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The European Programme Support Office

In 2021, Dublin City Council launched **Dublin City Council's EU Programme Participation Strategy 2021 – 2027** and the European Programme Support Office (**EPSO**) was established. The work of the **EPSO** is to implement the Strategy and to provide support services for staff participating or intending to participate in EU partnership projects, including capacity building, training and development and supporting linkages with EU Programmes and funding opportunities within the EU Funding Programmes to assist the City Council realise its priorities and contribute to areas identified by the European Commission, such as the Regional Policy Priorities, the path to Europe's Digital Decade and delivering the European Green Deal.

The office will have a key co-ordination, liaison and communications role both internally among Dublin City Council staff and with external stakeholders including other local, regional and European authorities and representatives.

The economic development policy and statutory role of Local Authorities were factors in establishing the **EPSO**. Dublin City Council has significant experience in leveraging funding under various EU Programmes, which has resulted in Dublin City Council having a positive reputation both nationally and internationally.

Digital Information Platform

EPSO have gathered important content which is now available on **CitiDesk**, the City Council's new intranet staff information portal and includes:

- Information about the role of the EPSO
- Dublin City Council's EU Programme Participation Strategy 2021-2027
- Advisory Committee: Terms of Reference and Members
- List of past and existing EU projects where the City Council participated
- EU Policies and Programme information (including links to relevant Commission and Programme webpages)
- Up to date Master List of all **Calls for Proposals** including **Summary** about each Call
- Upcoming Open Days
- National Contact Points
- Potential partner organisations

- Online digital **Training Needs Survey** to assess which areas will be a priority for EPSO to provide DCC staff with the support for improving their understanding of EU Programmes and EU Projects
- Online digital **Staff self-assessment tool** to assist staff aspiring to participate in EU Projects will be a self-assessment questionnaire which could help them with identifying what preparation is needed for engaging in an EU Project
- Online **Template Concept Project Note**

City Councillors can view this information on www.dublincity.ie Economic Development & Enterprise pages. ESPO is in discussion with Corporate Services to establish a platform on Sharepoint on line to host the data to allow access to external stakeholders.

Advisory Committee

Dublin City Council has consulted with a number of EU offices located in local authorities around the country and considered it best practice to adopt a cross-departmental strategic approach to the development of projects and the sourcing of funding to achieve the objectives as set out in the Dublin City Council Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024. This cross-departmental approach to working together and sharing information would ensure that all teams are aware of new and existing projects and funding opportunities in the wider organisation with a view to increasing efficiency. This approach will avoid duplication of work and ensure resources are leveraged most effectively; allow for prioritisation of projects where funding is limited; facilitate projects feeding into each other and allow teams to be aware of the wider scope of work happening internally.

An Advisory Committee has been established to guide the work of the EPSO. The Committee members are the Executive Managers/Director of Services of the Departments and have held its first meeting and agreed Terms of Reference for the Committee. This Committee will be supported and resourced by EPSO through direct collaboration with each of the heads of Departments.

Procurement of EU expertise

Participation in EU Projects will require technical knowledge and expertise as well as time to prepare applications and negotiate partnerships and resources. EPSO are currently preparing a tender document to establish Framework of EU experts who can provide assistance to staff and when the

Framework is in place, they can contact the panellists. The following categories of expertise will be sought:

- **Thematic Policy Expert** – Successful panellists will be knowledgeable in fields relevant to the work of Dublin City Council and/or areas of competency of the European Union
- **Proposal Writer** – Successful panellists will have proven skills and experience to write proposals for EU projects

Funding Needs Analysis

A Funding Needs Analysis will be carried out by the EPSO to identify key priority funding areas and potential sources of funding for each area and scope out project ideas / foundations of proposals and will create summary documents for each proposal. Based on the analysis, a portfolio of project proposals can be developed with a variety of cross-departmental themes.

EPSO will have a key role to play in targeting and securing external funds that will contribute to the delivery of this Plan and in achieving the objectives and will align all of its activities towards achieving the strategic objectives set out in the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024.

Project Participation Appraisal Process - Strategic Objective Alignment

The Evaluation Process will be developed further, to examine participation in various EU Programme opportunities. This process will align with the objectives set out in Dublin City Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024, Dublin City Council EU Programme Participation Strategy 2021 – 2027 and the EU Goals 2021 – 2027.

Communication Plan

EPSO will drive effective communication, both internally as well as externally, with key stakeholders and will connect staff with the appropriate people to gain knowledge of project requirements, opportunities and internal procedures. It will communicate its role and services and in particular will enhance its relationship with the Irish Regions European Office (IREO) to ensure the Council is fully informed on forthcoming calls and is engaged in EU policy issues and appropriate funding opportunities.

The Communication Plan will include engagement on appropriate social media and publishing newsletters to cover events and stories related to DCC staff's involvement in EU Projects, how-to manuals from proposal writing to partner searches and building relations with key stakeholders and organisations.

Irish Regions European Office (IREO)

A meeting will take place in Dublin on 13 April with Head Irish Regions European Office and Coordinator, Irish Delegation to the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. If the elected members would like to highlight any items of interest to them, the EPSO team would be happy to follow up with IREO.

EU Committee of the Regions

In addition, the President of the EU Committee of the Regions will be visiting Dublin on Wed 15 and Thurs 16 June 2022. The Lord Mayor is a CoR Alternate Member and will host the President in the Mansion House.

To find out more please go to the [City Council's website](#) or contact the office via europeanoffice@dublincity.ie

International Relations

Agreements with other International Cities

Dublin City Council has received a growing number of requests for Agreements with other International cities. As there is no existing criteria in place for the evaluation of such requests, it is generally accepted that it would be very beneficial if a process could be established to manage these requests. A DRAFT report will be brought to the next Protocol Committee meeting will be held on 28 April.

Collaboration between Dublin / Belfast / Manchester / Liverpool

On 30 April, Lord Mayor Gilliland travelled to Belfast with officials from the Climate Action Office and International Relations to meet with the Lord Mayor of Belfast, the Mayors of Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region to discuss areas for further collaborations, specifically relating to decarbonising transport, heat and industry and how the cities could learn from each other going forward. The delegation visited Net Zero Technology Centre in Belfast to see new hydrogen technologies and got an overview of plans to advance technology around green hydrogen and hear about developments in

green hydrogen from organisations active in this area. A number of bi-lateral meetings relating to possible opportunities of collaboration between the cities on Tourism, Culture, Night Time Economy, Sports were attend by Senior Management from CRES Department.

A Statement of Intent was signed by the Lord Mayors and the Mayors of Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester to demonstrate the four cities commitment to working north, south, east and west to collaborate on practical approaches to accelerate the delivery of net zero and share best practices, knowledge and experience.

City of Helsinki visit to Dublin

A large delegation from the City of Helsinki, led by their Deputy Mayor Nasima Razmyar and members of their Education Committee will make a study visit to Dublin on 18 & 19 May. The purpose of the visit is to understand the structure of the educational system in Ireland, the education providers and how the different stakeholders work together in the field of education. Contact details were provided to the City of Helsinki for the City of Dublin Education Training Board, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, Educate Together etc to allow them to arrange relevant meetings and site visits.

A meeting will take place in the Hugh Lane Gallery with the delegation where they will meet with Representatives from the Arts Office, Hugh Lane Gallery and Comhairle na nOg and they will share with the group the important role the City Council plays, working closely with neighbouring primary and secondary schools in the city, in supporting equity and equality through their operational cultural and arts programmes. The Lord Mayor will host the delegation in the Mansion House on the day also.

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