

**JANUARY 2020**

**MCA-INDIA STRATEGIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION 2021 AND BEYOND**

**Purpose of Report**

The previous meeting's report set out the detailed rationale for the MCA-India programme together with an update of in-market activities undertaken since UK India Business Council's (UKIBC) original report in 2017.

This report provides an update to the programme for the remainder of 2020-21 due to the impact of the Covid19 pandemic. The report also sets out progress in the development of a strategic implementation plan to support further activities in the India market. This includes draft proposals to establish a South Yorkshire – Indian Forum comprising of an Advisory Board and Business Network.

**Thematic Priority**

1. Ensure new businesses receive the support they need to flourish.
2. Facilitate and proactively support growth amongst existing firms.
3. Attract investment from other parts of the UK and overseas and improve our brand.
4. Increase sales of SCR's goods and services to other parts of the UK and abroad.

**Freedom of Information and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972**

In this section it must be clear if:

A – the paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that Board accept the next stage of the programme to establish a South Yorkshire India Forum in 2021 and endorse the continuation of the development of the MCA-India programme.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1** The Business Recovery and Growth Board were provided with a detailed rationale for the MCA-India programme and an update on activities to date at the previous meeting.
- 1.2** As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, activities for the remainder of the 2020/21 MCA-India programme have been adapted to virtual activities where relevant.

Details of the activities for Q1 2021 can be found in **Annex 1**. A current list of India Growth Champions is detailed in **Annex 2**.

- 1.3** As engagement with the Indian market is a long-term strategy, we are working with UKIBC to review our approach to date and initiating work on a “Roadmap” which sets out a Strategic Implementation Plan from 2021 onwards. This plan would seek to build on the work achieved to date and introduce a programme of activity for the financial years 2021/22 & 2022/23. The full report will be presented to the Board for discussion/approval at the March 2021 meeting.

## **2. Proposal and justification**

### **2.1 South Yorkshire India Programme for remainder of the 2020/21 financial year**

In response to the Covid-19 crisis and consequent travel restrictions, the India programme has been adapted to virtual mode wherever possible (events, trade delegations) whilst maintaining the quality of delivery. An actual trade mission is being planned for the next financial year (Autumn/Winter 2021). This approach enables momentum to be maintained based on previous visits to Mumbai and Pune, continues the work relating to the India Growth Champions and progresses strategically important relationships and links between Pune and South Yorkshire.

### **2.2 South Yorkshire India Strategic Implementation Plan (Financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23)**

The draft plan proposes the establishment of a South Yorkshire India Forum. This comprises two elements; an India Forum Advisory Board and a Business Network. This proposal builds on the original objectives set in UKIBC strategy report recommendation to create a “Team SCR/South Yorkshire”

- The Advisory Forum of 10-12 members would comprise of senior representatives from the public, private and academic sectors. This could potentially include the Indian High Commission, Department of International Trade, International Trade Forum and Company of Cutlers representation as well as universities and businesses operating in India.
- The Advisory Forum’s key responsibilities would include strategic oversight of the SCR-India programme and advise on implementation. The high-profile nature of its members will help galvanise “Team SCR/South Yorkshire’s approach to the Indian market creating increased effectiveness and impact. The Board would also play a coordinating role, engaging with wider stakeholders to identify and leverage opportunities with the Indian market for wider benefit.
- It is proposed that the Advisory Forum meet quarterly, Chaired by a LEP board member and is responsible to the MCA Business Recovery and Growth Board.
- The rationale behind the Advisory Forum is to help;
- raise awareness in South Yorkshire of the India opportunity and to generate sustained commitment from local business, political and academic leaders having individual and collective interest in the India opportunities.
- augment South Yorkshire’s profile amongst the key stakeholders in India,

- oversee development and implementation future strategies and sustain activities over time in a planned and timebound approach to increase trade and investment with India.
- The Business Network would include a wider group of businesses and stakeholders with interests relating to India. Members would receive access to networking opportunities, events and newsletters. The benefits of the network would be to provide a group of South Yorkshire businesses engaging with the Indian opportunity, and it would secure buy-in from Indian businesses and wider stakeholders to the opportunities in South Yorkshire
- The rationale behind the Business Network is as follows;
  - South Yorkshire would have a community of like-minded people, keen to grow SCR-India trade, investments, and partnerships.
  - The network would provide a group of regional businesses engaging with the Indian opportunity
  - The network would support securing buy-in from Indian businesses and wider stakeholders to the South Yorkshire opportunity. This is an important virtuous circle. Such entities/individuals in the Business Network will lend credibility and accelerate positive results. - it will provide PR opportunities, on launching and ongoing, which will help the City Region raise its profile among Indian stakeholders and the profile of India within the region. It will also provide a platform for the region to provide intelligence and other support to businesses in a light-touch way, encouraging exports to India, partnerships, and investments into South Yorkshire.

### **3. Consideration of alternative approaches**

#### **3.1 MCA India Programme for remainder of the 2020/21 financial year**

No alternative approaches apply with regards to activities proposed until the end of the current financial year. This is a continuing programme of activity adapted in response to international travel restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid19 pandemic as outlined in the forward activity plan for the SCR-India programme. Putting all activity on hold would have a detrimental effect to the programmes long term ambitions and in maintaining the links and relationships which have already been fostered.

#### **3.2 MCA India Strategic Implementation Plan (Financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23)**

The significance of the SYIF is to build on the past India engagements, oversee development and implementation future strategies and sustain activities overtime in a planned and timebound approach to increase trade and investment with India by leveraging support from local political, business and academic leadership. A fragmented and scattergun approach is unlikely to reinforce the brand of South Yorkshire amongst the Indian investors with the result that most engagements and follow up measures will lose their impact overtime leading to opportunities being soft-pedalled and ultimately de-prioritised.

South Yorkshire is competing internationally and with other regions within the UK in growing trade and investment with India. The Manchester India Partnership and the recent launch of West Midlands India Partnership programme by West Midlands Combined

Authority only vindicate the case for a coherent, collaborative, and a consistent approach to augmenting India trade and investment opportunities.

#### **4. Implications**

##### **4.1 Financial**

The development of this programme will be contained within existing budgets.

##### **4.2 Legal**

Not applicable

##### **4.3 Risk Management**

We will continue to monitor the situation with regards to travel restrictions and the Covid19 pandemic and ensure that appropriate safeguards and mitigations are in place.

##### **4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion**

In the context of Brexit and the need to diversify market opportunities for trade and investment, the MCA- India programme is seeking to develop new trading relationships.

#### **5. Communications**

- 5.1** The virtual delegation activity proposed in January 2021 involves meetings between the Mayors of Pune and Sheffield City region. This will include media interviews between the Sheffield City Region Mayor and members of the India press invited through our delivery partner UKIBC.

#### **6. Appendices/Annexes**

- 6.1** Annex 1 – SCR India Programme of Activities Q1 2021  
Annex 2 – India Growth Champions list

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: