

Scotland: A Trading Nation

Discussion Paper - Making the most of Scotland's international footprint and networks

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Overview

In recent years Scotland's international footprint, including Scottish Development International's in-market presence, the Scottish Government's external network of offices, Trade Envoys and the GlobalScot network has evolved to support Scotland's internationalisation ambitions.

This session provides an opportunity for businesses to share their experiences of engaging with Scotland's international footprint and networks. To explore the types of support businesses would value most from Scotland's presence overseas and what support is most helpful to facilitate successful export outcomes. The group may wish to consider whether there are wider opportunities or gaps in the support provided – whether that be from Scotland's enterprise agencies, or through the economic diplomacy the Scottish Government's network of offices, GlobalScots and Trade Envoys provide.

Background

Scottish Development International's (SDI) in-market presence currently extends to over 30 offices, in almost 20 countries. This is a well-established presence and the types of support provided depends on the opportunities in each particular sector and market. The launch of the Export Growth Plan is an opportunity to refocus and redouble our efforts to support business in key priority markets.

In addition to the in-market presence of our enterprise agencies the Scottish Government's (SG) external network of offices provides a platform for, and a more joined up approach to, existing and new activity by the Government, its agencies and public and private partners, in key locations outside Scotland. Following a recent expansion SG's offices can now be found in Belgium (Brussels), China (Beijing), Canada (Ottawa – with a presence in Toronto), France (Paris), Germany (Berlin), Ireland (Dublin), UK (London) and USA (Washington DC). Although opportunities will differ depending on the specific opportunities in a particular location, as a whole one of the network's key strategic outcomes is to help businesses trade internationally.

To complement Scotland's presence in country, the GlobalScot network has also grown over a number of years. This provides a worldwide network of business leaders dedicated to supporting Scotland's ambitious companies. And most recently a new set of Trade Envoys have been formally appointed in Scotland, Indonesia, Poland and the United Arab Emirates.

Support from Scotland's International Footprint

Support to businesses from Scotland's international footprint will vary. It could range from market research, regulatory information or political intelligence – through to trade missions, Ministerial visits and advice from in-market specialists.

Through the SG's external network of offices, there's a growing platform for the efforts of SDI and SG staff to be co-located, working in partnership, and alongside UK agencies, to support companies exporting in to their market. Increasing levels of collaboration across partners in-country will be crucial to ensuring services can best be tailored to businesses. However, this will differ depending on the stage of exporting a company is at. More experienced exporters may, for instance, find political intelligence and Ministerial visits beneficial, while relatively new exporters may find market research, and introductions most useful in order to support their expansion in a particular market.

In this discussion group it will be good to understand the experience of businesses in accessing in-market support/services and the experience of engaging with the GlobalScot network.

Suggested Discussion Questions

The group is asked to consider the following three core questions:

- **What can be done together to deliver on the Actions in the Plan?**
- **What should be prioritised in the £20m investment to get most return?**
- **What should be included in the next version of the Plan to drive exports?**

In addition to these core questions, the group may also wish to explore the following questions:

What is the experience of your business in accessing in-market support/services? What levels of awareness do you have of Scotland's international footprint and networks like GlobalScot?

Do you believe that Scotland's footprint is well positioned to support your business export? How would you prefer to engage with Scotland's overseas network ?

Whether it be the enterprise agencies or the Scottish Government, what kinds of support/services would you find helpful?

What type of support from Scotland's international footprint would best support you and your business where you are looking at expanding in to new markets?

Are there other networks that would be of benefit to you if more fully developed?