

The British Library's Regional Strategy

1 Summary of strategy

- 1.1 The British Library will implement its national offer through a Library-wide regional programme together with a range of national and regional partners.
- 1.2 The Library's regional strategy is UK wide, covering both the nine English regions and the three home nations.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Library's regional programme is to optimise usage of the Library's assets at regional level.
- 1.4 The Library's regional strategy recognises and builds on its existing activities and focuses on its four target markets at regional level: the researcher, the general public, business and the learner.
- 1.5 The Library's regional offer is built around five strategic strands: content, access, sharing skills, adding value and communication.
- 1.6 The Library will demonstrate its value to each region through appropriate metrics and case studies to be developed as part of the strategy, starting with the establishment of baseline data, and through maintenance of an audit of delivery region by region.
- 1.7 The Library will work in partnership with a variety of key national and regional stakeholders; it will become a trusted partner of choice and a recognised stakeholder in regional networks relevant to its target markets.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The British Library has a history of working regionally: for example, underpinning local and regional provision of resources through its reading room and document supply services and working with partners in the regions to deliver national programmes such as NEWSPLAN.
- 2.2 The Library's regional strategy recognises and builds on its existing activities and programmes throughout the UK, and focuses on its four target markets at regional level: the researcher, the general public, business and the learner. It has been developed in response to the changing political landscape: devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and increasing government focus on the English regions, for example through Regional Development Agencies, regional Museum, Libraries and Archives Councils, and Learning and Skills Councils. It is based on working in partnership with a variety of key national and regional stakeholders. It is embedded throughout the Library. It has been endorsed by the Library's Executive Team and it is supported by its Regional and Library Programmes.
- 2.3 To inform the strategy, a consultation exercise was undertaken during the summer and autumn of 2004. All nine regional Museums, Libraries and Archives Councils in England were consulted together with mla bodies in the home nations, as well as a number of other regional and national organisations and institutions

3 The British Library's national strategy

- 3.1 **Mission:** *Helping people advance knowledge to enrich lives. We bring direct benefits to those who use our collections and services because we help them advance their own knowledge, and the whole body of knowledge, through their research. We bring indirect benefits to all UK citizens whose lives are enriched through the fruits of the research we have enabled.*
- 3.2 **Vision:** *We play a lead role in the changing world of research information. We exist for anyone who wants to do research – for academic, personal or commercial purposes. We promote ready access to the British Library's collection and expertise through an integrated range of services which are increasingly time and space independent. We also connect with the collections and expertise of others, and work in partnership to fulfil our users' needs.*

4 The British Library's regional strategy

- 4.1 The British Library's national strategy will be delivered regionally through:
 - Developing a regional stakeholder network
 - Maintaining stakeholder contact and developing relationships
 - Developing and implementing an ongoing programme of regional activities structured round the five strands which emerged from the consultation exercise: content, access, sharing skills, adding value and communication
 - Measurable returns in the form of additional usage of the Library's assets demonstrated through case studies
- 4.2 The Library's regional strategy is UK wide, covering both the nine English regions and the three home nations.

5 Regional strands

- 5.1 **Content** The British Library is committed to increasing the visibility of its national collections which contain many items of world heritage status and world class scientific and business collections, raising awareness of their richness, their depth and breadth and disclosing their regional relevance. The Library will also seek to add value by developing links with both regional resources and with professionals in the regions.
- 5.2 **Access** The Library is committed to making its content more accessible to all through the whole range of British Library services. In particular, we will concentrate on:
- promoting our business offer regionally;
 - supporting learning at all levels in the regions;
 - facilitating access to the Library's reading rooms.
- 5.3 **Sharing skills** The British Library will support the continuing professional development of its own staff and of colleagues in the regions through sharing expertise and best practice, sharing information about British Library collections and about new Library developments, and by providing expert advice.
- 5.4 **Adding value** The British Library will support the wider library network through endorsement of regional initiatives and flagship projects and through impartial advocacy for the library sector. The Library will demonstrate the economic value of libraries in the regions and the value to all libraries of working regionally as well as nationally.
- 5.5 **Communicating** The British Library will share its strategy and plans with the regions. The Library will communicate its regional strategy clearly and from the top. It will provide a consistent offer to complement local and regional offers. It will continue to maintain personal contacts, at both strategic and operational levels.

6 Implementation

- 6.1 In the English regions and home nations the British Library will implement the national British Library offer through a Library-wide regional programme. The Library will also demonstrate its value to each region through appropriate metrics to be developed as part of the strategy, starting with the establishment of baseline data.
- 6.2 Regional activity throughout the Library will:
- be sustainable;
 - avoid a project-based approach unless sustainable and capable of national roll-out;
 - develop national offers for regional delivery;
 - invite regions to pilot new offers before roll-out;
 - be developed in partnership;
 - build on what regional agencies are already doing, for example on surveys of non-users;
 - build on existing regional initiatives;
 - build on existing national initiatives being delivered regionally;

- build on synergies between British Library and regional strategies;
- be sympathetic to regional differences;
- be creative in developing new partnerships: outside the public library sector and the wider mla sector.

6.3 The Library's Regional and Library Programmes will champion regional working across the Library, identify and promote existing regional activity, and support the development and delivery of regional programmes to our chosen audiences. It will be a source of regional intelligence, and a channel of communication to the regions. It will broker regional partnerships and develop and manage stakeholder relationships.

7 Key stakeholders

7.1 The Library will work in partnership with a variety of key national and regional stakeholders and wishes to become a trusted partner of choice and a recognised stakeholder in regional networks relevant to its target markets.

7.2 Regional stakeholders with whom we will work actively include:

- Regional Development Agencies
- Regional Broadband Consortia
- Creative Partnerships
- Learning and Skills Councils
- HE regional networks
- Regional Cultural Consortia and Cultural Hubs
- Tourist Boards
- MLA and its regional Museums, Libraries and Archives Councils and their library advisory panels
- BBC
- Open University

7.3 We will also report our regional activity to the following Government Departments:

- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department for Education and Skills
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister