture capitalists and founders who have raised funds were extremely insightful. One founder gave me feedback on my pitch; another showed me what she was doing with ICOs; and yet another gave me valuable advice on a unique project that came up after the mission, and gave advice on what I could charge for those services. I now have the opportunity to collaborate with global leaders, tech founders and venture capitalists who will be featured on my podcast. I will continue to foster these relationships with my Dublin connections via phone calls, text and social media."

Why Ireland?

Ireland has become the global technology hub of choice when it comes to attracting the strategic business activities of ICT companies. This has earned Ireland the reputation for being the heart of ICT in Europe.

- Two-way merchandise trade with Ireland amounted to \$2.4 billion in 2016, making it Canada's twelfth largest exporting and ninth largest importing partner in the European Union (EU)¹. Canada is Ireland's eighth largest trading partner outside the EU.²
- Ireland's GDP per person is ranked second in the EU, far ahead of the neighboring United Kingdom.³
- Ireland is the fourth largest recipient in the EU of Canada foreign direct investment; among EU countries, the Irish are the seventh largest EU direct investors in Canada.
- As of 2015, Ireland is ranked 18th out of 190 countries for its ease of doing business in the "World Bank Doing Business 2017 Report.
- Although Ireland has a relatively small population of 4.77 million (2016), it is recognized as a country that has a wide global reach and an impact that far exceeds its size. Indeed, Ireland's ability to attract multinational firms and major investments is viewed as a model by many other countries.

ITAC has had a long-standing commitment to supporting female entrepreneurs particularly in their quest to conduct business globally as well as to scale and grow their businesses.

¹ Statistics Canada

² Central Statistics Office, Ireland

³ Eurostat