



Delyth Jewell MS  
Chair  
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport  
and International Relations Committee  
Senedd Cymru

6 March 2024

Dear Delyth,

I am responding to your letter of 09 February about Wales in India 2024. I would like to thank the Committee for the interest shown in the upcoming programme which will celebrate and strengthen Wales' relationship with an important trade and cultural partner.

I have set out my responses to each of your questions below.

### Q1. Plans for Wales in India

The programme for Wales in India, as with all of our "Wales in..." years, has been designed with flexibility in mind. Events later in the year, or led by our strategic partners, are in the process of being finalised but examples of key events taking place are provided below. The programme centres around our three offices in Mumbai, New Delhi and Bengaluru; other cities and regions in India also feature, as well as some events in Wales.

The Minister for Health & Social Services and I officially launched the year in Mumbai and London respectively on 29 February. I was at the Indian High Commission at an event to mark St David's Day, whilst the Health Minister undertook a programme in Mumbai and Kerala.

The following are just some of the events taking place across the year:

- **February** – Launch of Wales in India (London and Mumbai)
- **Feb to March** – St David's Day events (London, New Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru)
- **March** – Medtech investment roundtable (Mumbai)
- **May** – Multi-sector trade mission (Mumbai and Bengaluru)
- **May / June** – Focus on Indian literature (Hay Festival)
- **June** – Pride month (Mumbai)

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

[Gohebiaeth.Mark.Drakeford@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Mark.Drakeford@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- **July** – Diaspora event (Mumbai)
- **August** – Indo-Welsh conclave trade and invest events (pan-India)
- **August** – Indo-Welsh Music (Eisteddfod Genedlaethol and Green Man)
- **September** – NHS visit (Kerala)

## **Q2. Lessons from Previous ‘Wales In...’ Years**

Previous “Wales in...” years held in Germany, Canada and France have yielded lessons learned that have been helpful during the planning for Wales in India 2024. Most of the lessons learned are around early engagement with internal and external partners, plus regular engagement with stakeholders to provide updates on activity, discuss ideas and resolve any issues. We are currently evaluating the Wales in France year – the first such year not to be impacted by the pandemic – and aim to use the learning from this to inform future activity.

We have had a dedicated Wales-based official, recruited on a fixed-term basis, to support the team in the overseas market and act as a liaison point between the overseas team and the Wales-based teams across Welsh Government. This model was used effectively for both Wales in Canada 2022 and Wales in France 2023. Lessons learned from Canada and France have shown that early recruitment is important, with the need to have resource in place at the planning stage ahead of the launch.

## **Q3. Alignment of Wales in India with the Budget Reduction for Trade and Investment**

Wales in India 2024 has ‘securing high quality trade, investment and employment opportunities for Wales’ as one of its key objectives. Therefore, whilst the budget for export support, including trade missions, has been reduced for 2024-25, we have prioritised the delivery of a trade mission from Wales to India, as part of the overall Wales in India programme. This mission will build on previous trade missions to India in 2016 and a virtual mission in 2021 and will support a delegation of Welsh businesses to explore trading opportunities in this market which is identified as a priority target market in our Export Action Plan. The latest full calendar year data (for 2022) shows an increase in the value of Welsh exports to India at £264.9m (up from £112.5m in 2021), with India ranking 15<sup>th</sup> in the top destinations for Welsh goods exports. Investment roundtables will also be a key pillar of Wales in India activities and will be held in priority regions across the year.

## **Q4. Draft Budget Allocation**

The allocated budget for Wales in India 2024 is £224,500 (£74,500 from 2023-24 and £150,000 from 2024-25). As set out in previous written evidence to the Committee, the 2024-25 funding comes from the £2.6 million allocated to the International Engagement line of the overall International Relations budget (BEL 3720). An additional £22,330 from the Trade & Invest BEL has been allocated to fund the trade mission to India. The budget for Wales in India has not been reduced as funding for the programme of activity was factored into the original budget allocations.

## **Q5. Impact of the revised approach set out by the Ministers to ETRA Committee on planning for Wales in India**

Our approach to trade and investment, as set out to the ETRA Committee, has not had an impact on activity for Wales in India. As part of this, our Welsh Government overseas trade events programme is published in advance of the following financial year to enable the programme to be marketed to companies, maximise take-up, ensure companies can

effectively prepare and ensure that we can secure attendance at events at the most cost-effective price. The programme is evidence-based and demand-led, focussed on priority target markets, as outlined in our Export Action Plan. Whilst the budget for trade and invest activity is reduced, Wales in India 2024 provided an opportunity to schedule a trade mission to this important market.

There is also a potential forthcoming Free Trade Agreement between the UK and India. Should the trade deal be signed, we will be able to support Welsh businesses in-market and help them to understand what the new FTA means for them.

**Q6. Balancing Wales in India activities with other international activities, including priority relationships.**

The Wales in India year will be a priority in terms of our international engagement, but this will not impact on other activity. Over the last year, we have supported a high number of diplomatic and international visits in Wales. We have also maintained our focus on partnerships signing a in new Shared Statement with Baden-Württemberg, as well agreements with Flanders and Silesia. The team in India is supported by the wider International Relations team in Wales. In addition, as mentioned in Question 2, there is a dedicated official in Wales to bring extra resource to the Wales in India team.

**Q7. Ministerial visit to India**

As outlined in the response to Question 1, the Minister for Health & Social Services visited Mumbai to officially launch Wales in India 2024. This visit combined with a programme to celebrate St David's Day. Her visit included meetings and events centred around trade and investment – including a roundtable on investment from the medtech sector, NHS Wales objectives, the soft-power and global responsibility agenda and furthering our work in India on the Well-Being of Future Generations Act. The Minister also travelled to Kerala with a programme centred around NHS recruitment. A Written Statement will be published in the normal course of business.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**