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City Inn Breaks into Europe with international support from UKTI

Company Name: City Inn

Award-winning hotel chain City Inn, which has hotels in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow and Manchester, is set to expand into Europe with help from UK Trade & Investment's (UKTI) Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS).

Having fully developed the City Inn brand in the UK, with hotels in its major target cities, the company was looking to expand internationally. The company looked to the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) for assistance. An FCO Civil Servant, Nick Baker, is now on a two-year secondment as City Inn's Head of International Development, finding sites for the company to develop new hotels on in major European cities.



The company decided to focus their development plans on the largest European cities, where the market was strong enough to support hotels of 400 to 600 rooms. Opportunities to develop large-scale new build, hotels on city centre sites are usually scarce, but the current economic environment could increase their availability. To help identify opportunities, Nick commissioned OMIS reports for Barcelona, Madrid and now Milan to arrange meetings with major landowners, city authorities and other useful contacts. City Inn are also looking for opportunities in Rome, Zurich, Geneva and Vienna.

Once opportunities have been identified, Nick's role involves working with CEO David Orr on negotiations with city planners to persuade them to amend development plans to accommodate City Inn hotels; and with vendors on sale prices and other issues. Each project can bring substantial benefits to the cities concerned: work for the construction and service industries, new sustainable buildings, more visitors, increased demand for local suppliers, and additional tax revenue.

Nick has also used OMIS assistance for market intelligence in the Netherlands. The UKTI team there produced an OMIS report identifying Dutch contacts that City Inn would need to work with once their hotel opens in Amsterdam at the beginning of 2011. These included potential corporate clients, booking agencies, the conference centre, the tourism and congress board and civic partners such as local schools and colleges. City Inn and UKTI then invited

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all of those identified to a ceremony in Amsterdam in October last year to mark the start of the hotel's construction.

to access through it.

Nick Baker says: "I knew about UKTI services, when I was at the Foreign Office, but had no experience of using them. I have been very impressed with OMIS' focus on results, which is all the greater as it's a fee-paying service, and the level of contacts I have been able to access through it. I also got invaluable help from inward investment agencies in each city. As a consequence of the research, I have been able to deliver a set of potential sites in most of the target cities, together with information supporting the business plan for investing in those places."

City Inn's Head of
International Development
Nick Baker

UKTI London International Trade Adviser Rob Walker says: "It's great to see Nick driving City Inn's international expansion plans, and colleagues in our embassy research teams delivering the necessary support. I look forward to the opening of City Inn's first hotel overseas, in the Netherlands."

For more information, contact penelopeparkin@uktilondon.org.uk or visit the company's website at <http://www.cityinn.com/>.

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London International Trade Team:

Tel: +44(0) 20 7234 3000

Email: info@uktilondon.org.uk

UK Trade & Investment Contact: penelopeparkin@uktilondon.org.uk

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