

Kent's European Relationship Select Committee – 14th January, 10.00 a.m.

Biographical Information: Steve Samson



Steve Samson is Trade Development Manager within Kent County Council's Economic Development team. The role aims to develop ways to encourage more Kent companies to consider exporting as a way of growing their business.

After graduating with a degree in modern languages (Spanish & French), Steve spent a year working in the private sector in the travel industry in a commercial role which involved liaising with international suppliers. Since joining Kent County Council in 2002, he has held a number of different posts over the last 10 years focusing primarily on

European co-operation within the International Affairs team. This has included supporting a variety of Kent-based organisations to secure over £25m EU grants from the Interreg and other EU programmes and working on KCC's strategic international partnerships.

From 2009, his focus has shifted to international trade promotion and he is currently co-ordinating the Kent International Business (KIB) partnership and programme as well as, for example, managing a €1.4m EU funded project called 2 Seas Trade which aims to support trade relations between Kent, Flanders (Belgium) and the Netherlands.

Suggested Themes for Member's Questions

1. EU projects:

- The involvement across KCC in EU funded projects and securing funding to support core activities – issues, opportunities (e.g. Thematic funding) and risks.
- The availability of (EU) funding expertise and advice – ensuring criteria are met and the risks of not doing so
- Maximising opportunities in the EU next funding round – resource issues and where the focus should be.

2. Trade Development

- Support for SMEs in Kent: Kent International Business
- The 2 Seas Trade Project