



**Report to:** Development Committee

**Subject:** International Relations Update

**Date:** 17 June 2014

**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 one of the key commitments in the Council's Investment Programme 2012- 2015, is that the Council will work with city partners to promote Belfast proactively on the international stage to attract trade and investment, increase visitor and student numbers and build the networks necessary to support growth.
1.2	Over the last year, work has been undertaken to develop and deliver an International Relations Framework and Action Plan that seeks to shape how city stakeholders can work together in a stronger and purposeful way, to maximize the economic impact for Belfast as a whole.
1.3	This framework and a 2 year plan were agreed by Members at the August 2013 Development Committee and are attached as Appendix 1 & 2 of this report. Members have requested an update and this report outlines delivery of the action plan to date, highlighting additional areas of work that have arisen as the year progressed and resources required to deliver these.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	In summary, the aims of the International Relations Framework are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To maximise economic return of development for Belfast.</li> <li>- To increase the economic benefits of marketing Belfast internationally.</li> </ul>
2.2	The following objectives are intended to help increase the economic benefits of developing a city-wide approach to proactively market Belfast internationally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deliver increased economic return to Belfast through collaborative international promotion.</li> <li>- Develop meaningful international partnerships and civic relationships to support Belfast's growth.</li> <li>- Promote the attractiveness of the city for business, education and tourism.</li> <li>- Create the optimum mechanisms for the international promotion of Belfast.</li> </ul>

2.3	<p>The framework sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- targets for each of the three primary market segments – trade and investment, tourism, education &amp; learning; and</li> <li>- key actions for each of the geographical target areas - China, Europe, India, North America.</li> </ul>
2.4	<p>The agreed action plan is appended for the period 2013 – 2015. It identifies the suggested role of Council as a co-ordinating partner and presents proposed priority actions for Council at this stage. In May 2014, officers met with key City stakeholders involved in international relations work, to determine where their priorities lie for this year. The additional activities outlined below for consideration reflect and support the current priorities of these stakeholders.</p>
2.5	<p>Proposed outcomes and annual targets for BCC are outlined in the Framework, focusing on Business &amp; Leisure Tourism, Education, Learning &amp; Talent and Trade &amp; Investment. This includes longer term outcomes and annual targets which will be achieved most effectively by Council working with key stakeholders in the delivery of the Framework. As the regional driver, Belfast has a key role to play in helping to deliver a number of regional targets; however, it is important to recognise the targets and longer term outcomes need to be agreed with city stakeholders as they can only be achieved in partnership.</p>
2.6	<p>To help deliver on the targets for this year with respect to the current International Relations Framework, the following actions results have been undertaken to date:</p> <p><b><u>General: Development of the Framework and relationships</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carried out stakeholder analysis</li> <li>- Produced three International Belfast newsletters</li> <li>- Joined NI Connections Diaspora and participated in NYC and London launches of the network</li> <li>- Produce a regularly updated and shared International calendar with stakeholders</li> <li>- Connection made to promote Belfast through HMS Duncan</li> <li>- Developed a Belfast civic welcome programme including a generic New Belfast video and city presentation</li> </ul>
2.7	<p><u>China</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitated and supported Chinese New Year 2013 and 2014</li> <li>- Produced China briefing</li> <li>- Held 4 stakeholder workshops</li> <li>- Reviewed Sister City relationship with Hefei</li> <li>- Hosted Jilin students with Lord Mayor</li> <li>- Attended the annual Hefei Sister Cities Conference in November 2013</li> <li>- Signed a Cooperation agreement with Mayor of Shenyang in November 2013</li> <li>- Hosted a Hefei inward business, civic and arts mission from 13-15 January 2014</li> </ul>
2.8	<p><u>India</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertook study visit to India in April 2013</li> <li>- Secured and hosted Global India Business Meeting in June 2013</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed GIBM programme and secured 300 delegates, 20 investment leads and 50 local companies connected to Indian opportunities</li> <li>- Delivered 40 plus India in Belfast Week events in June 2013</li> <li>- Produced India country briefing</li> <li>- Held 3 India stakeholder workshops</li> <li>- Hosted Mumbai VIP on renewable energies</li> <li>- Review of planned stakeholder activity in India for 2014, including investigating potential cities to partner for trade, tourism and education sector opportunities</li> <li>- Partnering the British Council led UKIERI project for supporting Belfast SMEs to gain access to the Indian market.</li> </ul>
2.9	<p><u>USA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertook mission to South by South West, Austin</li> <li>- Produced country briefing</li> <li>- Undertook Tech mission to California in October 2013, with 20 Belfast companies</li> <li>- Supported the Lord Mayor's mission to Washington, New York, New Brunswick and Toronto, in November 2013.</li> <li>- Consulted with stakeholders</li> <li>- Hosted Nashville delegation during Belfast Music Week</li> <li>- Supported the Lord Mayor's New York civic mission in March 2014</li> <li>- Supported the Lord Mayor's Belfast business mission to New York City in May 2014</li> <li>- Signed Belfast Boston Sister Cities Partnership in May 2014.</li> </ul>
2.10	<p><u>Europe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertook Bilbao tourism mission in November 2013</li> <li>- Ongoing lobby to maximise EU funds for Belfast 2014-2020</li> <li>- Leading on NI European Regional Forum in Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secured £375,000 from OFMDFM to support the Forum and members via a 2 year capacity building fund</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Re-established cooperation links with Dublin, Liverpool, Glasgow and Edinburgh</li> <li>- Held stakeholder workshop on future Interreg V programme</li> <li>- Held Lord Mayors Forum event with Dublin in March 2014.</li> </ul>
2.11	<p><b><u>Additional Activity</u></b></p> <p>Members should be aware that additional areas of work have arisen during the last few months:</p>
2.12	<p><u>China</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Received a request from the Confucius Institute and its participant Belfast Schools (Grosvenor and Aquinas) to help resource the schools to fund the cost of receiving Chinese students via the Belfast/Confucius exchange programme at a cost of £6,000.</li> <li>- Received a request to participate in an outward mission to Shenyang in autumn 2014 to provide civic support to the launch of Queens University's new medical campus in the city and endorse the growing industrial linkages between Bombardier and Shenyang. This may coincide with an OFMDFM visit to open their new Beijing office if deemed appropriate. It is estimated that this mission would cost</li> </ul>

	<p>approximately £10,000 considering visa, travel, accommodation, translation costs and expenses related to the attendance of the Lord Mayor and the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees along with an officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support Chinese New Year 2015 celebrations in partnership with Good Relations.</li> </ul>
2.13	<p><u>USA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Received an informal request to consider receiving an inward trade mission from the City of Seattle, Washington State, to explore trade linkages with regards to the aerospace and engineering sectors. Further detail has yet to emerge on this before a decision can be made.</li> <li>- Following the signing of a Sister Cities International Agreement with Boston, it is requested in a separate report today to Members to establish a voluntary Belfast-Boston overseeing board and an annual costed action plan of activities yet to be determined for 2014-2015.</li> <li>- Hosting the Massachusetts State Senate President Therese Murray in September 2014 which has already been agreed by Members in April of this year. This will involve a civic reception and programme of meetings on 16 September and will help develop the Belfast Boston action plan.</li> <li>- Deliver a second west coast of USA Tech Mission in autumn 2014 in partnership with Invest NI as agreed already by Members.</li> <li>- Following the successful New York City business mission, it is proposed that New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer is invited to Belfast to explore the potential for New York City pension investments in the city.</li> <li>- To compliment this, it is proposed that BCC issue an invitation to New York State Comptroller, Tom Di Napoli to visit Belfast to visit the projects in Belfast that have received investment from the state pension funds facilitated in Belfast through Crescent Capital.</li> <li>- Explore further collaboration opportunities with the City of Nashville to continue building on the formal Sister City link and maintain the strong relations with the Mayor's office and support the link between Queens University and Vanderbilt. These could also include a focus on joint activity in the fields of music, creative industries overall and tourism, particularly with the Ulster Scots diaspora promoting historic and cultural links</li> </ul> <p><u>India</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To promote the UKIERI project outlined in a further report to Members today. A request will be presented to Members separately today, to formally agree to involvement in the project to promote opportunities for Belfast businesses seeking to engage in the Indian market. This report will also include proposals to host an inward and outward visit related to this project at a cost of £15,000.</li> </ul>
2.14	<p><u>Europe</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is proposed in a separate report that BCC works with the City of Dublin to develop a costed action plan of activities to promote the Belfast-Dublin economic corridor.</li> <li>- All party attendance and formal promotion of Belfast at the Liverpool International Festival and Global Cities event 17-18<sup>th</sup> June 2014.</li> <li>- All party attendance at the Eurocities AGM in Munich in November 2014</li> <li>- Ongoing development of the Council's Eu Members working group and involvement of Members as speakers at Eu events when the opportunity arises to promote best practice.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Potential to further explore economic and tourism linkages with Bilbao given the successful visit there last year.</li> </ul>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	Members have already agreed to a £150,000 annual budget for the delivery of the International Relations Action Plan.
3.2	Currently International Relations work is being undertaken by staff within the European Unit. This has resulted in an increase in workload in the unit which is expected to continue to rise given that the new EU funding calls 2014-2020 have now begun to open.
3.3	Given the pending review of governance and organisational structures of Council as a result of LGR, it is proposed at this stage to focus on priority work and continue to operate within the current structure to deliver International Relations with the offer of an honorarium to the EU Unit staff. This is currently being progressed by Senior Management and HR as an interim solution.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	There are unlikely to be any Equality and Good Relations issues attached to this report, although the International Relations Framework is currently undergoing equality screening.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Note the content of the report</li> <li>– Note the International Relations Framework delivery date for Belfast</li> <li>– Approve the additional International Relations activity and recognise that more detailed requests around these will be presented in due course.</li> </ul>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Regular update reports will be brought to the Development Committee by the Director of Development.	
Reporting Officer: John McGrillen	

<b>7</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
Appendix 1 & 2 – International Relations Framework and Action Plan	