

City of London Corporation's Overseas Offices

The City of London Corporation (CoLC) operates a number of overseas in the following locations:

- Belgium: Brussels
- China: Beijing and Shanghai
- India: Mumbai
- United States of America (US)

The City of London Corporation's overseas offices work as a natural extension of the priorities set in London in support of the Competitiveness Strategy. They work to support both the policy and promotional work of the Corporation.

The offices each have metrics and objectives flowing from the Competitiveness Strategy. These are in place to ensure they continue to make positive engagements and position the UK as a go-to partner for countries and companies looking for capital and expertise.

The placement of offices is regularly reviewed, including during market prioritisation exercises with the next exercise to be conducted in the late spring of 2025. Members of this Committee have enquired about setting up a presence in other financial services centres such as Singapore. The City Corporation has been working with Singapore, both public and private sectors, to strengthen partnerships and cooperation. It has an MOU with the Monetary Authority of Singapore which highlights cooperation in Green Finance and Fintech. Most recently, both the Policy Chairman and the Lord Mayor visited Singapore in 2024, building on these themes. Committing resource to invest in on the ground presence is more crucial in countries where governments play a crucial role in signalling foreign cooperation opportunities, driving new business policies and approving new licenses It could be helpful in other countries, such as Singapore, but is less urgent.

Staffing and office costs

Staffing and office costs for each current office are set out in the table below. All activity was completed within IG's annual business plan and budget.

	2023/24	2024/25
	£ 000s	
China Office	143	161
China Office staff costs	181	155
Total China	324	316
Brussels Office	150	218
Brussels Office staff costs	536	555
Total Brussels*	686	773
India Office	108	100
India Office staff costs	60	60
Total India	168	160
US Office	N/A	100
US Office staff costs		300
Total US**		400
Total	1,178	

**From FY 23/24 the Brussels special code (RABR) will also be used for all related EU costs in order to clearly extract financial data for the EU Transparency Register. An additional £69k of costs are budgeted for these items.*

***Current US costs also include an additional £100,000 from PIF 25/25*

Brussels Office

In line with the Competitiveness Strategy, the Brussels office focuses on policy that impacts the financial and professional services sector, including in areas of capital markets, sustainable and digital finance, and international cooperation. In line with the competitiveness strategy, it works to reduce frictions between the UK and the EU.

The City of London works closely with practitioners, trade associations and other stakeholders to shape the future direction of financial services policy. The Corporation advocates for open markets on both sides of the channel whilst ensuring economic, legislative, fiscal and regulatory developments do not negatively impact the business landscape in the UK.

The office in Brussels was opened in 2004 and is currently staffed by 4 FTEs (*1 Deputy Head, 1 Policy Adviser, 1 Policy Associate, 1 Events Officer,*) plus the Managing Director.

Key objectives

The Brussels team is tasked with the following key objectives:

- Protect and increase mutual UK-EU market access and ease of doing business in FPS.
- Support and improve regulatory coherence through cooperation on shared challenges.
- Build and nurture networks for influence and encourage mutual trust.

KPIs

The Brussels office has KPIs in the following areas:

- Increase FPS trade flows between the UK and EU.
- Establish formal mechanisms for future collaboration including Regulatory Dialogue and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
- Enhance informal mechanisms for future collaboration including dialogues with member states and EU27 visits.
- Establish a regular drumbeat of events explaining UK policymaking in areas of shared interest.
- Develop thought-leadership in frontier policy areas.

EU engagement through the City of London Corporation's Brussels Office

The Brussels office conducts regular engagement, including:

- The Brussels Office is the key contact point for the UK FPS sector in Europe and works hard in keeping channels open between the EU and the UK.
- The office plays a key role in raising the voice of the UK and other like-minded third countries on key EU policy files with direct impact on the UK FPS sector.
- The office organises regular events and produces thought leadership on key policy files. The office leads engagement with EU officials, member state representations, third-country partners and the wider Brussels FS ecosystem.

- The Brussels office also organises regular delegation trips to key member states, visiting key policy makers and regulators in EU capitals and raising the voice of the UK FPS sector there.
- The Chairman of Policy and Resources hosts an Annual Brussels reception and participates in a programme of engagement with senior decision makers in the Commission, MEPs and member states and third country representatives around this reception.
- In addition, the Policy Chairman regularly visits key member state capitals together with the office to raise the voice of the City and the UK FPS sector. The Chairman's visits aim to advocate for UK FPS interests and build networks for influence with key decision makers.

Key achievements

Following the above objectives, the Brussels office was successful in numerous areas over the last year:

- **Labour Government publicly prioritises reset of UK-EU relations:** This follows strong advocacy from COLC and the FPS sector with the incoming administration. Government officials are actively using COLC channels to update the sector and seek our steer.
- **EU officials warming to future collaboration:** Senior EU officials are stepping forward to advocate for greater UK-EU collaboration in FPS given the global geopolitical and macroeconomic environments.
- **Successful two first meetings of the UK-EU Forum on Financial Regulatory Cooperation:** Establishing and embedding this mechanism for formal UK-EU regulatory dialogue was a key COLC priority. At HMG's request, the COL Brussels Office has coordinated across the IRSG network to produce the sector's official input for the first two Forum meetings which have both addressed sector priorities.
- **Maintaining UK data adequacy** with the EU, despite the rewriting of the UK GDPR. Post-election, Labour has publicly committed to protecting existing adequacy. The publication of the IRSG report on international data transfers and the presentation of this report to a Brussels audience proved to be key levers. Furthermore, the Committee replied to the House of Lords call for evidence on data adequacy last May, highlighting the importance of adequacy for the sector.
- **Softening the EU stance on plans to harmonise the framework for third country branches** (CRD6 article 21c). Our regular engagement with key stakeholders in Brussels and our delegations to EU member states were key aspects to make the voice of the UK FPS sector heard in the EU.
- **Raising the profile on the Corporate Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the corporate sustainability reporting directive (CSRD)** by mobilising a growing alliance of third-country partners.
- **Moving the European market infrastructure regulation (EMIR) in the right direction** by aligning our sector in our regular cross-industry meeting in the IRSG EU Regulation Committee and the Brussels Industry Salon. Furthermore,

raising the potential impact on the EU economy and financial stability with key figures from EU institutions and member states. We will continue our engagement during the ongoing legislative process, advocate for solutions beneficial to both sides of the Channel and highlight the importance of CCP equivalence.

- **Deepening the office's role as a key contact point between HMT and industry on EU affairs.** The EU and the UK held the first Joint Forum on Regulatory Cooperation in October. The Brussels office, in its role as secretariat of the International Regulatory Strategy Group (IRSG) EU Regulation Committee, together with the TheCityUK EU Market Advisory Group, was charged by HMT to ensure helpful input from industry on the dialogue.

China Offices (Beijing and Shanghai)

The City of London Corporation have dedicated offices in Beijing and Shanghai which support our China engagement. These offices were opened in 2008. Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and China was £87.7 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q2 2024. China remains one of our most important trading partners.

The language and cultural complexity of this market have warranted more in-market support, and the offices manage in-market stakeholder conversations and gather insight which helps understand policy issues and opportunities. The office provides valuable input into driving forward the IG business plan, that culminate into programme and logistical support for all Policy Chairman and Lord Mayor visits.

The Beijing office has 2 FTE (one Chief Representative and one Senior Associate) and the Shanghai office has 2 FTE (one Chief Representative and one Senior Associate). Their China market strategy is co-ordinated by a market lead (1 FTE) based in Guildhall.

KPIs

The China office drive work as part of an overall High Growth Markets Strategy cascading from the Competitiveness Strategy. The main focus is FDI wins from China and supporting China's journey to net zero. The China offices have KPIs in the following areas lined to projects:

- Position the UK as a go-to partner for countries and companies looking for capital and expertise.
- Enhance UK policy influence on the development and international alignment of sustainable finance in China.
- Attract foreign direct investments (FDI) into London.
- Retain the UK's position as the largest offshore Renminbi Forex (RMB FX) spot trading hub in the world.
- New Green Bond listings on London Stock Exchange (LSE).

Projects

The China office conducts a range of projects, including:

- Green Finance Taskforce (GFT)

The office's key campaign this year is focused around developing stronger alignment between the UK and China in Green Finance which is critical to achieving global targets on climate. The China offices are responsible for driving forward the GFT project and provide support to Sir William Russell and Dr Ma Jun who act as joint secretariat on the GFT.

Achievements:

Attract listing of Green Bonds on London Stock Exchange:

- Encouraged Chinese banks to list Green & Blue Bonds on the London Stock Exchange.
- In June 2024, Industrial & Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) issued a global multi-currency "carbon neutral" themed overseas green bond on various exchanges overseas, specifically 300 million euros on London Stock Exchange.
- In July 2024, China Construction Bank's London Branch issued RMB 2 billion senior Green Notes.
- Chinese central bank, People's Bank of China, has issued notice of tightening Carbon Emission Trading reporting standard, as a move to aligning towards international standards (2024.)

Governance of Green Finance Taskforce

- Advanced the work of the 3 new working groups (transition finance, carbon markets, nature and biodiversity financial disclosure).
- Latest Taskforce meeting in March 2024 provided a platform for UK's Transition Plan Taskforce (TPT E3G) to advocate UK and international standards in supporting China to develop transition plans for Net Zero delivery. It also allowed UK financial institutions (LSEG, Schroders, and etc) to exchange with their Chinese counterparts (China Life, ICBC, and Bank of Comms) in Scope 3 Emission Reporting Standards and investment allocation for transition finance.

- Attract & Retain Campaign (ARC)

The China team lead in market engagement for the ARC campaign in China, which promotes London as the destination city for investment, capital and jobs. The China team also assists UK FPS firms in successfully expanding their presence in the Chinese market.

Achievements:

- Secured commercial wins with 6 Chinese FPS companies.
- China International Capital Corporation renewed its 10-year office tenancy in London

- Guotai Juanan (Chinese investment firm) successfully upgraded their Rep office to a company in City of London.
- Yingke Law firm successfully opened its London office in 2024.
- Duan and Duan Law firm opened its London office in November 2024.
- CITIC Securities has also expanded its office space in 2024 and increased its workforce in the City of London.
- China Minsheng Bank has received regulatory approvals to upgrade its rep office to London branch.
- Aspect Capital, a UK-based investment manager, specializes in systematic and quantitative investment strategies. Aspect Capital (China) was officially established in March 2024 in Shanghai.
- LSEG/Shenzhen Stock Exchange partnership MOU announced.

- RMB Monitoring Group

The China office lead on the Corporation's RMB Internationalisation Initiative which seeks to ensure London maintains and monitors its place as a hub for RMB trading. It works closely with PBOC on this initiative and this project is key in maintaining a strong stakeholder relationship with PBOC.

Achievements:

- London is the largest offshore RMB clearing hub outside Greater China.
- Produced half-yearly London RMB Business Bi-annual report: [London RMB Business Bi-annual Report – May 2024](#)
- RMB FX trade via London has grown to a daily average of US\$149bn (2022) from less than US\$25bn since inception of the workstream in 2012.
- London had surpassed RMB 100 trillion clearing volume by May 2024.

- Lord Mayor & Policy Chairman Visits

The office plays a critical role in organising visits for the City of London principals. They utilise key stakeholder relationships to ensure visits drive wider market engagement within China.

Achievements:

- March 2024 – the visit by the Lord Mayor, accompanied by Sheriff Masojada, focused on engagement with the financial and investment sector in China and Hong Kong, with special focuses on Green Finance and the fast-growing Pension market opportunities in the Mainland. He met with senior leaders in the Chinese financial regulators, as well as the State Vice President. The visit also included visit to abrdn's Joint Venture in China, as well as business lunch with British businesses in Hong Kong.
- June 2024 - The Policy Chairman travelled to China and Hong Kong to promote Green and Transition Finance; Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into London; and Open & Global Markets. Specifically, he spoke at the Shanghai Lujiazui Financial Forum advocating for public and

private sector investment allocation on Green Finance. He also met with the Vice Governor of the policy bank the People's Bank of China, discussing policies in Carbon Markets and financial disclosure standards for Nature & Biodiversity. In the banking sector, he met with the President of the Industrial & Commercial Bank of China (ICBC, the world's largest bank by assets according to S&P 2022.) He also met with the largest investor from Hong Kong (CK Hutchison Group); Chairman and CEO of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange; and CEO of the Hong Kong Exchange Fund of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority; as well as meeting with the Policy Committee of the British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong.

- In these visits and other engagements, the City Corporation:
 - Promotes London as the destined financial investment centre for capital and jobs.
 - Facilitates UK's financial and professional services to capitalise on growth sectors in China.
 - Encourages Chinese policies to allow Chinese investors to invest abroad, through various policy tools such as releasing/relaxing Qualified Domestic Institutional Investors (QDII) quota.
 - Advocates China to continue open for foreign businesses, from market access to ownership rights.

India Office (Mumbai)

The Corporation has a dedicated office in Mumbai, led by the Chief Representative who support our India engagement. The office has helped the Corporation develop a strong network of institutional, regulatory and business relationships and helps to maintain a strong understanding of the policy issues and potential trade and investment opportunities in India.

This network is integral to developing programmatic and logistical support for all Policy Chairman and Lord Mayor led visits that are bespoke and focused on our High Growth Markets Strategy cascading from the Competitiveness Strategy.

The Mumbai office has 1 FTE (a chief representative) who works with a market lead (1 FTE) based in Guildhall.

KPIs

The India team lead our campaign on Sustainable Finance in market and their KPIs are focused on the mobilisation of Green and Impact finance from UK to India. The key areas of focus for the office are detailed below:

- To position the UK as a go-to partner for countries and companies looking for capital and expertise.
- Increase investment flow between UK FPS and Indian sustainable infrastructure projects.
- Mobilise financial and professional services firms to expedite user cases for how to develop, structure, and finance of India's green project pipeline as part of the net zero transition.
- Increase services trade in particularly around sustainable finance and infrastructure.

Projects

The India office conducts a range of projects, including:

- UK India Infrastructure Financing Bridge (UKIIFB)

The India office support on the UKIIFB project. This two-year project is a collaborative initiative led by NITI Aayog and the City of London. This partnership convenes a group of private sector stakeholders who will assess a range of infrastructure projects, which the Indian government is seeking capital for and provide expertise advice and guidance on how to make these more attractive to international investors.

Achievements:

- The establishment of a strong UKIIFB SteerCo has enabled productive conversations to take place over the course of 2024 via 3 SteerCo meetings.

- The SteerCo have carried out a robust assessment of one Indian infrastructure project so far this year and are currently reviewing another.
- Their feedback will lead to recommendations on what can be done to drive investment into Indian infrastructure projects.
- UKIIFB has also produced a report (Opportunities and barriers for international investor in Indian infrastructure). The report is currently being finalised and will be used to feed in the policy asks ahead of the Indian budget and the subsequent Economic and Financial Dialogue in London.

Recent engagements with NITI Aayog are:

- February 2024 – The first meeting of the UKIIFB steering committee was held in London at Guildhall over two days. This meeting set out the objectives for the project. This was also an opportunity for the UK steering committee to meet with NITI Aayog in person for the first time.
- February 2024 – Lord Mayor met the CEO of NITI Aayog Shri. BVR Subrahmanyam as part of the annual LM visit to India. The meeting was held at NITI Aayog in New Delhi.
- February 2024 - CPR met BVR at the NITI Aayog in New Delhi. Meeting focussed on next steps for the project and plans for in-person meetings and exchange of letters in 2024, including CPR visit in November 2024
- September 2024 – BVR and the NITI Aayog team travelled to London in early September for the second steerco meeting and official exchange of letters between the Policy Chairman & BVR.
- November 2024 – CPR met with NITI Aayog and BVR during his annual visit to India. The Delhi programme on UKIIFB was over 2 days with 5 panel discussions on various sectors in Indian infrastructure. CPR was accompanied by the UKIIFB UK delegation.

Lord Mayor & Policy Chairman Visits

Another key role the India office and Chief Representative carry out is the co-ordination of visits for the Lord Mayor and Policy Chairman.

Achievements:

- February 2024 - The Lord Mayor travelled to India in February 2024, to reinforce the narrative that India remains a strong trading partner for the UK and that the UK and India are global leaders in industries of the future such as fintech. He also met with the Chief Minister of Maharashtra to affirm the links between City of London and Mumbai as financial hubs.
- November 2024 – The Policy Chairman’s annual visit to India started in Delhi with meetings convened under the UK-India Infrastructure Financing Bridge. He met with Indian government officials, private sector leaders and policymakers from infrastructure bodies. As part of the meetings CoLC have been invited by NITI Aayog to build policy

asks which NITI Aayog could potentially feed into the Indian budget. During the Mumbai programme the Policy Chairman engaged with private sector FS stakeholders including in a reception hosted by the UK Deputy High Commission and a meeting with the Chairman of the National Stock Exchange. The programme scored the importance of continuing the engagement with India and the opportunities it represents for the UK.

USA

CoLC continues to pursue policy and trade opportunities with the US. Our US presence aims to drive regulatory cooperation and trade with our second biggest trading partner.

Over the past twelve months, the Corporation has established a legal entity in the US and complied with all necessary registrations under US legislation in order to conduct our ongoing activity.

Work is ongoing to recruit into the US office on a permanent basis and further updates will be brought to this Committee later this year.

Key policy objectives

- Protect and increase mutual UK-US market access and ease of doing business in FPS.
- Support and improve regulatory and policy coherence through cooperation on shared challenges, and support of existing mechanisms.
- Build and nurture networks for influence and encourage mutual trust.

KPIs

- Increase FPS trade flows between the UK and US.
- Support and enhance formal mechanisms for regulatory collaboration including the UK-US Financial Regulatory Working Group and Financial Innovation Partnership. Deepen these mechanisms to address existing frictions and to work to avoid future fragmentation.
- Explore new mechanisms for enhanced collaboration and market access including cross-border regulatory sandboxes.
- Establish the British American Finance Alliance (BAFA), which is co-chaired by CPR, as the formal industry engagement mechanism for both US and UK administrations.
- Establish a regular drumbeat of US visits and events explaining UK policymaking in areas of shared interest.
- Establish a regular drumbeat of activity in the UK harnessing inbound US visits and senior delegations.
- Develop thought-leadership in frontier policy areas.

Policy influence over 2024

- **February 2024:** COLC hosted a joint meeting of US Treasury and HM Treasury officials in the Guildhall in the margins of the 9th official US-UK Financial Regulatory Working Group. This meeting fed sector priorities into the regulatory dialogue.

- **April 2024:** CPR co-chaired British American Finance Alliance (BAFA) publishes [The UK-US FPS relationship: A Foundation for Jobs, Growth and Security](#). The report champions the UK-US relationship and offers policy recommendations for deepening the corridor.
- **April 2024:** CPR travels to Washington DC. He met with senior policy makers, regulators and c-level industry to advocate for BAFA's recommendations.
- **May 2024:** SEC Commissioner Hester Peirce publicly advocates for a [UK-US Cross-border regulatory sandbox](#) following COLC and BAFA advocacy efforts.
- **June 2024:** CPR hosts Commissioner Peirce in London for a sector roundtable on the Commissioner's proposal.
- **June-October 2024:** COLC officers develop research paper on the Commissioner's proposal. In October COLC holds a roundtable with FCA, HMT and BOE to align the sector's thinking.
- **August 2024:** CPR writes to Chancellor Rachel Reeves advocating for strong focus on UK-US FPS relationship and positions BAFA and COLC as key partners.
- **September 2024:** BAFA hosts HMT officials following the 10th meeting of the FRWG in Washington.
- **October and November:** COLC holds two roundtables on the US election, one beforehand and one as follow-up. We partner with SIFMA to offer the sector a DC-based viewpoint.
- **November 2024:** Officers attend the IMF/World Bank meetings in Washington DC and circulate intelligence across the sector. BAFA meets in parallel to develop a forward-facing programme for the new administration.

Key achievements

- **US officials thinking creatively about the relationship:** Commissioner Pierce's public proposal for a UK-US cross-border sandbox follows COLC's recommendation in V4EG and represents a positive step. Officials within US regulators are becoming bolder in ambition.
- **FRWG and BAFA:** The 10th meeting of the FRWG sees the group well-positioned. BAFA is an established part of the process and US TAs have become more engaged. HM Treasury officials are keen to build task and finish groups onto BAFA to provide more momentum.