

» LATVIA

Latvia's banking system has been Westernized and is internationally recognized, stable and safe, with the free movement of money convertible to any other currency. Latvia has agreements on the mutual promotion and protection of investments with many countries, including Canada, and has joined the major international conventions. Latvia has been given positive investment ratings, reflecting the low debt level, political stability, economic reform and progress toward EU membership. Visit: www.bankasoc.lv

Free zones can be established and operated within the EU. Similarly, the Latvian customs code, which is modelled on the EU code, allows the establishment and operation of customs-free zones and customs warehouses. Two free ports and two special economic zones (SEZs) have been established in Latvia in recent years. The **Riga Free Port** is managed like a British free port; the main responsibility for the control of duty-free goods in Riga lies with the port operator, who keeps the customs administration informed. In the **Rezekne SEZ**, qualifying investors are granted a tax reduction for land, property and corporate income. The **Ventspils Free Port**, the leading port on the Baltic Sea, is among the 15 leading European ports in terms of cargo turnover. The port is both the largest crude oil and oil products transshipment terminal and the largest liquid chemicals transshipment terminal in the Baltic Sea region. It is the second-largest potash transshipment terminal in the world. Visit: www.ventspils.lv The **Liepaja SEZ** is in the third-largest city in Latvia. Its investment advantage includes infrastructure facilities, highways and a railway system connecting Liepaja to the major industrial regions of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. For a 20-year period, each and every enterprise will enjoy generous tax incentives. Visit: www.liepaja-sez.lv

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:

Bureau of Statistics: www.csb.lv

General business information: www.zl.lv

Information on Latvian companies: www.lursoft.lv

Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (a non-governmental, politically neutral, voluntary organization of Latvian companies in different economic sectors, providing information on Latvia's top 50 enterprises and trade fairs): www.chamber.lv

Latvian Development Agency (for advice on foreign investment): www.lida.gov.lv

Latvia Economic Bulletin (a monthly source of information on government priorities and projects/programs, which is accessible to anyone free of charge for 5 days): www.leta2000.com

Latvian Institute (particularly concerning Latvian culture): www.latinst.lv

Latvian Tourist Board: www.latviatravel.com

Ministry of Economy: www.lem.gov.lv

» LITHUANIA

Lithuania has an excellent standard highways linked developed ice-free port (the lowest in Central and educated and cost-effective governments, excellent minority relations, a stable has succeeded in developing friendly and opportunity sustained, long-term growths, Lithuania is the regional agreements have been signed agreement on trade and Lithuania has been signed And Lithuania has signed on investment promotion

The **Klaipeda Free Economic** commercial site in the harbor is one of the prime sites for business. Visit: www.f

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

General information:

Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Lithuania): www.chamber.lt

Lithuanian Development Agency (for advice on foreign investment): www.lida.gov.lt

Travel information: www.lta.lt

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Latin America and the Caribbean Brazil

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- The Airport Development Market

Mexico

- The Ocean and Marine Shipboard Technology Market
- The Aerospace and Airport Development Markets

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- Cameroon, Morocco, South Africa

United States of America Atlanta, Miami

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- Security and Law Enforcement Products Market

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- The Military Aerospace Market

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- The Aerospace Market

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- Security and Law Enforcement Products Market

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www.infoexport.gc.ca

Building a solid reputation

MHKW — architects to a new China



"Opportunities for excellent architects in China are unlimited," exclaims Michael H.K. Wong and he should know. Wong's Toronto-based architecture and design firm, **MHKW Architects Inc.**, has recently won three contracts in Southern China. "The future is fantastic," he adds.

MHKW Architects Inc. (www.mhkw.com) has been commissioned to design the forty-one storey Guangdong Mobile Communications building in Guangzhou, the Art and Cultural Centre in Zhongshan and the village of Waishen Qian Urban Renewal Project in Zhuhai. Business is clearly booming for the Toronto firm — which has won every international competition it has entered in China.

China's construction sector is in the midst of a monumental boom itself, fuelled by soaring standards of living and bolstered by demographics. The institution of a mortgage system and the recognition of individual property rights have greatly enhanced the commercialization of this market as well.

Wong, "Canadian by choice and by adoption," was educated in Taiwan where he obtained his engineering degree and graduated from the University of Manitoba in architecture in 1966. He is proud of his firm's success but readily shares the acclaim.



Art and Cultural Centre, Zhongshan.

"Trade officers at the Canadian Consulate General in Guangzhou were extremely helpful," he says, "in providing us with briefings, contacts and market support. I don't know if I could have done it without them."

Number one — by design

Wong goes on to explain his company's involvement in China's construction market: "An accident led me there. Toronto was twinned with the city of Chongqing and Art Eggleton, who was mayor from 1980 to 1991, chose me to represent the Toronto building services sector in 1986. Later, when Chongqing wanted to build a 110-floor highrise, city officials said: 'Let's call Wong.' That was in 1994, and ever since then it has been one project after another."

"A lot has changed in the building services sector in China," notes Wong. "The Chinese are now starting to appreciate good design in the free market. They are beginning to shop for quality."

Wong's commitment to China goes beyond business, however. He has recently completed a lecture series with Larry Richards, Dean of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design (ALD), that took them to seven cities

in China. Their speaking tour emphasized a singular virtue to their audiences: creativity.

"The Chinese architectural community is learning fast," Wong says. But, he asserts, "Canadian architects are second to none. Put simply, we are the best."

Tips from an expert

The prospects for architects and designers in China are good. Furthermore, Wong believes that Canada's educational system and its harsh climate have inculcated Canadian-trained architects with that essential creative "edge".

"Canadians also have a good image in the Chinese market. This," explains Wong, "is due to our government's promotion of Canadian businesses there and Dr. Bethune (who) did a wonderful job."



Guangdong Mobile Communications, Guangzhou.

Market opportunities abroad should, however, be engaged cautiously. Speaking of the Canadian architectural industry, Wong offers exporters this advice: "The resources of Canadian companies are comparatively small, therefore, to reinforce success our approach must be focused and targeted."

Take it from Wong, an old hand in this new market:

- Understand the country and know your market: do your homework.
- Talk to those already doing business abroad.
- Use your trade commissioners (www.infoexport.gc.ca).

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