



**A Framework for
International Relations
and Twinning in DLR**

Economic Development & Enterprise, Strategic Policy Committee Report

The following document reports on the work of the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee in relation to Twinning and sets out a proposed framework approach for the future development of International Relations and Twinning activities in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Report from the Economic Development & Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee on the development of a framework for future International Relations and Twinning in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Introduction:

This report from the Economic Development and Enterprise SPC Sub-Committee has been developed for consideration by the members of the County Council. This report was developed by a subcommittee of the SCP which was chaired by Cllr Barry Ward and included the following members:

Cllr. John Kennedy, Cllr. Denis O’Callaghan, Cllr. Lettie McCarthy, Cllr. Kate Feeney, Aileen Eglinton, Josephine Browne and Georgina Sweetnam. The Subcommittee met on April 10th, June 12th and October 4th to help inform the development of this report.

The document is set out in two parts.

Part One

Background and context to twinning, DLR’s current key twinning and international relationships and the key issues identified for consideration and agreement by the Subcommittee.

Part Two

Proposed objectives and policy approach for future International Relations and Twinning in DLR and a draft programme tasks and actions for 2017 – 2018.

The final section of the document provides additional information in relation to International relations and Twinning.

Appendix 1: Outline details of DLR’s twinned partners and activity.

Appendix 2: Possible EU Programme opportunities.

Appendix 3: Current and recent EU funded projects in DLR

Part One:

1. Background context to Twinning.

Twinning developed mainly after the Second World War to promote mutual understanding and friendship. Whilst not legally binding, the signing of a formal twinning agreement facilitates the setting up of a longterm, trusting relationship. Its form and content are not fixed, and may be amended depending on the specific nature of the partnership which is being set up according to partners' wishes.

Twinning is a reserved function of the Council and legislative provision is set out in the Local Government Act 2001 Pt 9, S 75 which outlines the following:

- (1) A local authority may enter into arrangements for the twinning of its administrative area or a part of it or establish other similar links with any other area, whether within or outside the State.
- (2) The decision to enter into an arrangement under subsection (1) is a reserved function.
- (3) A local authority shall not enter into an arrangement under subsection (1) unless, having had regard to the following matters, it is satisfied that the arrangement is justified:
 - (a) the benefits likely to accrue to its administrative area and the local community,
 - (b) the social, cultural and general interests of its administrative area and the local community.
 - (c) The total cost involved.
- (4) The Minister may issue directions to local authorities or specified classes of local authorities for the purposes of this section.
- (5) There shall be recorded in the annual report of a local authority for every year expenditure and other particulars in relation to the performance of its functions under this section. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Council has twinned links with the County of Ynys Mon (Anglesey) in Wales / Cymru and Brest in Brittany / Breizh (1984) and in more recent times has signed a friendship agreement with Izumo in Japan in 2008, and most recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop cooperation and links with Chengdu in China.

Friendship/Co-Operation Agreements have become more popular in recent years where partners sign a 'Memorandum of Understanding', documenting the areas of interest in which the partner cities or areas are committing themselves to explore, and the timeframe for any proposed collaboration.

During the last decade, the budget, visits and activity has been limited as is set out in appendix 1 and in the last 5 years a modest budget of €3,000 has been maintained to support activities or opportunities with partners. There have been no formal twinning trips to or from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown since 2013.

See Appendix 1 details of budget and details of existing agreements with Brest, France; Anglesey, Wales, & Izumo City, Japan and Chengdu in China.



2. Key Issues raised for Consideration

The sub-committee was tasked with considering the current context and proposed policy and approach for twinning. A number of key issues and questions were considered to help inform the proposed policy approach and objectives.

- Why twin – what are the benefits or key objectives and policy approach for the County?
- The term “twinning” and wider inclusion wider international relations / less formal arrangements
- Consideration of existing twinning arrangements
- Should DLRCC develop a new twinning / connection and if so on what basis?
- Support and Resources for twinning and next steps

The Sub-committee considered that;

- Twinning and friendship agreements can offer benefits especially when there is a clear, shared objective, with strong, shared interest, community involvement, and commitment of the partners involved. It was also considered that such partnerships can offer an important opportunity to learn, share ideas and support community engagement. However it was also considered important to clarify the key objectives, the links to sustain, and what community benefits are expected to accrue.
- Developing links or partnerships can support in achieving policy objectives such as culture, sports, heritage, age friendly, and links with diaspora, economic development, coastal communities as well as tourism. There may also be opportunities to work on problems or develop innovative solutions with partners around key challenges such as design, smart cities, climate change and energy.
- However it will be important to consider the key objectives and what the most appropriate partnership arrangements might be to achieve the objectives. There may be opportunities through specific European Programmes rather than entering into a formal twinning, depending on the objectives, mutual interest and level of community engagement to drive and sustain the partnership into the longer term future.
- The role of the Local Authority should be to develop the existing formal relationships and secondly to facilitate and enable local organisation to develop direct international links and relationships which will contribute to the development of the identified priority objectives.

Further to consideration of the reports and discussion, a number of key points were agreed which has informed the proposed twinning approach, policy and objectives which are set out in the report;

1. The existing twinning relationships with Anglesey and Brest should be reviewed for strengthening and identifying areas of mutual interest for potential exchange or co-operation.
2. The need for clear objectives around twinning or developing new international links and identifying desirable outcomes/outputs and potential to link with key partners to help achieve wider benefits.
3. It is important to recognise ‘Twinning’ in terms of its formal legislative requirements. It was also recognised that there was opportunities to explore / facilitate less formal future partnership arrangements in circumstances where there is mutual interest and benefit and fit with the objectives, but there needs to be a clear interest or commitment from the community or partners involved to develop and sustain the links.
4. When considering future arrangements, the following areas should be considered: Economic, Education, (all levels), Sporting, Cultural, Historical. Artistic, Recreational, Diaspora, Tourism
5. There is an opportunity to explore potential new partnership link that could deliver strategic/wider community benefits for DLR to support in achieving our Objectives. This could be with an area with strong links with diaspora, shared characteristics and evidence of mutual interest and that this would support with achieving our objectives. Initially this could focus on European countries or ‘Sister Cities’ – i.e. potential North American city. Aim to explore locally first with HE/ FE providers, Chamber of Commerce to gauge current partnership links/ interest, objectives and resource to support and sustain such a relationship and follow up with embassies.
6. Important to ensure viability and sustainability and explore potential for alternative sources of funding to develop (EU). Opportunities to enable towns to work together but need to identify funding matches available and recognition that the formal status of twinning not always necessary to develop such links.
7. A draft programme to be developed for next 2 years with a focus on reviewing and strengthening existing arrangements, within resources, while exploring longer term potential and opportunities.

3. Conclusion

On the basis of the sub-committee's work to date, it is proposed to follow up with DLR's current twinning or co-operation agreements to scope opportunities for exchange or co-operation that would be mutually beneficial and fit with our objectives and resources going forward. (See appendix 1)

Resources are limited and the priority will be to follow up with the relevant twinned authorities to scope opportunities and draw up a programme of activity based on areas of mutual interest and benefit in line with resources.

Given the limited budget, funding opportunities such as EU funding or alternatives will be explored to identify opportunities to support with achieving objectives. (See appendix 2)

On-going meetings will be held with Chamber, UCD, IADT to discuss their international relations and strategic partnerships to build awareness and help inform consideration for future opportunities which may be mutually beneficial and fit with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's criteria and agreed objectives into the future.

The Economic Development & Enterprise SPC discussed and approved the proposed framework approach at its meeting on October 10th and requests the Council to consider the following framework approach setting out the policy criteria and objectives for future actions and the suggested programme of work to be implemented.



Part Two:

Framework Approach for future International Relations and Twinning in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

It is proposed that any future International relations or twinning activity in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown should support the progression of the relevant goals and objectives of the DLR Corporate Plan and the DLR Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 -2021 related to supporting the economic and community development of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council seeks to facilitate and enable local organisation to lead the development of a range of informal links with towns and cities.

In considering any new linkages with international partners, the following approach and objectives are proposed to be considered for International relations or Twinning.

Any proposed new links or relationships (from formal twinning / friendship agreements) will be expected to demonstrate that they achieve the following criteria and support in delivering on one or more of the objectives set out;

Policy Criteria:

- **Shared similarities/ characteristics** identified between DLR and candidate area.
- **Mutual shared interest and support** from community/ business groups for partnership with lead identified for each area.
- **Clear aim / focus** that achieves wider community benefit for partnership between DLR and the proposed candidate area.
- **Fit with DLRCC Local Economic and Community Plan goals and objectives** and support in achieving one or more of the key objectives below
- **Sustainability and Viability is demonstrated** – mutual interest, commitment and resources are demonstrated to support in achieving the aims and maintaining into the future.

Policy Objectives:

- Objective 1:** Support the development of **Tourism, Sport, Recreation, Heritage and Culture Sectors**, and Enhance Links with Diaspora.
- Objective 2:** Support the aim to develop Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown as a **“Learning County” promoting Education and Lifelong Learning.**
- Objective 3:** Support and encourage **community spirit, public participation and community development** for all within the county.
- Objective 4:** Support and promote **economic development and enterprise** and improve the prosperity of the county by attracting new Investment and Enterprise Development.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Outline of DLR's twinned partners and activity

The following set out the current international links between Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and other international cities.

Brest

DLRCC has a Twinning Agreement with Brest, in Brittany or the Bretagne region, north-west France. Located on the Western tip of Brittany, the City is an important port and naval base. The population of the City was estimated at 142,722 as of 2007. Brest is developing a series of maritime projects for the Technopôle Brest-Iroise cluster and the European Institute for Marine Studies (University of Western Brittany). This includes Le Campus Mondial de la Mer - Global Sea 13 Campus. Their ambition is to make the tip of Brittany the world's major centre for the study of oceans and seas and their constructive enhancement

The Isle of Anglesey

The Isle of Anglesey (Ynys Môn in Welsh) is situated off the north-west coast of Wales. The population of Anglesey at the 2011 Census was 69,751. Anglesey has successfully used its natural environment to develop a series of events, festivals and programmes to support public engagement and tourism. Examples of such events include Anglesey Marine Week, Anglesey Wildlife Tours and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Menai Seafood Festival.

Izumo City, Japan

As of 2010, the total population is 145,008 and the area of the new city of Izumo is 543.48 square kilometres. It has a number of maritime and marine features that include the tallest lighthouse in Japan. In 2008 St. Joseph's boys F.C. Sallynoggin and Izumo City F.C., took part in an international soccer tournament along with a number of other international youth soccer clubs.

In 2011 the county's first Japanese Gardens at Cabinteely Park were opened by the Japanese Ambassador to Ireland. There was a visit by the Izumo/Ireland Friendship Club to Cabinteely Park in 2012.

Chengdu, China

In 2007 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council was invited to participate as part of a delegation to Chengdu. The Deputy County Manager attended this event and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chengdu Hi-Tech Industrial Zone, China. This was part of an EU project which involved the establishment of an office in Chengdu to support trade links.

In May 2017, a delegation from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown attended a trade summit in Chengdu. The Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fair. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the County Council and the City of Chengdu which aims to promote exchanges and cooperation in the fields of trade and commerce, culture, education, science and technology, tourism.

Our partners have developed the Following links

Institute of Art, Design and Technology

The Dún Laoghaire Institute of Arts Design and Technology (IADT) have developed strategic links with the following cities.

IADT are Ireland's only Institute of Art, Design and Technology with a specific aim to lead and inform the creative, cultural and technological industries through learning, teaching, research and innovation. IADT have developed a Strategic Plan for 2014 – 2018. Strategic priority 8 of this plan relates to the International Agenda and states:

“To further develop and formalise links with international HEI's and organisations to develop and grow our international student numbers and provide opportunities for new types of collaboration and engagement”

IADT currently have a strong working relationship with The George Browne University Toronto, Canada where a new MA programme has been developed.

DLR Twinning Activity since 2007

Year	Adopted Budget	Expenditure	Description
2007	6,800	6,800	Football Team Trip: Brest assoc. event
2008	7,000	9,068	Festival of World Cultures: Izuma assoc. event. International Soccer Tournament: Izuma assoc. event
2009	2,400	8,300	Festival of World Cultures: Izuma assoc. event Japanese Garden Project, Cabinteely Park
2010	5,700	0	Japanese Garden Project, Cabinteely Park
2011	3,000	2,853	Japanese Garden Project, Cabinteely Park Izuma – Ireland Friendship Club visit
2012	3,000	804	Izuma – Ireland Friendship Club visit
2013	3,000	0	Chengdu, China – Memorandum of Understanding
–			
2016			



University College Dublin

UCD has grown to become Ireland's largest and most globally engaged university, it is in the top 1% of universities globally and has become the destination of choice for international students coming to Ireland and educating some 5,000 students at locations outside Ireland. It is an active member of the Universitas 21 university network. Universitas 21 (U21) is an international network of 25 leading research-intensive universities in sixteen countries.

Other twinning and international relations in the Dublin City Region

Our Dublin Authority neighbors also have twinning and friendship arrangements in place; South Dublin is twinned with Brent District in England and Bad Segeberg District in Germany and Fingal signed an MOU with Cheng Du in China in 2016. However there is no further information on the website regarding any additional international arrangements that might be in place.

Dublin City Council has the most significant number of international partnership arrangements, however it also has a fully staffed International Relations Unit to manage the relations which include;

Dublin is currently twinned with:

- San José (1986)
- Liverpool (1997)
- Barcelona (1998, Addendum in 2009 for 2 years)
- Beijing (2011)

Dublin currently has the following friendship or co-operation agreements in place:

- Tbilisi, Georgia 10th December 2014 to 10th December 2017
- Mexico City 2014 for 4 years
- Guadalajara (Mexico) 22nd March 2013 – no time limit
- Moscow 20th March 2009 – no time limit but now proposing a new Co-Operation Agenda for 2017 to 2019
- St. Petersburg 28th September 2010 – no time limit but now proposing a new Road Map for 2017 to 2020
- Wuhan (China) 5th September 2016 for 3 years.

Appendix 2:

EU Programme opportunities

There are a number of European Programmes which provide opportunity to develop international relations / links with other European cities these include:

Horizon 2020 is the EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly €80 billion of funding from 2014 to 2020. This provides opportunities to participate in EU funded research projects in the areas of sustainability, city regeneration, Smart Cities, ICT, transportation etc.

INTERREG is a series of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes that aim to stimulate cross border and inter-regional cooperation in the European Union. Started in 1989, INTERREG is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) INTERREG V covers the period 2014-2020.

INTERREG is very accessible for Local Authorities.

- Cross Border Programmes (INTERREG VA)
Ireland -Wales Programme **DLR eligible**
Ireland/Northern Ireland/Scotland Programme. **DLR eligible**
- Transnational Co-Operation (INTERREG VB)
Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (**NPA**)
Atlantic Area Programme (AA) **DLR eligible**
North West Europe Programme (NWE) **DLR eligible**
- Inter-regional (INTERREG VC)
Interreg Europe (EU 28 MS) **DLR eligible**

See appendix 3 for list of current and recent EU supported projects in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Other programmes include;

- **URBACT** is the EU's Programme for integrated urban development. It enables cities across Europe to develop integrated solutions to common urban challenges by networking, learning from one another's experiences, drawing lessons and identifying good practices to improve urban policies
- **INTERACT** offers services and products (harmonised tools, innovative ways to collaborate) to support the cooperation and exchange network for territorial cooperation programmes.



Appendix 3

Current and recent EU funded projects in DLR

Name of Project	EU Programme	Project Topic	Partner Cities	Time Frame
CHANGE Network	URBACT III	Citizen collaboration in the Social Design of Public Services.	City of Eindhoven (Lead partner) Gdansk, Poland. Forli, Italy. Nagykanizsa, Hungary. Riga, Latvia. Amarante, Portugal. Aarhus, Denmark. Malmo, Sweden. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Ireland	2015 – March 2018
Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs	COSME	Exchange learning for SME owners across Europe.	Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Romania	2016 – (Jan) 2018
Placemaking four Cities (P4C)	URBACT II	“Placemaking as an Open Living Lab”. Pilot Transfer of good practice and Placemaking Tools	DLRCC (Lead partner) Eger, Hungary. Pori, Finland Albacete, Spain	2014 - 2015
Outdoor Tourism	Ireland Wales INTERREG 4A	To develop the Outdoor Tourism sector in all partner areas.	Conwy County Borough Council (Wales) (Lead Partner) Kildare (Ireland) Gwynedd (Wales) The Outdoor Partnership (Wales) Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (Ireland)	2007 - 2013
BRAND project	Ireland Wales INTERREG 4A	To develop & test a method of place re-branding re-engaging communities. To create a toolkit of the methodology developed and make this available to other areas as a template for community regeneration.	Athy, Dún Laoghaire, Holyhead and Rhyl.	2010 – 2013
SURE Network	URBACT II	SURE stands for “Fostering diversification of local economies by using innovative Socioeconomic methods of Urban REhabilitation in deprived urban areas”	Eger, Hungary (Lead Partner) Pori, Finland. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Alcobaa, Portugal. Larnaca, Cyprus Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. Komotini, Greece Gheorgheni, Romania CEEI Albacete, Spain	2010 - 2012

- **ESPON**, the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion, studies and predicts developments in European territory.
- **LIFE** is the financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU. The priority areas of its sub-programme for environment are: environment and resource efficiency, nature and biodiversity, environmental governance. Areas of particular ecological may be protected. In addition, projects may be developed in areas that face considerable environmental issues.
- **COSME** facilitates access to finance for SMEs through the “Loan Guarantee Facility” and the “Equity Facility for Growth” promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture, notably thanks to the Erasmus for young entrepreneurs exchange scheme. Therefore, companies that are active in the field of tourism may profit from its provisions.
- The **Creative Europe** Programme consists of three sub-programmes: the “Culture sub-programme” for cultural & creative sectors, the “Media sub-programme” for the audio-visual industries and the Cross-sectoral strand for joint projects between the cultural/creative sectors and the audio-visual industries. The setting of transnational projects and cooperation networks are encouraged. The European Capitals of culture is also part of the programme.
- **Erasmus+** aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising Education and Training. Therefore, educational activities which are related to tourism may benefit from Erasmus+ funding. The programme may be also used to support the organisation of European Sports events.

