



Report
Staff Report
 The Corporation of the City of Brampton
 5/22/2024

Date: 2024-05-08

Subject: **Economic Development Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)**

Contact: Clare Barnett, Director, Economic Development

Report number: CAO's Office-2024-448

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Clare Barnett, Director, Economic Development dated May 8, 2024, to the Committee of Council on May 22, 2024, re: **Economic Development Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)**, be received; and
2. That the Economic Development Office continue to pursue MOUs and respond to invitations from international organizations and jurisdictions to bring economic benefit to Brampton.

OVERVIEW:

- **The Economic Development Office is frequently approached to engage in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process to further mutual economic interests and benefits between the City of Brampton and the proposed partner.**
- **MOU discussions most often focus on the Innovation District and identified projects with Innovation District partners to deliver collaboration and results.**
- **Investment missions and international outreach have resulted in invitations to sign MOUs with global partners. This includes other cities, and also innovation incubators and accelerators, as well as national and state-level governments.**
- **The City's cultural diversity fosters a dynamic and adaptable environment that encourages innovation and attracts businesses and talent.**
- **There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report.**

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, Council approved the Economic Development Global Partnership Program (GPP) ([CW118-2018](#)) to replace the Sister City Program.

The GPP is a multi-phased process ensuring that all future alliances support job creation and the strategic objectives of the Economic Development Office (EDO) while also demonstrating clear economic benefits.

The GPP is focused on developing formal partnerships that create economic development opportunities within the Advanced Manufacturing, Food & Beverage Processing, Health & Life Sciences, and Innovation & Technology sectors. Evaluation criteria (Attachment 1) have been created to ensure the proposed alliances align with the economic development objectives of the City of Brampton.

The city's economy is experiencing tremendous growth. Brampton is now home to over 104,000 businesses, with \$2.3 billion in total construction value (2023), a 17.1% increase from 2022, and 870 processed development applications in 2023.

Brampton has 250 cultures speaking 171 languages, making it one of the most diverse cities in Canada. This cultural diversity fosters a dynamic and adaptable environment that breeds innovation and attracts businesses and talent.

CURRENT SITUATION:

EDO has not signed a Global Partnership Agreement since the implementation of the Global Partnership Program, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic impacting staff's ability to travel and partly because of the program's complex evaluation criteria.

Nevertheless, investment missions and international outreach have resulted in invitations to sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with global partners including other cities, innovation incubators and accelerators and national and state-level governments.

MOUs are not legally binding but serve to document expectations or intentions of those involved.

MOUs typically come with little financial commitment and can deepen economic development cooperation and innovation-focused relationships to strengthen businesses and create jobs.

Since 2023, EDO has signed MOUs with important international partners, including:

- The Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi, which is a direct result of the 2023 Investment Attraction Mission to Pakistan;
- The Catalyst in Northern Ireland and the Guinness Enterprise Centre, which are direct results from the 2023 Investment Attraction Mission to Ireland, and

- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, an important partner in innovation and technology advancement.

Examples of projects that have resulted from these MOUs include:

- Irish start-ups visiting Brampton ahead of the Collision Conference for a boot camp to learn about accessing the North American market through Brampton;
- A project with the Catalyst in Northern Ireland to understand the development of Brampton's Innovation District ecosystem and community; and
- A partnership focused on cybersecurity with the Catalyst in Northern Ireland and the Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst.

EDO is actively pursuing several additional agreements, notably with the municipalities of Manila and Lisbon (Attachment 2).

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendations in this report. Funding for investment missions and international outreach is available in the 2024 approved capital budget.

Legal Implications:

Staff will continue to work with Legal Services for reviews and recommendations as needed and to ensure that the form documents with legal implications are satisfactory to the City Solicitor or designate.

Communications Implications:

Economic Development staff will continue to consult with Strategic Communications, Tourism & Events for protocol and communication support.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

This report supports the Strategic Focus Area of Growing Urban Centres and Neighbourhoods to stimulate innovation, create jobs and grow investment.

CONCLUSION:

Economic Development MOUs with international partners underscore the City's commitment to fostering meaningful relationships and facilitating knowledge exchanges on a global scale.

These relationships drive economic growth by promoting collaboration and the exchange of ideas. As Brampton pursues additional agreements with cities such as Manila and Lisbon, it cements its role as a key player in international cooperation, fostering collective progress and prosperity through diverse partnerships.

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – GPP Application Steps
- Attachment 2 – MOU List