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Migration Policy Development



ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL TALENT TO **LITHUANIA**

International Best
Practices and Approaches

January 2021



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Future Place
Leadership™



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS VYRIAUSYBĖS
KANCELIARIJA



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This guide was produced within the project “TALENTAS – Developing a strategy for the implementation of talent policy in Lithuania” funded by the European Union via the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the European Commission’s Directorate General for Structural Reform Support. The aim of the text is to provide inspiration to Lithuania by showing how other countries and regions have built and managed talent attraction management initiatives, and to share the key lessons learned from these efforts. The content herein is based on the work which Future Place Leadership has undertaken with governments, regions and cities across Europe during the past 10 years, as both practitioner and advisor. The author would like to acknowledge the contribution of ICMPD staff in Vienna, as well as the various partners in Lithuania and the countries studied, for their support in producing this guide.

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The views expressed in this document can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union and Lithuanian institutions involved in the project.

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Introduction

This guide is based on over 10 years' experience working in the niche industry of talent attraction and retention for places. The content contained herein is based on the practical skills, knowledge and insight gained by the author in the role of Programme Management Lead, building an entire division of a Danish talent attraction entity. Moreover, the text draws on understanding achieved in the role of Advisor, serving governments, economic development boards, city leaders, innovation hubs, companies and talent across Europe and beyond. The text presents a summary of what [Future Place Leadership](#) (FPL) deems to be the key lessons learned for those locations seeking to be best in class in regard to Talent Attraction Management (TAM), whether they be countries, regions or cities.

This experience-based format makes the practices and approaches from abroad relevant for any entity or location currently developing or optimising their TAM activities. Regarding the Lithuanian context in particular, following TALENTAS situational analysis and priority setting, the path for the country is laid out in the following.

To *enact change and improve policy*, we first need to create a **climate for change** – an overall sense of urgency and the guiding teams to execute it, where stakeholder support is evident. With TALENTAS, that journey has started and is already well on its way.

In particular, there are **two preconditions that need to be met**, which, in a way, go hand in hand with each other. Firstly, in order to encourage government entities in Lithuania to prioritise this agenda through investment and resource allocation, there is a need to **attain solid data** on the economic benefit of talent attraction and retention, including in regard to returnees. Secondly, these data can and should be used to **conduct lobbying efforts** locally, thereby fostering a more positive environment and perception of global talent and those who return, which will also make these individuals feel more welcome in Lithuanian society.

In this respect, the launching of **International House Vilnius** should be seen as a key enabler for improved soft landing, welcoming and retention activities, all much needed in Lithuania. Another area for action highlighted through the TALENTAS project is to **start optimising retention**, with a special focus on those spouses and students already in the country, who would represent a lost opportunity should they not be integrated into the labour market in the long term.

However, **attraction should not be overlooked**, and inspiration for Lithuania can particularly be found in best practice coming out of Copenhagen and Denmark as a whole in terms of combining the place brand with the employer brand, finding the niche targeted segment and standing out to talent, including by co-creating marketing

solutions with both companies and global talent already living in that location. Finally, these efforts should be executed in a way that enables campaigns to go beyond awareness to having the capacity to activate an ongoing dialogue with the target group through the use of, for example, artificial intelligence – and ultimately deliver qualified leads to employers in search of talent.

Good practices and approaches from abroad: Lessons learned for Lithuania

The overall strategic recommendations seen in the market relate to three main areas, where the best in class implement state-of-the-art collaboration platforms and strategic initiatives.

Firstly, TAM for a particular place cannot be successfully carried out by that one entity alone. The most successful locations work in a **network-oriented mode**, locally, regionally and nationally building long-term partnerships that focus on mutual benefits and make sure the needs of the target group come first, rather than that of an individual entity or logo. Think ‘one-point entry’ or ‘one-stop-shop’.

Secondly, the best in class have all adopted a **participatory approach** to engaging international talent, mapping out the customer journey and understanding their specific needs and pain points, thereby optimising the services offered – and ultimately making the talent themselves the ambassadors and promoters for that particular place. In addition, all TAM activities should be demand- rather than forecast-driven. Thus, like talent, the employers should be part of the entire business development and service offering process, including identification of the market gap

that needs to be filled and where the particular location can add value to start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the corporate world at large.

Thirdly, many places struggle to stand out, tending toward generic messaging that ultimately could apply to many other locations worldwide. Thus, the challenge is to identify the true DNA and uniqueness of what your location offers, finding a creative way to **differentiate yourself** in a crowded market. As an extension of this approach, many attraction campaigns could be improved by employing **better niche segmentation** of the target group, fostering the identification of certain sectors with quality in international competitiveness and quantity in terms of volume of jobs, while going into specific detail on the actual skills needed.

Each of the following 15 sections outline in detail a specific good practice or approach that has been used to achieve success on TAM abroad, presented here to inspire Lithuania in forming its own strategic initiatives. The report concludes with a presentation of four of the latest trends in the TAM field, each of them relevant for Lithuania’s work in this field.

01

Pursue a long-term talent attraction plan

Most actors operating in the field of talent attraction would agree that the Greater Copenhagen region offers one of the most advanced talent attraction and retention platforms. However, this initiative also launched over a decade ago. Thus, building up a dedicated division and a set of activities, as [Copenhagen Capacity](#) and its partners have done, takes time. Consider this process a long-term one. Just imagine the time horizon for relocating to another country: researching regions and job opportunities, applying for jobs, getting interviews and job offers, relocating your entire life and obtaining a legal status to do so. Completing the process may take months or perhaps one year, or more.

Thus, as a point of departure, it should be clear to

all stakeholders that the results will not be seen tomorrow. Build your initiatives on a long-term vision and focus on mid-term results – yet identify early quick wins to show proof of concept and demonstrate to stakeholders that the process works. A methodology that has worked well for locations like Gothenburg Region, Sweden, is the change leadership model of FPL, adapted from [John Kotter's Eight-step change model](#). The process has three stages: creating a climate for change; involving, engaging and enabling; and implementing and sustaining. It shows the development from establishing a sense of urgency and building guiding teams to launching the strategic process, empowering stakeholders, creating and communicating early wins and leading by example (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Gothenburg example of change leadership



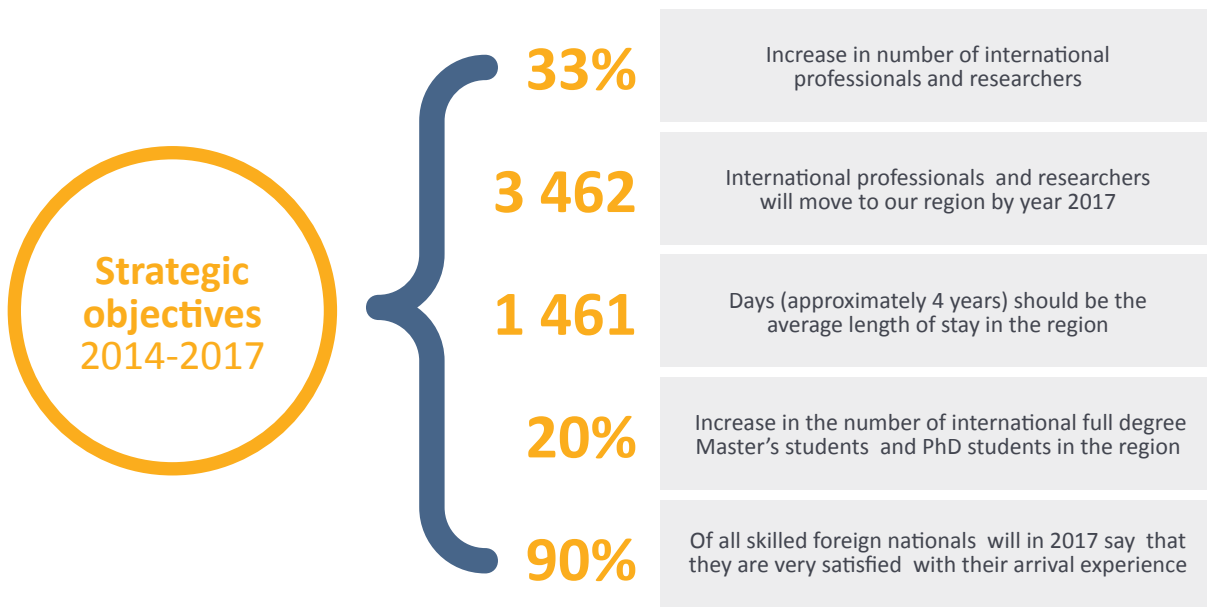
02

Ensure stakeholder support

You need stakeholder support across different levels of government, including the regional and city level. This support must also extend beyond the public sector, including to the education and business sectors. There is a fine balance between securing overall support and resources and having ‘too many chefs in the kitchen’. This balance must be achieved before the path toward budgeting and first activities can be tread. For instance, the Capital Region of Copenhagen successfully launched a regional talent strategy process, inviting all relevant stakeholders to define the key

challenges they faced, and subsequently built 10 initiatives together as an invitation to global talent. The Make Copenhagen your personal business initiative was a bottom-up approach steered by an advisory board consisting of entrepreneurs, corporate executives, local municipalities, the regional development agency, university deans, and the national employer union, amongst others. The result was 10 key initiatives that guided implementation, with the findings shared on a national level and serving to inspire other regions (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Objectives of the Make Copenhagen your personal business initiative



Source: Copenhagen Capacity.

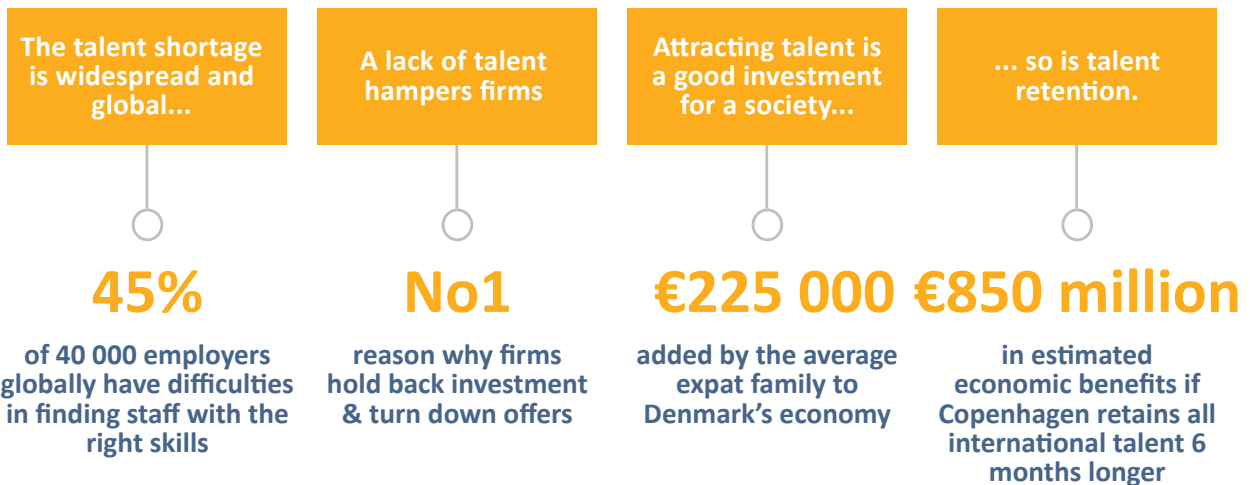
03

Highlight the economic benefit

Many places struggle to articulate the reasons why the focus should be on talent *attraction* rather than talent development, which focuses on the unemployed domestic population. Thus, it is essential to be clear in highlighting the economic benefit of talent attraction for society. International talent should be a net economic surplus, as they create additional jobs, pay taxes and pro-

vide consumer spending, which, taken together, outweigh their use of public services while in the country. As a public entity investing taxpayer money in this area, it is essential to highlight the data and figures to prove the business case. Some of the most prominent arguments are presented below, including a calculation method employed by the Capital Region of Copenhagen (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The value of international talent



Source: Future Place Leadership Presentation TAM, EU Amsterdam, 2018.

04

Understand the current labour market

Another mistake often made by locations engaging in TAM concerns forecasting the future labour market supply and demand for that particular location. Just because economic forecasts suggest that region X will suffer from a lack of skill Y by the year Z, this does not mean that local companies have a demand for this skill today. Thus, rather than jumping to fix a skills gap based on forecasts for the future, locations must focus on identifying the *current* labour market supply and

demand. The key here is to have a direct dialogue with both smaller and larger employers, thereby fostering understanding of what is needed in the short term rather than the long term. When Brainport Development in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, set forth on solving the talent agenda, it did so on the principle that the organisation was established and financed by employers to make sure that all activities were employer led.

05

Lobby local stakeholders

Rather than promoting your location to international talent abroad, sometimes you need to start by promoting the value of international talent in the domestic media and among other key stakeholders. After all, there are no votes in

attracting non-voters. You will not be successful in your pursuit of talent unless you undertake a continuous effort to engage in lobbying and public relations activities aimed at securing local support.

06

Start by retaining talent in the present location

Most locations jump at the chance to conduct attraction campaigns simply because it sounds appealing to see the name of the place in print or appearing in the global media. However, resources and marketing efforts will be somewhat wasted if you do not have integration and soft landing services ready to turn targeted individual global talent into residents and taxpayers. Thus, one key piece of advice is to start with activities aimed at retaining talent already present in the respective location, such as providing support for international students looking to transition from graduation to employment. A useful framing question you can ask yourself in this regard is: Why fly halfway around the world to attract your target segment when it might already be at your local university?

You should therefore identify local opportunities for raising awareness and facilitating meetings between foreign talent already on location and employers not currently utilising or understanding this (often lost) opportunity. In many countries, including Lithuania, efforts are also needed to make SMEs more comfortable with hiring international talent.

Successful retention of international students in the local labour market thus requires joint action by universities, local businesses, local government, public service providers, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Ideal examples of local coordination exist in only a few municipalities worldwide, at least one of which can be found in Germany (Box 1).

Box 1. Your future in Stuttgart, joint recruitment event (Germany)

Since 2014, the City of Stuttgart – together with local universities, employers, NGOs, and the Stuttgart branch of Germany’s Federal Employment Agency - has co-organised an annual recruitment fair for international students. The one-day event takes place under the auspices of the Mayor of Stuttgart and is held at city hall. International students and graduates are invited to learn about local resources for finding a job in Stuttgart. Attendees can network with representatives from Daimler, McKesson Europe, and other employers onsite, and participate in industry-specific workshops – such as a recent workshop titled “Different possibilities after your study – architecture and urban planning”.

The event concludes with a reception, which provides additional networking opportunities for students and the local actors involved in the organisation of the event. Your Future in Stuttgart has not only encouraged collaboration between the City and local actors, but also within city government. Each year, the City’s Economic Development Department, the Department for Social Integration and Social Affairs, and the Immigration Office work together to provide all other local partners with logistical support.

Source: Stuttgart Central City Administration. Morris-Lange 2019

Another example of innovative local retention practice from Germany is the **Study & Work** initiative, which between 2015 and 2017 supported innovative local practices in retaining international graduates (Figure 4). The key lessons from the local projects undertaken were summarised and subsequently shared by way of a toolbox provid-

ing detailed information on eight support tools, including individual coaching during the job search, strategic job fair attendance, entrepreneurship training, and educational videos for international students and local employers. The advantages of holding direct meetings between students and companies are summarised in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Face2Face - Student and company visits to trade fairs (Study & Work toolbox)



Source: Study & Work initiative.

07

Embrace the ‘one-stop-shop’ concept

Relocating to a new country can carry with it a substantial administrative burden. Imagine the time you need to invest in going to many different offices and locations in order to undertake the various tasks needed to get started in a new location – from attaining a social security number, tax documents and local municipality registration to job/career counselling, to name the more obvious examples. Now imagine that you are an employer with five international employees who cannot start work because they are struggling to get their paperwork in order. ‘One-stop-shops’ – digital and physical – can enable international talent to get everything done in one place. Digitalisation has brought us to a point where most aspects, excluding actual biometrics, can, at least in theory, be done online – including having one’s questions answered by a chatbot.

At the same time, an element of concern may arise – “this is my life and my private personal data” – and as secure as your online system might be, international talent may be insecure in their new location and need to see an actual person for them to trust the system. The recruited individuals may also need a place to go and meet people, places which offer social activities for both expatriates and locals. This is the ‘one-stop-shop’ or ‘international house’ concept that exists in Denmark, Finland, Estonia and the Netherlands, to name a few of the frontrunners in this area (Box 2). Lithuania is already following in these footsteps with International House Vilnius, a commendable development in this regard.

Box 2. International House Copenhagen (Denmark)

International House Copenhagen was established in 2013 as a public-private partnership between the Danish Government, the City of Copenhagen, the University of Copenhagen and a number of private companies working in the field of attracting and retaining internationals. The facility was founded on the idea for a regional ‘one-stop-shop’ for all international talent settling in Greater Copenhagen. For instance, newcomers can get all their paperwork done in one place, receive job and career counselling, join New in Denmark events, and much more.

Companies can also use International House Copenhagen to fast-track administrative paperwork for their international employees. Operation of the International House can be seen as reflecting

the aims of the different partners, but there is no shared budget – each partner maintains its own budget, employees and organisation. International House Copenhagen also does not have a CEO, which comes as a surprise to many. While every partner has its own management/governance structure, there are different boards and steering committees:

- International Citizen Service – a steering committee that meets on a regular basis to discuss topics within the citizen service field.
- Advisory Board of the International House – a group of representatives from different companies, organisations and universities, who meet four times a year to discuss various topics, from the political agenda to challenges for internationals (e.g. bureaucratic barriers).
- Different networks comprising various International House partners – e.g. networks focusing on spouses or students.

The house also serves as a meeting place for international talent, with frequent events to foster their social integration.



Source: Interview by Future Place Leadership and material from International House Copenhagen.

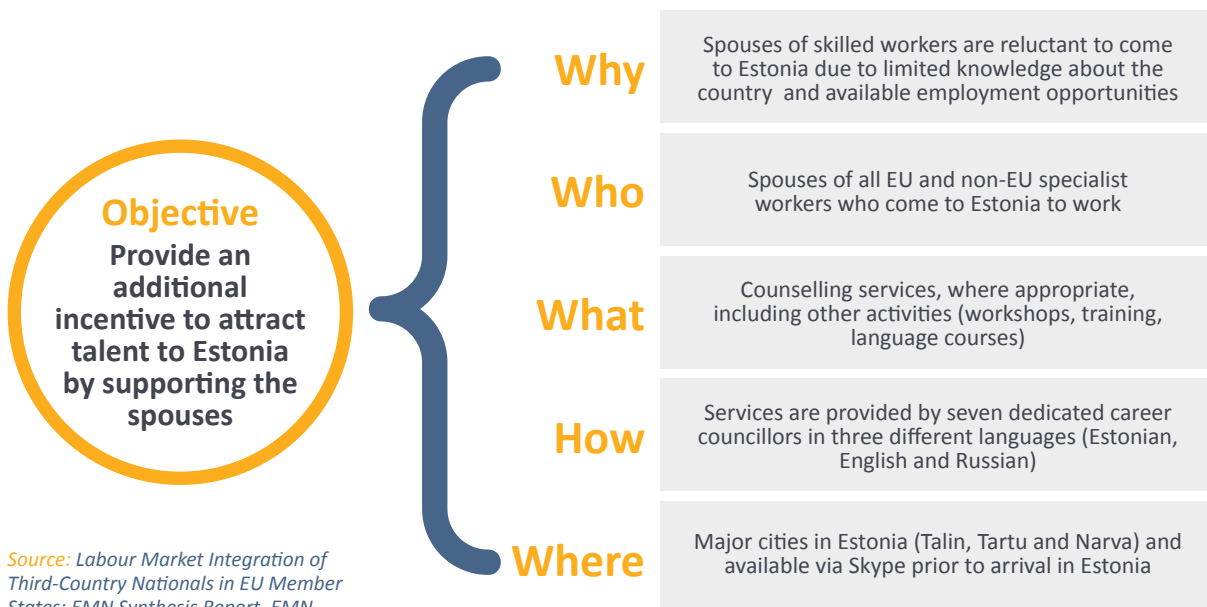
08

Engage the accompanying spouse

Many locations fail to consider what really is a lost ‘plus one’ opportunity: the accompanying spouse. Simply put, you will likely fail to keep the talent you have attracted and lose out on potentially recruiting the accompanying spouse if you do not adequately support *both of them*. Most expatriate assignments fail because the accompanying spouse is unhappy in their new surroundings. The reasons for this unhappiness might stem from a lack of social or cultural integration (e.g. if the spouse is taking a professional sabbatical or the couple has decided that only one person will work outside the home) or from lack of professional integration (e.g. if the spouse has unsuccessfully sought job opportunities in the new location).

Thus, a programme to support the accompanying spouse and family is actually as integral to successful talent attraction as the campaign activities itself – as long as the target group is more senior than young professionals, who are not as likely to have a spouse. One example of such an initiative comes from Estonia, where [Work in Estonia](#), the official guide to working in the country, offers support to spouses wishing to develop professionally. The programme successfully strikes a balance between personalised and group services, with the goal of enabling 51 percent of participants to find professional engagement in Estonia after six months (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Work in Estonia spouse programme



Source: Labour Market Integration of Third-Country Nationals in EU Member States: EMN Synthesis Report, EMN.

09

Cooperate directly with talent and employers

As a location develops its particular offering in the talent attraction space, a simple notion is frequently left out of the internal business development process: The talent is your end-user and the need to understand their journey and decision-making factors is *integral* to success. Mapping the customer journey, and the pains and gains involved, will help you understand where a location can optimise the process.

Typically, a company or university is your actual customer, so it is necessary to also understand their needs in minute detail, only then proceeding to co-create approaches and find durable solutions. Across Europe, too many well-intentioned public sector initiatives have been

launched prior to any user test as to whether the particular service actually solves a prioritised need. To use a military metaphor, engaging the ‘Generals’ (CEOs/Deans) in the overall proof of concept and the ‘Lieutenants’ (Hiring Managers and Recruiters) in how service offering development operates in practice is strongly advised – and should typically be done at advisory board or steering committee level. When doing so, be careful to not ‘just’ invite big employers because it may look good to others or they might finance your project: You need representation that reflects your corporate landscape, from start-ups to SMEs and larger companies across relevant sectors. Each type of outfit has different challenges and thus requires different solutions.

10

Develop an ‘employer-place’ brand

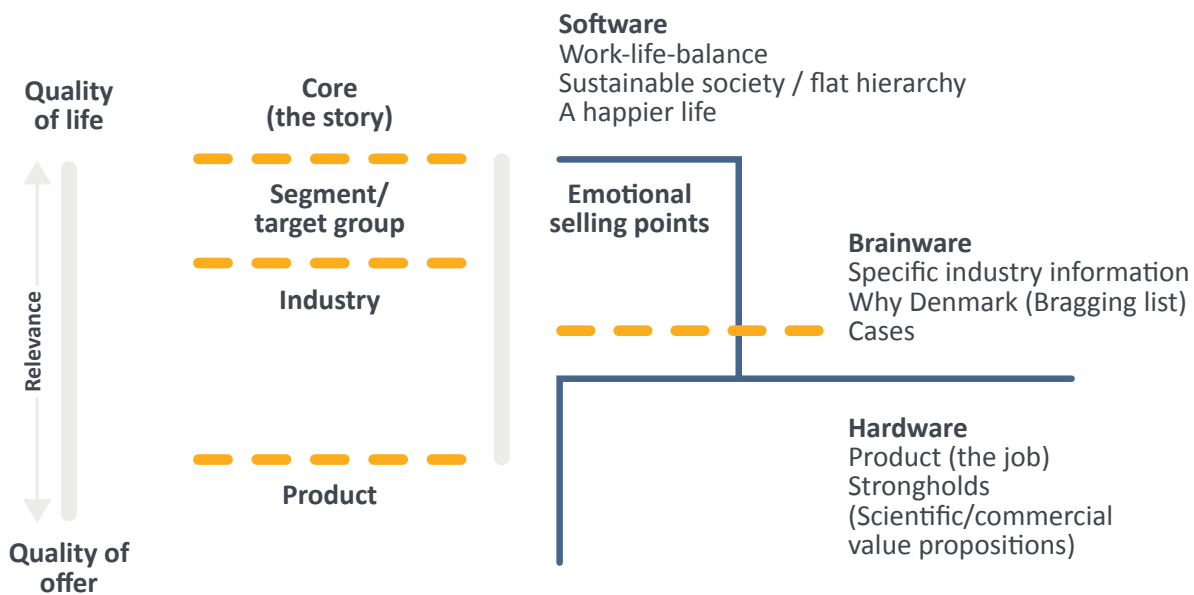
When the time comes to undertake branding and marketing activities, the lesson learned – and a relatively recent industry development – has been to shift from generic branding and marketing to spotlighting the unique selling points of a location as a career destination, with very targeted segmentation. Regardless of the brand aware-

ness and brand perception of a given place, most places are still not associated with a career brand. Furthermore, as employers need to recruit from faraway markets and untested channels, an attractive employer brand by itself is insufficient. Thus, there is a need to develop a unified brand for both employer and place.

Such brands should incorporate what, for example, Copenhagen Capacity has defined as “software, brainware and hardware”. As outlined in Figure 6 below, at the core of this brand lies a balance between quality of life and the quality of the offer. Quality of life can be defined as the ‘software’ that represents the more emotional selling points, which for a brand and society such as Denmark, for example, would be an attractive work-life balance, a flat social hierarchy and an overall happier life – elements embedded in the country’s DNA, in terms of leadership and lifestyle. The ‘brainware’ is specific industry or cluster information, the ‘bragging list’, so to speak,

of why the place in question has a competitive advantage internationally. This aspect also indicates why coming to that particular location would be a noteworthy addition to the resume of any international recruit, where s/he would be a valued part of a dynamic knowledge and innovation hub – as opposed to a place where the newcomer gives their talent to help that place grow. Lastly, the ‘hardware’ is the actual product – the quality of the offer: the particular job and strong points of the employer, responsibilities, salary and other benefits. The way in which this methodology is implemented can be seen on the campaign platform [The State of Denmark](#).

Figure 6. Copenhagen’s ‘employer-place’ brand



Source: Copenhagen Capacity presentation at TAM EU, Porto, 2019.

11

Stand out with location-specific messaging

The top management of a rather large and influential European economic development agency once invited a consultant to come in and help their team review their sales material. At one point, the consultant challenged the team to a simple test. Four different key sales messaging packages, one taken directly from the website of the region in question and three taken from competitors, were shown onscreen without the respective logos. The task for the region was to find their message. They could not. The reason: The main messages were generic ('good infra-

structure', 'going green', 'a great place to do business', 'a digital frontrunner', etc.).

While each of these messages represent a positive, they had by that time become basic expectations in the market rather than messages that stood out as unique to the particular location. The best in class digs one level deeper to identify their uniqueness and appeal to the target market. Try the exercise for yourself. Figure 7, below, shows the information used by the consultant to demonstrate the point.

Figure 7. Are we all saying the same thing?



Source: Future Place Leadership.

12

Leverage the most high-profile place brand

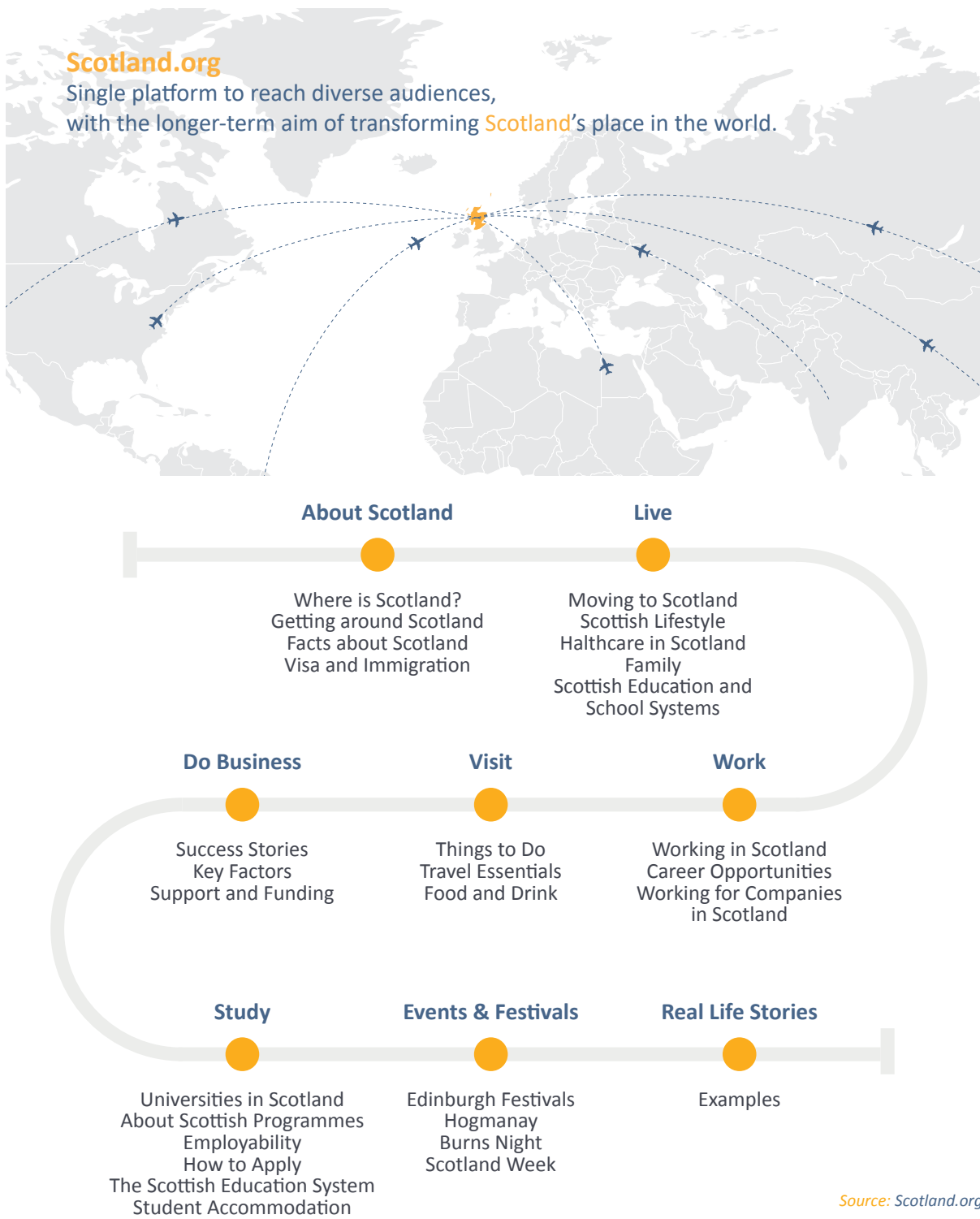
Many regions struggle to present one umbrella brand, or even one landing page, to promote opportunities in the region/country. Imagine you are an international talent looking to explore opportunities abroad. Despite being a small region or even a single city, a place should of course have ambitions to be recognised internationally – but the likelihood of your target group finding you is small. Furthermore, once each individual city and region in close proximity starts promoting their particular offering, the picture becomes muddy – the target group simply gets lost in landing pages that ultimately talk about the same metropolitan area or larger region. The pertinent question then is: How many local/regional brands can you have?

Organising coordination takes time, but to succeed in attracting international talent you should leverage each other's resources and budgets, unite forces and focus on getting talent to look

at your combined offering as a whole. Put in simple terms, your number one priority should be to make sure that there is a pie to eat in the first place, rather than worrying about who gets the biggest piece. Team up if you are multiple cities in a larger region, or use the country brand if you are a smaller nation. The most important attribute is to be large enough to be relevant, using the brand/region that will get you the most attention and thus the most promising potential targets.

A good example of this playing to strengths is the approach taken by [Scotland](#), which is part of the United Kingdom but also a country in its own right. In a collaborative effort, Scotland has made sure that efforts are anchored at the *national* level, seeking to harness the national story for the benefit of all of Scotland and stimulate international growth. A comprehensive Scotland is Now platform and toolkit has been created (see Figure 8), with its relevance only increasing following Brexit.

Figure 8. Scotland is Now toolkit



13

Target specific group segments

Depending on the target groups (e.g. young professionals vs. senior experts), different elements of the core story will need to be highlighted. In the Danish example above, initial branding messages included both the work-life balance and flat social hierarchy. Both were appealing to senior experts, who tend to value highly both their private life and the opportunity to lead by empowerment rather than micro-management. However, young professionals were less interested in work-life balance. In fact, they did not desire this at all, wanting instead to fast-track their career by putting in long hours.

Many attraction campaigns across Europe have focused on rather broad industries such as IT or life sciences. Lately, the segmentation is much more specific; for instance, from IT generally to the gaming industry in particular. The specific micro-niches also continue to narrow – within the gaming industry there is clear segmentation regarding the various skills and talents (even ‘software developer’ is becoming a rather general term). Although this may sound like classical marketing segmentation, it is still a learning experience for many locations to move from generic to specific target groups, while securing enough labour and job openings in these segments to be relevant to an international target pool.

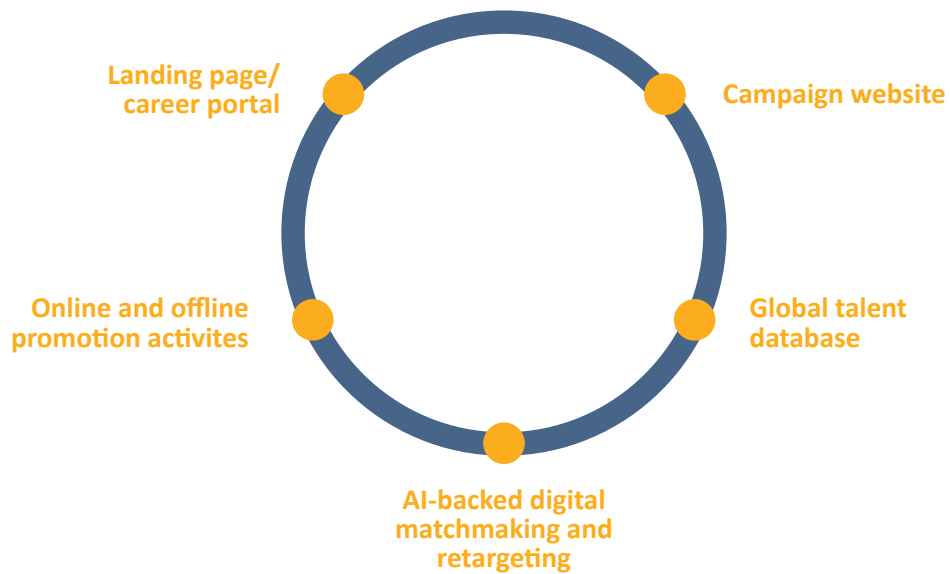
14

Maximise the impact of data collection

Attraction campaigns enacted by prominent locations often utilise a combination of a landing page highlighting job openings and exciting companies and a specific campaign platform. Both the entire campaign and the career portal need visibility; online and offline promotion activities are thus required. What may surprise locations entering this space is the makeup of the attraction funnel itself, from for example,

awareness to engagement towards a qualified lead and the subsequent screening and hiring process. Many such campaigns do not fully optimise the actual data flow behind the system, which would allow proper tracking of the value provided to companies. They thus miss an opportunity to nurse the prospective talent from displaying an interest to making the move. The ideal set-up in this regard is depicted in Figure 9.

Figure 9. The ideal attraction flow for locations



Source: Future Place Leadership, inspired by Copenhagen Capacity, 2020.

A more generic landing page/career portal is the baseline that highlights the general opportunities in the region and the overall elements of ‘software’, ‘brainware’ and ‘hardware’, as outlined in Section 10 on employer-place brand synergy. The campaign website is then the very segmented target campaign of a certain industry/cluster seeking specific skills and embodying the uniqueness of this sector. Actual leads on prospective talent are fed into a database, which then matches candidates with relevant job openings based on a high degree of automation, using artificial intelligence to do so. By tracking the online behaviour of the targeted individual, understanding how they engage with the campaign, the system can also optimise the retarget-

ing of the prospective talent with relevant jobs and opportunities in the future.

Recently, a leading region for talent attraction held a campaign that reached an audience of some 23 million, but the number of jobs ultimately created was ‘only’ 23. However, the marketing spend compared to the net economic gain to the region – taking into consideration the financial value to the economy that this attracted talent represents – still resulted in a net gain. In addition, the data accumulated during the campaign represents a significant resource for future lead activation. It is therefore of vital importance to ensure that you *own the data*. Otherwise, you can neither create nor measure value.

15

Make the talent your ambassadors

Your best marketers are the users themselves, so make the international talent your ambassadors. They can speak of their experience to those segmented target groups (e.g. former colleagues or fellow alumni) which you wish to attract. For example, in the [Nordic talent ambassador](#) initiative, the experience *is* the marketing: The storyteller is not an agency but an individual just like those in the target group (i.e. same age, occupation and nationality). Through peer-to-peer recommendations from non-Nordic talent currently living and working in the Nordic region, individuals share their story to their own network back 'home'. The ambassadors do this with the action-oriented message #jointhenordics, making the case for the region as a career destination in a way that is much more trustworthy than the same message delivered by an employer, branding expert or recruiting agency.

This is not the kind of campaign to 'go viral' or get thousands of 'likes'; rather it is a direct, one-on-one dialogue between the current customer and the potential lead. Identifying and creating such a funnel, from awareness to interest and lead, would likely cost a great deal of resources. Yet, a simple, friend-to-friend interaction between a talent ambassador and a former peer can achieve tremendous impact. The messages shown in Figure 10 from the Nordic talent ambassador campaign neither went viral nor created a significant buzz among users. However, among those 20 users who commented on the post were multiple global professionals eager to know more about the region. As they were associates of the talent who published the post, they also had the right profile for the region and thus represented direct talent relocation targets to work with.

Figure 10. Nordic talent ambassador initiative, digital postcards from a talent ambassador



Source: Future Place Leadership.

Industry trends to watch out for

In addition to the above good practices and approaches, we would like to present four trends that are impacting the talent attraction industry and outline how locations are adapting their TAM approach to certain societal developments and target group preferences.

01

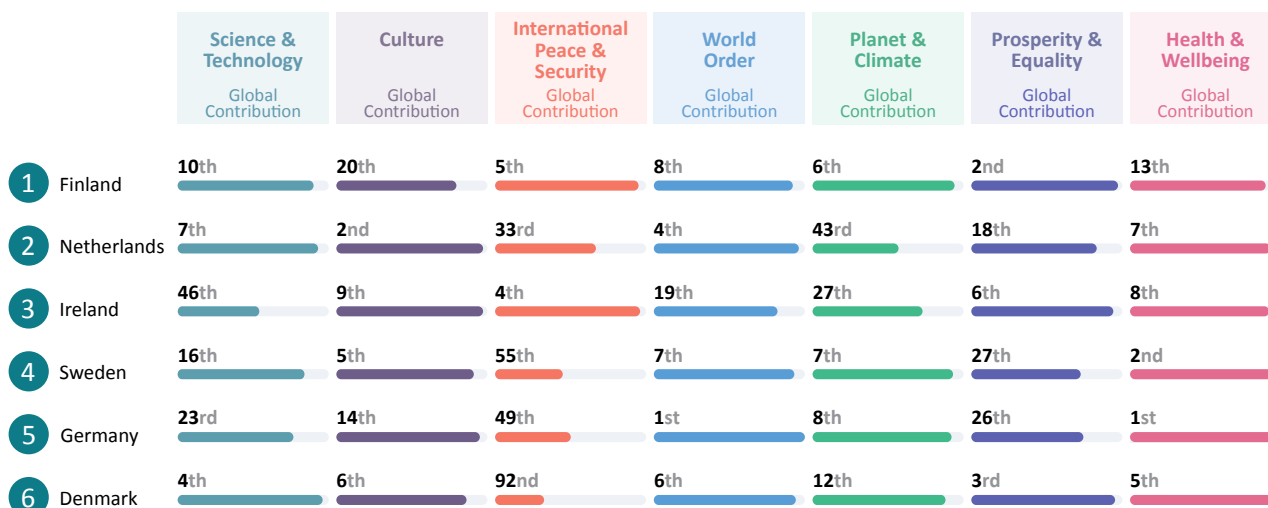
Purpose- and value-driven brands

As the industry of place branding and talent attraction has developed, an emerging trend is the increased focus on the impact to society. In fact, rather than talking about place branding, the conversation is being steered towards place *making*. This takes into consideration recent worldwide developments as well as the growth of purpose-over-profit thinking, particularly among young millennials entering or already in the workforce (and beyond) – not just as employees but also as managers and leaders. The talent hubs of tomorrow might take the form of locations that wish to attract talent while trying to solve greater societal challenges of international dimensions. In this way, talent will naturally be more likely to

be attracted by what the location is *doing* rather than what it is saying (branding).

Admit that you have faults and as one single location cannot have all the solutions. Show that you have the right values and DNA in your society, including a commitment to make a positive, measurable impact on climate, health, achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, etc. In other words, show it, don't tell it. Be good, but more importantly *do* good – this will increasingly be what talent is looking for. An interesting indicator and way of exploring this area more in depth is the [Good Country Index](#) developed by Simon Anholt, shown below.

Figure 11. The Good Country Index



Source: The Good Country Index.

02

Share talent: From foes to friends

Top international talent is very mobile. Multiple leading regions in the field of talent attraction are thus currently exploring whether talent competition can be turned into talent sharing and collaboration. Why not collaborate with other partners so that, when an international talent leaves one region, they can be recommended to relocate to a partner region? A place cannot

stop a talent from leaving but helping the talent to the next location initiates a circular model, where regions with a certain supply and demand of labour might fit perfectly with regions with a different supply and demand situation. The [European Talent Mobility Forum](#) is one example of a network of places actively seeking to do this together in 2021.

03

TAM and COVID-19

In the midst of a global pandemic, one may wonder: Why talk about talent attraction and retention when our economies are bleeding and most companies are focused on survival? Why talk about mobility when we are isolated? Why talk about international talent and relocation when borders are closed?

As evident from recent discussions in the European Talent Mobility Forum, which encompasses leading entities in Europe working on talent attraction and retention, the counterargument is that places need the best and brightest international talent to create the growth required to

help economic recovery. Moreover, a given location will already have global talent living there. Places need to support this target group as they find themselves in a foreign land struggling with job insecurity, non-citizen residency and employment visa status challenges related to stimulus package layoffs and social exclusion. At the same time, they need to consider how the actual immigration processes and physical relocation can be done during a lockdown, including via remote work across borders, as well as which messaging will actually appeal to global talent in the midst of a global pandemic.

04

Special focus on returning citizens

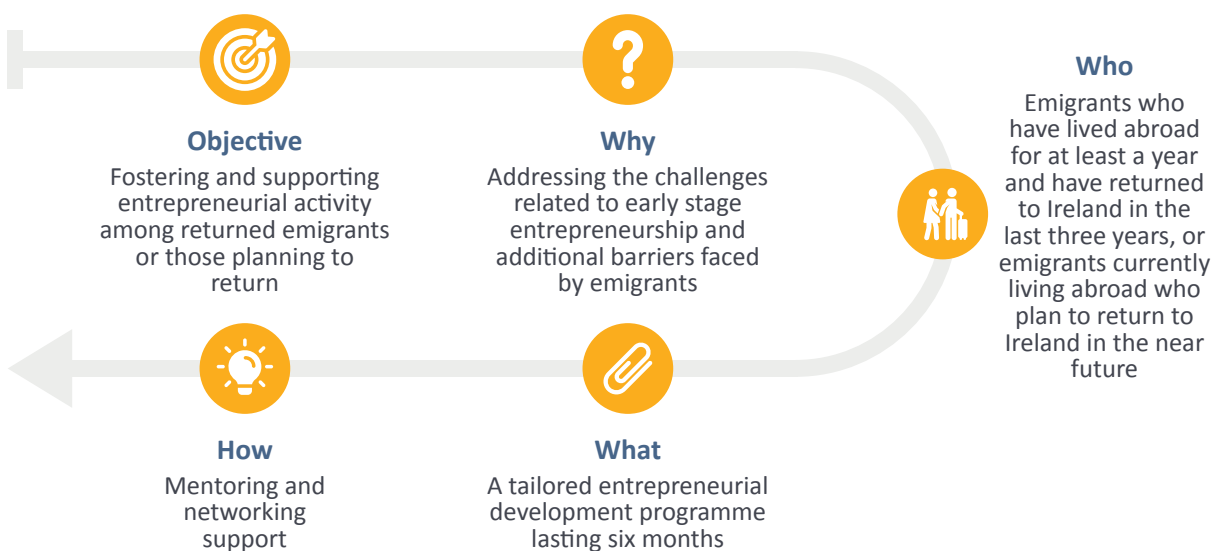
Many countries consider potential returnees an important target group for their talent policy. Specific measures can address various stages of the return process. Attraction policies aim to convince citizens living and working abroad to return to their country of origin, thus stimulating return migration. As part of this set of policies, engagement and information strategies play a prominent role. Another instrument in this regard is financial incentives for returnees.

The COVID-19 pandemic and long periods of lockdown seem to have increased the importance of 'home', 'family' and 'safety'. Consequently, multiple countries have seen an increase in interest from returnees. If we take the example of New Zealand, many nationals have returned during the pandemic, with many [planning to stay long term](#).

Returnees may need support not only in finding employment; they are also often interested in self-employment, grasping the opportunity to make use of their new skills and knowledge gained abroad. For this reason, entrepreneurship programmes are an attractive part of reintegration packages. The returnee offering can include preferential access to loans and training to cre-

ate a business plan and in financial management skills, as well as support during the bureaucratic steps necessary to start a business. For example, in Ireland, the **Back for Business** mentoring programme targets returning emigrant entrepreneurs with the aim of addressing the specific challenges they face, namely, networking and re-establishing contacts (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Back for Business initiative (Ireland)



Source: Back for Business initiative.

References and useful links

Back for Business initiative: <https://www.backforbusiness.com/>

Copenhagen Capacity: <https://www.copcap.com/>

European Migration Network (2019). *Labour Market Integration of Third-Country Nationals in EU Member States: EMN Synthesis Report*, February 2019, <https://emn.ie/publications/labour-market-integration-of-third-country-nationals-in-eu-member-states-emn-synthesis-report/>.

Future Place Leadership: <https://futureplaceleadership.com/>

Good Country Index: <https://index.goodcountry.org/>

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John Kotter's Eight Step Change Model: <https://www.kotterinc.com/8-steps-process-for-leading-change/>

Morris-Lange, S. (2019). Retention of International Students/Graduates in Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands, ICMPD, <https://www.icmpd.org/publications/working-papers/>

Strategy for attracting and retaining more talented internationals in the Copenhagen Region 2014-2017.

Structural Reform Support (European Commission, DG REFORM):
https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/structural-reform-support_en

Stuttgart Central City Administration: <https://www.stuttgart.de/en/en/your-future-in-stuttgart>

Study & Work initiative: <https://www.study-work.de/>

The State of Denmark initiative: <https://www.state-of-denmark.com/>

Work in Estonia initiative: <https://www.workinestonia.com/>

