



Birmingham
Commonwealth
Association
Partnerships / Collaboration / Outcomes

Trade and
Business Group

Birmingham Commonwealth Association: Trade and Business Group

The BCA Trade and Business Group has been clear from the outset that the mark of its success lies in its ability to achieve outcomes. In order to assist in this aim, it arranged for the association to become a not-for-profit organisation limited by guarantee. This status has the added advantage of improving the group's access to funding. The vision driving the group forward identifies its role as being:

...a key Commonwealth Trading House for its funders, partners, businesses and the community. It aims to accelerate significant trading in the Commonwealth in the relentless pursuit of wealth generation; recognising that profits are essential in order to create capital for growth, prosperity, opportunity, and employment.

The group is facilitating and coordinating engagement between BCA members and international business partners with the support of UKTI, Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, Asian Chamber of Trade, the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, Central Government Departments and Birmingham City Council to enable members to:

- Support enterprise and business development
- Attract inward investment and foreign direct investment
- Enhance trade links with Birmingham businesses
- Exploit new markets particularly but not exclusively in Birmingham's key growth sectors including advanced engineering, financial services and life sciences
- Develop the city's trade and research connections to support competitiveness and growth
- Draw on local government networks and connections to add value to the initiative chosen
- Draw on the support of the Royal Commonwealth Society's international network of partners

The current activity of the group comprises:

- Trade mission to Jamaica in April 2016. Jamaica's Millennium goals include the following key targets of development: healthcare, green technology, agro-technologies and the strengthening of export links to the EU. Birmingham and Greater Birmingham offer a unique position to assist Jamaica in meeting its Millennium goals through its world class cluster in healthcare, innovation and research; business support and advanced manufacturing
- Planning a trade and business symposium in September/October 2016 to promote Birmingham as an ideal logistics hub
- Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and India comprise the key geographical areas of focus for 2016
- Initiatives undertaken in collaboration with UKTI have included two country specific seminars focusing upon export opportunities to/trade with India and South Africa.



Tamil pickers collecting tea leaves on plantation in southern India

In addition to the current work programme, the group is making progress towards ensuring the linkages and facilitation to:

- ¹ **Commonwealth Green Finance Facility** – to help fund sustainable infrastructure projects across the Commonwealth with a focus on island countries.
- **Commonwealth First** – to encourage SMEs to leverage the Commonwealth network when starting their international journey.
- **The Commonwealth Trade Initiative** – to connect businesses across the Commonwealth and facilitate greater intra-Commonwealth trade and investment.
- **Commonwealth Healthcare Business Group** – bringing together complementary public, private and third sector expertise to help facilitate Commonwealth Governments in improving health provision and outcomes.
- **The Global Goals Commonwealth Sustainable Business Challenge** – to encourage all organisations across the Commonwealth to consider how they can engage with sustainable development goals and how they build them into their strategy and the way they do business.

Two of the many organisations which fully endorse the activities of the BCA include the Commonwealth Business Women's network and LHP Consultants:

The Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (CBW) works with women in business by connecting governments and the private sector to encourage and enable women's economic empowerment. The objectives are to encourage more women onto boards and into senior decision-making roles, plus develop gender-based procurement programmes and access to supply chains, finance and skills. This is delivered through trade, talent and training, including the work with BCA to encourage women to develop and be prepared for the business world. The Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network provides a platform in development by working with United Nations (UN) to promote international co-operation in the fields of business, government, technology companies and venture capital/private equity to enable women entrepreneurs to connect, collaborate and do commerce.



¹ As outlined by Lord Marland of Odstock, Chairman of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council in his statement during a meeting of Foreign Ministers on 26th November 2015.

LHP Consultants

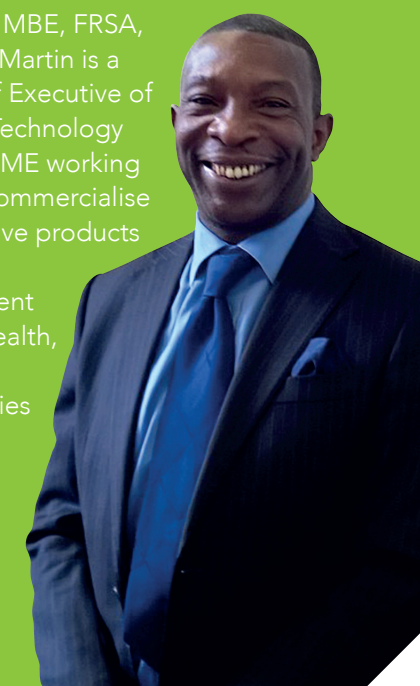
Darren Lister, Vice Chair of the Trade and Business Group, Senior Business Consultant at LHP Consultants and former employee of NutraHealth Plc was awarded The Queen's Award for Enterprise 2015 for its outstanding achievement in the International Trade category.

Darren states the advantages of being part of the BCA as:

- Being a not-for-profit organisation which will allow all its members to engage in an unrivalled Commonwealth networking organisation for Greater Birmingham
- Having key objectives to strengthen and maximise Birmingham's engagement with Commonwealth countries
- Supporting enterprises and businesses that wish to trade and in particular export to Commonwealth countries
- Facilitating a more cohesive strategic approach for all stakeholders to yield added value, with defined and prioritised achievable outcomes
- Encouraging inward investment into Birmingham and Greater Birmingham from Commonwealth nations
- Assisting and guiding SME and FTE exporters to export successfully

Chair of Trade and Business Group Martin Levermore

Martin Levermore MBE, FRSA, Chartered MCISI. Martin is a founder and Chief Executive of Medical Devices Technology International, an SME working with the NHS to commercialise and bring innovative products to market. He is a passionate exponent of the Commonwealth, looking to exploit arising opportunities for the benefit of Birmingham.



We work with a number of agencies including:

Business Developer

Commonwealth Business Women's Association

UKTi (United Kingdom Trade and Investment)

Marketing Birmingham

Asian Business Chamber of Commerce

Federation of Small Business (FSB)

Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council

Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce

Life Science/Technology/Digital

MDTI (Medical Devices Technology International)

Aidem Digital

International Synergies Ltd

Travel

Diamond Travel

Birmingham Airport

Air India

Legal

Irwin Mitchell Solicitors

City Law Immigration Ltd

Mills & Reeve

Bank

ICICI Bank UK PLC

HSBC Bank

State Bank of India

Accountancy/Finance

Ernst and Young

HWSA (Haines Watt Chartered Accountant)

Government Representative

Honorary Consul for South Africa

India Consul General

Birmingham City Council

Pakistan Consul General

Bangladesh Assistant High Commission

Cyprus Consul General

Social Enterprise

Institute of Social Entrepreneurs