

# New Irish Chamber of Commerce eyes chances

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Ireland may be a great distance from Macau but the opportunities for business cooperation and cultural exchanges have likely never been so close, with the recent establishment of the Irish Chamber of Commerce of Macau (ICCM).

The creation of ICCM was gazetted on Wednesday and the association is in the final process of becoming a formal entity, just like other chambers of commerce already established.

Speaking to Macau Daily Times, the ICCM founder, Niall Murray, is hopeful the chamber will boost the tapping of new business opportunities in both Macau and Ireland.

“We see a lot of business opportunities in the local gaming, IT [Information Technology] and hospitality sectors,” he explained, “and in the Irish part, finance, IT and real estate are among the most attractive sectors for foreign investors.”

Given the financial crisis in his homeland, Ireland, Murray stressed that it would only bring about more business chances.

A growing number of Irish companies and investors are looking abroad for new opportunities in new markets, especially Asian markets that defy the economic slowdown in US and Europe and continue to enjoy robust economic growth, he explained.

Like other chambers of commerce, ICCM does not just focus on Macau, but also has an eye on the booming market in mainland China, and the Asia Pacific region as a whole.

Murray said ICCM would closely collaborate with the Irish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, Shanghai and other Chinese cities, as well as the Irish Embassy in Beijing, to tap into new potential across the mainland.

## Talent pool

As for Macau, he believes the unmatched expansion that the city’s gaming industry enjoyed in recent years has created huge room for further developments in areas such as energy management, IT, software and other supporting services for casinos and resorts budding up everywhere in the city.

These are the areas in which the Irish companies boost a competitive advantage, Murray added.

“We have a huge talent pool,” he said, adding that many Irish professionals are already working as management personnel, engineers and consultants for the sector.

Murray himself is currently director of operations development at gaming operator Sociedade de Jogos de Macau, after also working for rival Sands China.

ICCM is the newcomer to a sector that already includes the British Business Association and the French Macau Business Association.

Murray said ICCM has already built up very close working relations with some of them, such as the American Chamber of Commerce, and would continue to bridge a cooperative link with others.

“The nature of our relations will be cooperation rather than competition,” he said, adding that a complementary relation would benefit all. As such, ICCM would try to integrate with its counterpart, by reaching out to the influential figures in the local business and commercial sectors.

But ICCM does not limit its scope to the business and commercial side, Murray assured.

The chamber will also aim to promote cultural exchanges between Macau and Ireland through various gatherings and celebrations and performances, such as traditional Irish dances and music. “We aim to play a bridge-building role,” he stressed.