



**Report to:** Development Committee

**Subject:** Update on ITLG linkages

**Date:** 2 October 2012

**Reporting Officer:** John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

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<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that, at the 14 September 2011 meeting of the Development Committee, a proposal to host a delegation from the ITLG (Irish Technology Leadership Group) was approved. Six representatives from ITLG took part in a two day visit to Belfast on 4 and 5 November 2011.
1.2	A report was presented to the 13 December meeting of the Development Committee, outlining a review of the visit and confirming ITLG's commitment to put in place a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Belfast City Council and ITLG for an agreed collaborative work programme. This draft MoU was presented to the 21 February 2012 meeting of the Development Committee.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The Irish Technology Leadership Group (ITLG) is a group of Irish and Irish American senior executives based in Silicon Valley who are active in the global technology industry. They work to promote industry linkages between USA and Ireland through a range of collaborative initiatives including trade visits, award ceremonies and events in both USA and Ireland.
2.2	As part of the 4 November programme, the delegation met a range of organisations and individuals involved in the promotion and development of the technology industry in the city. Representatives outlined their offer to maintain contact with the organisations and individuals that they had met in Belfast.
2.3	In order to formalise the linkages, a MoU was agreed between Belfast City Council and ITLG and was endorsed by the Development Committee in February 2012. This contained a range of activities including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of trade mission activity between Silicon Valley and Belfast</li> <li>- Development of an internship programme for up to 2 individuals from</li> </ul>

	<p>Belfast to be placed with leading Silicon Valley businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of international promotion activities in Silicon Valley to promote Belfast.</li> </ul>
2.4	Members were particularly keen that progress would be made on the trade mission activity. Since that time, officers have met with Invest NI and they have confirmed that they are supporting businesses who wish to travel to specific trade events or as part of trade missions to Silicon Valley.
2.5	Since the November visit, two representatives from ITLG have been back to Belfast for a brief visit. They came to the city on the back of a visit to Dublin with their respective companies. Their key engagement was with University of Ulster and they explored opportunities to develop an ITLG office in Belfast, possibly based at the University. No further progress has been made on this issue.
2.6	With regard to international trade activity, ITLG are holding an “Innovation in Entertainment” event and awards ceremony at Sony Studios in California on 27 September. Invest NI has not organised a specific group visit to this event but Brian Glynn, the Invest NI representative in San Jose, will be attending on behalf of the organisation.
2.7	ITLG have invited two companies from Northern Ireland to attend the event – both have been nominated for awards. These companies are Troll inc from Derry, and Inlifesize from Belfast. It is understood that another business from Belfast – Factory Pictures – will attend the event. Representatives from the University of Ulster will also be present. Company participation costs are being supported by Invest NI.
2.8	With regard to the proposed internship, it has proved very difficult to realise this initiative. It is understood that the calibre of interns that are being sought is extremely high. It has also been difficult to get ITLG to pinpoint these opportunities. Officers are aware of one internship opportunity that has been presented for local students but this has been organised through UU staff direct contacts in USA, as opposed to through the ITLG contacts. The student offered the internship has won prizes in global animation competitions and therefore is considered to be very experienced.
2.9	It is understood that other bi-lateral working is taking place between individuals who are part of the ITLG network and local, Belfast companies and individuals. However managing the organisation-to-organisation linkages between Belfast City Council and ITLG has proved more difficult to do and the progress in this field to date has been hampered due to the structure and workings of ITLG.
2.10	It was confirmed at the February 2012 Development Committee that this MoU would be reviewed on an annual basis. Members are therefore asked to add their assessment as to the effectiveness of the MoU with ITLG over the last year.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>A financial allocation of £40,000 towards MoU activities was approved at the February 2012 Committee meeting.</p>

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	All initiatives will be subject to all relevant equality and good relations considerations.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the update on the ITLG MoU and working linkages</li> <li>- Add any other information which may be relevant as part of this review.</li> <li>- Consider how to proceed with the ITLG relationship.</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
There is no specific decision tracking attached to this report.	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding ITLG – Irish Technology Leadership Group	