

European & External Affairs Committee

Date: Thursday, 9 December 2004
Time: 9am –12.15pm
Venue: Committee Rooms 3 & 4
Title: Wales, A World Nation – A Strategic Framework

Purpose

The paper has been revised following discussion at the Committee on 11 November 2004. At that time the Committee had no issue with the general thrust of the paper or the principles it set out but asked to see it again.

Summary

The attached document sets out the approach the Assembly Government proposes to take in achieving its goal of making Wales a recognised World Nation, and the strategic framework within which it will pursue its international-related activities.

This strategic framework sets out the principles which will guide the Assembly Government's activities and priorities through the following key, inter-linked and complementary areas:

International Relationships;

The Image and Branding of Wales;

Promotion and Marketing;

Events and visits – internal and external;

Working with and through others.

Action

To note the revised document.

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Wales, a World Nation - A Strategic Framework

The Vision

Our vision for the future is that Wales will become a recognised World Nation with all the economic, social and political benefits that brings as:

- a location of choice for people to live, work, study, visit and do business;
- a strong international trading nation;
- a key player able to influence national and international policies and proposals which impact on the daily lives of the people of Wales;
- a valued partner in the sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise.

1. This document outlines the progress that has been made by the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners towards achieving this vision and sets out a strategic framework within which the Government intends to proceed.

Background

2. Historically Wales not enjoyed the same kind of international profile and recognition in its own right as Scotland or Ireland. Since the National Assembly for Wales was established in 1999 the Assembly Government has begun to address that issue by capitalising on this once in a lifetime opportunity to raise Wales' profile overseas and to stamp Wales' unique identity on the world.

3. Beginning from a low base, we have had to learn how to develop international relationships and about promotion and marketing. We have had to develop knowledge, experience and the tools and vehicles to make our mark. This has been achieved by the Welsh Assembly Government working in partnership with others with specialised expertise including foreign direct investment (FDI), tourism, arts and culture, trade and education.

4. Some examples of the progress we have made include:

- Active membership of European networks such as the Committee of the Regions, Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions; European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL); Teleregions Network; the World Health Organisation Regions for Health Network (RHN).
- Becoming a leading member of Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (NRG4SD), promoting sustainable development at the regional level.
- Hosting many VIP visitors to Wales of President and Premier rank, many of whom have addressed Assembly Members in the Chamber (See Annexes 1& 2).
- Signing or reaffirming formal government agreements between Wales and the Province of Chubut, Catalunya, New South Wales, Silesia, Brittany, and Latvia, with the latter being the first formal relationship with a full member state of the European Union.
- Increasing and strengthening representation overseas through a network of international centres and offices
- Working with other others – academia, local government, ASPBs – to develop a more integrated approach to international activities.
- Wales World Nation - a high quality, integrated marketing and communication package to promote the corporate image of Wales.

5. Five years on from Devolution, Wales is developing in confidence on the international stage and is respected among its peers and partners in Europe and the wider world. The Welsh Assembly Government has developed considerable knowledge and experience in international matters and has begun to take seriously the business of promotion and profile on a scale that is unprecedented. While there is still a long way to go to achieve our vision, the Welsh Assembly Government has a clear view of how it intends to achieve it. The forthcoming reform of public services and the merger of key players working internationally - the Welsh Development Agency and the Wales Tourist Board – with the Government will significantly strengthen the capacity and ability to do so.

6. The time is now right to set out the strategic framework within which the Welsh Assembly Government, with our partners and the wider Wales, will continue to work to achieve our vision.

Economic, social and political benefits

7. The economic, social and political benefits are interdependent with advances in each area impacting on the others.

8. Economic benefits are often more tangible and easily measured in increased levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and profitable trade links. The work of the Welsh Development Agency and WalesTrade International is fundamental to strengthening our position in these areas. Tourism is also a major economic factor for Wales - while the majority of tourism activity in Wales currently emanates

from the UK market, this is changing thanks to the international marketing skills of the Wales Tourist Board. Also important are the economic and longer-term benefits of encouraging overseas students to study in Wales. The recent formation for this purpose of the Wales International Consortium, representing all the Welsh universities and colleges is a significant development and achievement in this area.

9. Socially, improved quality of life for individuals is an outcome of greater economic prosperity. Developing international relationships also contributes to improving the quality of life for the people of Wales. Through interaction and collaboration with other countries, we can develop knowledge and experience to inform our own policy development in areas such as the environment, health, social care and education. These relationships are two-way and we have much to offer the world. Our reputation as leaders in areas such as Sustainable Development, language development and Environmental Technologies will, in turn, open the doors to greater international recognition and influence.

10. The opportunities to promote Wales politically, economically and culturally post-devolution are enormous. As a devolved country within the UK, Wales' distinct position, experiences and aspirations can differ from the UK as a whole. We have already seen the interest that Wales attracts from countries wishing to learn more about our devolved system of government. Devolution allows us to participate in networks which will increase Wales' influence as a country in our own right and to foster links of potential long-term benefit with other countries or regions, some of which see a greater connection with Wales than with the UK as a whole.

The Way Forward

11. Achieving better recognition as a World Nation is in the economic, educational and political interests of Welsh society and the people of Wales. It is ambitious and will not be achieved without the involvement and commitment of many. The Welsh Assembly Government recognises its responsibility in providing the lead and developing and shaping the framework to achieve the vision. It also recognises the significant role that can be played by others, and its reliance on their full participation. The Government will continue to work with those within and outside Wales who can contribute –including public and private sectors, business, civil society and academia. In doing so, a key principle must be to capitalise on and play to our strengths. Another is to be realistic in terms of resources, priorities and value for money. Above all, we must avoid mixed messages and disparate branding.

12. Our activities and priorities will be channelled through a number of key areas :

- International relationships;
- The Image and Branding of Wales;
- Promotion and Marketing;
- Events and visits – internal and external;
- Working with and through others.

13. These areas of activity are inter-linked and complementary and need to be undertaken in a concerted and integrated overall framework to realise the full potential. We must avoid a silo mentality and approach to realise that potential. Wales is a small country: therefore it needs to punch above our weight. The Welsh Assembly Government's objective is to put Wales on the world map. Wales may carry different labels for different purposes but the overall message needs to be clear: Wales is the brand.

International Relationships

14. Bilateral and multi-lateral relationships, and involvement in international relationships generally, provide profile and the opportunity to influence. Strategic alliances with like-minded countries and regions offer significant potential benefits to both parties in that respect, as well as practical economic, social, cultural and political benefits.

15. Such alliances and relationships do not always have to be enshrined in a formal Memorandum of Understanding or similar document (such as those with Catalunya, Baden-Württemberg, Chubut, New South Wales, Brittany, Silesia and Latvia) but can be equally meaningful and effective if based on sound working relationships and practical benefits (as in the case of Wales' relationship with Emilia Romagna, Flanders, Finland and Lesotho for example).

16. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to develop links with key countries and regions, within the limits of our resources. Our growing confidence and maturity enables us to take a more pragmatic approach than in the past in developing relationships. To be meaningful and beneficial to both parties, the relationship must be based on mutual respect, openness and pragmatism, and deliver real and measurable benefits. We will apply these principles in keeping our existing relationships under review, in exploring the potential of others and in determining the extent of the resources we commit to them. We must be pro-active in prioritising alliances based on the potential benefits to Wales - and take a focussed and co-ordinated approach to maximise our impact - while remaining agile and flexible enough to take full advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

17. The approach towards countries and regions falling outside our identified priorities will always be based on courtesy, friendship and respect, but will not attract the commitment of resources required of a more developed relationship.

18. A similar pragmatic approach, based on the same principles, will be applied to multi-lateral relationships and involvement in multi-national or regional networks and groups such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), Conference of European Regions with Legislative Power (RegLeg), EARLALL, the Four Motor Regions and NRG4SD.

19. The Welsh Assembly Government will encourage and be supportive of the development of links and relationships by Welsh interests outside its own initiatives.

The Image and Branding of Wales

20. The key agencies involved in overseas activities on behalf of Wales – the WDA and WTB – have naturally focussed on promoting Wales as a location for FDI or as a tourist destination. Sector specific promotion is not intended to raise the general awareness and profile of Wales.

21. The Assembly Government's Wales World Nation communication initiative launched in 2001 was the first serious measure to develop and promote a corporate image of Wales to underpin the overall objective of making Wales a location of choice for people to live, work, study, visit and do business. We intend to develop that initiative still further in promoting a consistent and positive image of Wales in the round, but one which is capable of being adapted to meet different market and sectoral requirements.

22. Work by the Assembly Government and the key Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs) has identified the concept of "focused excellence" as one which should underpin the image of Wales in whichever form it is applied, and in whichever sector-specific market. It is important to identify Wales' Unique Selling Points. Wales has some very good 'world class' stories to tell in promoting that "focused excellence" image at a global level– these symbols of Wales at its best could include the manufacture of all Airbus wings at Broughton, Flintshire; Super Fast Ulysses Ferry on the Holyhead to Dublin route; Nobel Prize winning academics Brian Josephson and Clive Grainger; world class sports personalities; internationally renowned Welsh names in performing arts and culture; the very top level of University Research on Stem Cells; iconic buildings such as the Millennium Stadium and the Wales Millennium Centre; the Ryder Cup 2010; Artes Mundi; the Dylan Thomas Literary prize; the Technium concept. Wales is recognised and appreciated for, amongst other things, outstanding landscape, our commitment to sustainable development, the Assembly's unique position on gender balance, culture, tradition, skilled workforce, good business environment, friendly people and quality food and drink.

Promotion and Marketing

23. There are a number of players currently engaged in the promotion and marketing of Wales overseas. The Assembly Government's own promotional activities and initiatives, such as those centred around a global celebration of St David's Day, have encouraged a corporate approach to promoting and marketing Wales overseas. However, there has been little or no attempt to work on a corporate basis or to explore the potential to do so outside Assembly Government led activities

24. Wherever appropriate and practicable, the Assembly Government intends to pursue a corporate Welsh approach to promotion and marketing in priority markets, including the production of consistent, generic, corporate material, PR and marketing initiatives. The merger of the key agencies will facilitate that process.

Overseas Representation

25. The Assembly Government also intends to make fuller use of the substantial overseas Welsh representation network established either by the ASPBs or the Assembly Government itself, which

includes a presence in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Paris, Amsterdam, Milan, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, Dubai, Taipei, Singapore and Sydney. The level of representation will vary from one person working from home, a shared office, a one-room office to a bigger Wales International centre representative office. Although different markets will require different approaches, there is a need to move towards ensuring that all Welsh Assembly Government/ASPB representation will contribute to the wider promotion of Wales in addition to the sector-specific function.

Events and Visits – internal and external

27. Visibility is important. The Assembly Government has, with partner organisations, established a pattern of successful showcase events overseas to promote Wales in the round, based on sound business rationale and tailored and adapted to fit the circumstances. Recent examples include the China International Fair for Investment and Trade in Xiamen, 2004, the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Sydney, the Venice Biennale, 2003, featured nation status at the InterCeltique festival in Lorient, 2003, and Wales Weekend in New York 2002, 2003, 2004. We will continue to showcase Wales overseas where the business case for doing so merits the investment. More generally, we will use St David's Day as the prime vehicle for raising Wales' profile overseas.

27. Attendance at, and participation in, international meetings/conferences, overseas visits and missions, can be equally productive in achieving wider profile and influence if properly targeted. The Assembly Government will continue to exploit new opportunities and encourage and support others to do likewise where practicable.

28. Major events in Wales with international audience and appeal contribute directly to the local economy and offer golden opportunities to promote Wales and raise its profile, which have not been fully exploited to date. Developing the proposed corporate approach to PR and marketing will enable us to exploit better events like the Wales Rally GB, the Ryder Cup 2010 and its lead-in events, events at the Millennium Stadium and those at the Wales Millennium Centre, the Llangollen International Eisteddfod, Artes Mundi, the Royal Welsh Show, the Hay Literature Festival and the Brecon Jazz Festival.

29. One indication of the progress made in raising Wales' profile is the increasing number of visits from VIPs and delegations. Such visitors rarely fail to be impressed by what they see, in the sense of the reality being better than their relatively moderate expectations. The Assembly Government will continue to seek to attract influential visitors to Wales, particularly those who can further Wales' cause in particular markets or areas.

Working with and through Others

30. To achieve maximum impact and get the best deal for Wales it is important for the Welsh Assembly Government to work with and through others.

The National Assembly for Wales

31. The Welsh Assembly Government recognised the important role the National Assembly for Wales as an institution and Assembly Members have in promoting Wales internationally. The Assembly Government is keen to explore how the National Assembly for Wales, Assembly Members and the Welsh Assembly Government can best work together to maximise the opportunities for Wales.

UK Bodies

32. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to collaborate with UK bodies such as the British Council, Visit Britain, and UKTI which have a remit to work for the whole of the UK. Working closely with these bodies will help to ensure that they present a consistent and relevant image of Wales that matches our own. Wales should benefit fully from the resources that such organisations deploy overseas

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, other UK Government Departments and Devolved Administrations

33. FCO has been and continues to be of considerable assistance across the range of our overseas activities – international trade, FDI, developing relationships with partner regions, publicity and profile. With Welsh Assembly Government encouragement, St David’s Day is now established in the calendar of many overseas posts and work will continue to pursue that initiative as a profile raising opportunity for Wales and to mainstream Welsh interests still further.

34. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to work closely with the FCO to achieve our objectives, particularly to ensure that Wales’ interests are promoted against the background of the FCO’s developing strategic priorities. We will work similarly with other UK Government Departments, including the Wales Office, and other Devolved Administrations..

The Diplomatic Corps

35. The Welsh Assembly Government has increasingly engaged with the foreign Diplomatic Corps based in London, and will continue to do so. We also value highly the role and contribution of the more than 20-strong Consular Group in Wales. We will continue to work with them individually and as a group. We will also continue to press for the establishment of further full time consular representation in Wales.

The Public and Voluntary Sectors

36. Throughout the public sector in Wales international activity flourishes at many different levels - from town twinning and cultural exchanges to sharing experience and best practice in health and local government circles. The international academic network is active with highly productive links between academics and institutions. The voluntary sector is increasingly engaged in overseas links and activities. We want to enlist the support of and be supportive of such links and activities to develop a more

concerted effort to promote Wales.

The Private Sector

37. The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the important role that the private sector has to play in promoting Wales on the international stage. We will seek to work with the sector – on an individual company basis where appropriate, and corporately – capitalising on the strengths Wales has across the wide range of business and commerce.

The Welsh Diaspora

38. The Welsh diaspora throughout the world can be powerful allies with diverse opportunities through their daily lives to champion Wales and to make a continuing positive contribution in many different fields.

39. There are many individuals who are willing and able to present today's Wales to the wider world. The Welsh Assembly Government is keen to support and assist them to do this in a way which will benefit us all.

40. The Government wants to engage with Alumni of Welsh Universities and with the Wales International Consortium and Higher Education Institutions to establish productive links with Alumni associations.

41. Welsh Societies around the globe can provide an essential network of enthusiastic champions for Wales. The Government will look to engage more fully with Welsh Societies to ensure that they can assist us in presenting the image of modern Wales that we are keen to promote.

Measuring Success

42. If we continue to apply the principles set out in this document, success will build over time and will be evidenced through a changing perception of Wales internationally. Measures will include increased levels of trade, foreign direct investment, visitors to Wales, international students, films made in Wales and how often Wales is seen as a partner of choice in eg scientific collaboration or political initiatives. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to explore cost effective means of market research, working with others to establish ways in which to evaluate developments in Wales' profile overseas.

Conclusion

43. This strategic framework sets out the principles which will guide the Assembly Government's activities and priorities through the following key, inter-linked and complementary areas:

International Relationships;

The Image and Branding of Wales;

Promotion and Marketing;

Events and visits – internal and external;

Working with and through others.

This will require co-ordinated action from the Welsh Assembly Government and all its partners. That is where we must now concentrate.

European and External Affairs

Welsh Assembly Government

December 2004

Annex 1

Some senior VIP visitors to Wales since 1999

08-12 October 1999	Premier Bob Carr	Premier of New South Wales
23 June 2000	His Excellency Mr Wen Jiabao	Chinese Vice Premier (now Premier)
15 September 2000	President Olusegun Obasanjo	President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
18 January 2001	His Royal Highness Prince Pengiran Muda Haji Al Muhtadee Billah	Crown Prince of Brunei

1 st March 2001	An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern	Taoiseach (P.M) of the Irish Republic
6 April	President Jordi Pujol	President of Catalunya
16-17 October 2002	Jan Olbrycht	Marshal of Silesia
2-3 rd December 2002	Mary McAleese	President of Ireland
14 th March 2003	Monsieur Josselin De Rohan	President of the Regional Council of Brittany
9 th July 2003	Helen Clarke	Prime Minister of New Zealand
27 th July 2003	Dennis Hastert	Speaker US House of Representatives and delegation of congressmen and partners.
19 th November 2003	Herr Erwin Teufel	Minister –Präsident, Baden-Württemberg Germany
13 th May 2004	Vire Vike-Freiberga	President of the Republic of Latvia
3-5 June 2004	Michal CzarSKI	Marshal of Silesia
12-13 th October 2004	Monsieur Jean-Yves Le Drian	President of the Regional Council of Brittany

Note: This is just one aspect of the wide range of VIP visitors welcomed to Wales since 1999; some of the above have also visited more than once.

Annex 2

VIPs who have addressed Assembly Members

Visiting Speaker	Date	Time
HM Queen Elizabeth II	26 May 1999	Opening of First Assembly
Philip Lader, US Ambassador	6 July 1999	1.30-2.00
Bob Carr, NSW Premier	12 October 1999	1.30-2.00
Roy Maclaren, High Commissioner for Canada	30 November 1999	1.40-2.08
Sir David Steel, Presiding Officer of Scottish Parliament	27 June 2000	1.50-2.00
Tanni Grey-Thompson, Athlete	12 December 2000	1.45-2.00
Bertie Ahern, Taoiseach, Republic of Ireland	1 March 2001	12.05-12.30 (after morning plenary)
Tony Blair, Prime Minister, United Kingdom	30 October 2001	1.30 -2.00
Peter Caruana, Gibraltar First Minister	19 March 2002	1.50-2.00
Jan Olbrycht, Marshal of Silesia	9 May 2002	11.40-12.05 (Plenary adjourned)
HM Queen Elizabeth II	13 June 2002	
Mary McAleese, President of the Irish Republic	3 December 2002	1.45-2.00
Colin Jackson, Athlete	3 April 2003	1.45-2.00
HM Queen Elizabeth II	5 June 2003	Opening of Second Assembly
HRH Prince Charles	5 June 2003	Opening of Second Assembly

Minister-Präsident of Baden-Württemberg, Erwin Teufel	19 November 2003	1.45 - 2.00
Lord Chief Justice Woolf	6 July 2004	1.45 - 2.00
President of the Breton Regional Council, Monsieur Jean-Yves Le Drian	13 October 2004	1.45 - 2.00