

News story: UK Government invests in Scotland

The UK Government has announced that it has invested £300 million in an Edinburgh and South East of Scotland City Region Deal. This is the fourth UK City Deal in Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Government, and will boost the economy of Edinburgh and the whole of South East Scotland for decades to come.

Today's move brings UK Government investment in UK City Deals in Scotland so far to around £1 billion.

Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell said:

The UK Government is investing £300 million in the Edinburgh and South East of Scotland City Region Deal, which will boost the economy of Edinburgh and the whole of South-East Scotland for decades to come. The Edinburgh deal will focus on the capital's strengths of new technology, innovation and culture. It will make a real difference to the lives of people in the region, creating jobs and prosperity and driving investment.

The Edinburgh deal brings UK Government investment in UK City Deals in Scotland so far to around £1 billion, and demonstrates clearly the value to Scotland's economy of being part of a strong United Kingdom.

On Thursday [20 July] the UK Government announced the start of steel cutting on the Clyde for the new Royal Navy Type 26 Frigates – an historic milestone for the Royal Navy, UK Defence and Scottish shipbuilding, enabled through a £3.7bn contract signed with BAE Systems earlier this month.

The work to build the ships, which starts today, will secure approximately 1,700 skilled shipbuilding jobs in Scotland and 2,300 jobs throughout the supply chain across Britain until 2035.

Both of these demonstrate clearly the value to Scotland's economy of being part of a strong United Kingdom.

The Edinburgh City Deal will focus on maximising the economic value of new technology. It will use Edinburgh's track record in innovation and new technology to build the sector, creating prosperity and jobs. The deal will include the creation of five new innovation hubs, including in robotics and space technologies.

Edinburgh's world class universities are at the heart of this City Deal, with investment in cutting edge research in the technologies of the future at Heriot-Watt, Queen Margaret and Edinburgh Universities, exploring innovation

in space, health sciences, agri-tech and food and drink.

It will also create a new Edinburgh concert hall, reaffirming the city as a global cultural leader, and reinforcing and building the contribution of culture to the city's economy.

The UK Government investment in UK City Deals in Scotland has now topped more than £1 billion. Combined with other sources, this will unlock more than £4 billion of investment for Scottish cities and regions. That investment comes on top of a sound financial settlement for Scotland, plus an additional £1 billion in Barnett consequentials in the past year.

UK City Deals have a proven track record of delivering for Scotland, with successes in Glasgow, Inverness, and Aberdeen, showing the substantial economic benefits that this joint investment with the Scottish Government, local authorities and partners can bring. Tay Cities and Stirling city deals are currently under discussion, and the UK Government has announced its commitment to exploring a Borderlands deal. These demonstrate clearly the value to Scotland of being part of the Union.

Press release: 2017 Alexander Dalrymple Award

The Alexander Dalrymple Award is given by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) in recognition of an outstanding contribution to world hydrography. First presented in 2006, it is named in honour of the first Hydrographer of the Royal Navy in 1795.

The Award was presented at reception in London by Admiral Tim Lowe, UK National Hydrographer and Deputy Chief Executive of the UKHO. Admiral Lowe commented:

“Adam has made a significant contribution to capacity building and improving maritime safety in the Southwest Pacific region. As National Hydrographer, he has a wide ranging and busy portfolio from managing a very efficient national and regional production/delivery unit through to representing New Zealand at a variety of strategic fora within the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).

“He is also a member of the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB) and a hugely active Capacity Building Coordinator for the South West Pacific Hydrographic Commission (SWPHC). In the latter, he has delivered significant training and mentoring initiatives in areas such as maritime safety information, hydrographic surveying training and nautical cartography training. These aspects have significantly benefitted developing Member States across the breadth of an enormous sea area.”

Adam Greenland is the twelfth recipient of the Alexander Dalrymple Award. Educated at the University of East London and the University of Greenwich, and a former Merchant Mariner, Adam Greenland is a Chartered Surveyor who has been with Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) since 2005.

In making the presentation, Admiral Lowe commended Mr Greenland's leading contribution towards New Zealand's fulfillment of its SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) responsibilities, his work as a member of the IHO/FIG/ICA International Board of Standards of Competence, setting and reviewing the minimum international standards of competence for hydrographic surveyors and nautical cartographers, and his role as a driving force in the Pacific Region Navigation Initiative (PRNI). This initiative is focused on navigation related aspects of maritime safety to support Pacific Island Countries fulfill their own SOLAS obligations.

The award presentation took place at a reception held at Lancaster House in London to mark the UK Government's celebration of World Hydrography Day 2017, a United Nations-endorsed recognition of the vital role of hydrography in supporting safe navigation and sustainable use of the world's seas, oceans and waterways.

The theme chosen by the IHO for this year's World Hydrography Day is 'Mapping our seas, oceans and waterways – more important than ever' and Admiral Lowe spoke of the relevance of this theme to the work of the UKHO:

"This year's World Hydrography Day theme has tremendous synergy with the work we undertake at the UKHO on a daily business and with Government initiatives designed to aid the development of sustainable marine economic growth, nationally as well as worldwide. Our knowledge of the shape, nature and depth of the seafloor is a fundamental requirement for the proper, safe, sustainable and cost effective use of the world's seas, oceans and waterways."

Admiral Lowe also paid tribute to the work of the IHO's long-serving former President and current General Secretary, Robert Ward, who is due to step down from the role later this year. Admiral Lowe said:

"Robert has a long history of involvement in the implementation and development of the standards and regulations associated with electronic chart navigation and digital hydrographic data, both in the IHO and in the IMO. On behalf of the United Kingdom and the UKHO, we would like to thank Robert for his valuable contribution to the work of the International Hydrographic Community during his Presidency and latterly, as General Secretary of the IHO."

News story: £10m fund to restore peatland opens for applications

A £10 million grant scheme to restore England's iconic peatlands has officially opened for bids, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

In England, peatlands cover 11 per cent of the country and provide a key habitat for birds such as the merlin, dunlin and golden plover. They provide 70 per cent of the country's drinking water and store more than 3.2 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. But it is estimated as much as four fifths of our peatland is in need of restoration.

Funding will be made available for schemes that restore upland and lowland peatlands, create habitats for vulnerable wildlife, reduce flood risk by slowing rain water flow and increase carbon capture.

The government fund is in addition to the £4 million Defra has already allocated to existing Natural England peatland restoration schemes across the country, from Cumbria to Cornwall, which have raised water levels for mosses to thrive and seen rare species replanted.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Peatlands are a vital part of the natural ecosystem that provide key habitats for wildlife, supply us with clean water and reduce carbon emissions, so I encourage groups from across the country to apply for funding to restore this important habitat.

This scheme will help fulfil our ambition to be the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state while returning thousands of hectares of peatland to their natural state.

Bids with the greatest potential for greenhouse gas mitigation and projects that deliver better value for money and maximise environmental benefits will be favoured. The scheme is for capital works and is open to everyone outside central government and their agencies.

Funding will be available for three years from April 2018 as part of Defra's £100 million of capital funding for direct investment in projects that support the natural environment.

The closing date for applications will be 20 November 2017 and applications will be made via Defra's [e-tendering platform](#).

Speech: Starting local, going global

Let me start by recognising the fantastic '10 Thousand Small Business Programme', run by our hosts Goldman Sachs. The programme is unlocking the huge growth potential of the UK's small businesses, providing practical education and creating invaluable peer to peer networks.

And it seems appropriate that the great global corporation of Goldman Sachs is at the helm of this support – for it too was once a small business. Today, that seems a hard thing to picture; but you have to go back to 1869. Founder Marcus Goldman, from his one room office on Pine Street in New York, helped small businesses access capital by connecting them to investors. I think it's safe to say he made a success of it.

The importance of small businesses to our economy is as true now as it was back then. Over 99% of private businesses in the UK are SMEs; you employ over 15 million people and generate nearly 50% of all private sector turnover.

Quite simply, you are a vital and productive component of the engine that is the UK economy. We all receive a dividend from your success – be that in the jobs you create, the communities you sustain, or lives you enrich with your products.

You create wealth and generate income for all the public services we value in our society. That is why this event today is so important. You've heard from inspiring and successful business leaders about how you can take your business to the next level.

In fact, the panel just before spoke about the incredible level of opportunity around the world. The great news is that trading overseas is no longer the sole preserve of multi-national giants. Exporting is also no longer a pipe-dream for SMEs; rather it should be one of the first points on the business plan. The last session was titled 'Starting Local, Going Global' – but let me take that one step further and say that 'global is the new local'.

It may be a cliché, but the thing about clichés is that they're often true. Having visited some of our key overseas markets, I am reminded how highly British products and services are regarded around the world.

We are renowned for our quality, heritage and innovation.

Whether that's more martinis in the USA being made with British Gin; the Brompton Bikes seen on the streets of Shanghai and Tokyo; or the British expertise creating smart cities in India.

I want you all to leave with one simple message: as a small business, there has never been a better, easier and more important time to export.

UK exporting landscape

A survey of the 10,000 Small Business Programme community reveals 50% of you are planning to increase your current overseas trading, or begin exporting for the first time. It is wonderful to see so much ambition and internationalist spirit under one roof. Research shows that companies which export are more profitable, resilient and productive.

Yet still only around 11% of overall British companies sell anything beyond our shores. And it is the same story amongst small businesses, as only one in 10 SMEs were exporters of goods and services in 2015. I may be largely preaching to the converted inside this room, but these figures show that the case for exporting needs to be made outside, in the wider business arena.

When I see that 20% of the UK's small businesses either used to export and have stopped, or are considering exporting but for several reasons haven't yet made the jump – I see a great deal of unfulfilled potential. Not just in the form of additional profits and productivity that those businesses are forgoing, but also in our national economy – the strength of which relies on our ability to trade overseas.

I speak to UK businesses every day: either as the local MP, not far from here, in Wyre Forest, as the Minister for International Trade, or even as a consumer of their products. I understand the real barriers SMEs are facing.

Too often, they're put off exporting by lack of access to finance; they're wary of language and cultural differences; they think their products won't sell overseas; or they lack enough overseas contacts. And sometimes it can just be because there aren't enough hours in the day. I ran a small business and I know it can often feel like you're playing every position on the pitch, not to mention managing the team!

But there are 3 reasons I want to give which show how government is helping.

great.gov.uk

Firstly is around the unprecedented levels of export support we are providing, with a focus on digital. If you haven't already, I would urge you to visit our world leading digital platform: great.gov.uk. There is quite simply nothing like it anywhere on the globe.

Where else can you find, all in one place, thousands of overseas business leads for which you can apply today, access 100 country guides, giving invaluable market insight whilst demystifying the exporting process, or register to have global buyers contact you direct to supply what they need?

And thanks to our partnerships with online giants such as Amazon and eBay, we are making it easier and cheaper for you to sell to over two billion online customers around the world – at the click of a mouse. The time spent laboriously looking for contacts abroad, exploring markets, or seeking buyers amidst mountains of paperwork is over.

If you do one thing today, go on [great.gov.uk](https://www.great.gov.uk) and see for yourself how easy and simple it now is to seize a world opportunity. But it would be wrong of me to say that it is just government that owns the silver bullet to improve our national exporting performance.

We cannot achieve the culture shift we want, and need, on our own. We want to create a national movement where government and industry work in tandem to help UK companies at every stage of their export journey.

That is why I am delighted that the 'Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Programme' has identified, at its core, international trade as a pathway for growth. Arguably one of the most valuable features of the programme is the networks you create and the associated peer to peer learning.

For it's all well and good hearing the benefits of exporting from politicians like me, but I'll be the first to admit that the best spokespeople are the exporters themselves. They have the experience, the contacts, the shortcuts, they know what it's like. So, I urge those alumni here today who are exporting to share their experiences with the rest of your cohort.

Department for International Trade

The second way government is helping is getting our own house in order following last year's referendum result. Trade is more important than ever and now the UK political landscape reflects this. For the first time since 1983, the UK has a dedicated department for international trade. The Prime Minister has given us the sole purpose of being the most passionate advocate for free trade in the world.

What does that mean for you? It means that we want to create an environment where it is easier for businesses to identify and seize global opportunities, whilst attracting the investment needed to grow our economy.

For the first time in years, trade promotion, policy and finance all fall under the remit of one department. This means we can be more co-ordinated than ever before. I mentioned earlier lack of finance being a barrier to export.

UK Export Finance, the government's export credit arm, now sits within my department. It ensures that no viable export deal will fail due to lack of finance or insurance. With UKEF's risk appetite recently doubled to £5 billion, and support now offered in 40 foreign currencies – from the Australian Dollar to the Zambian Kwacha – this sort of financial guarantee has so far ensured 300 UK companies shake hands on a deal rather than walk away.

And last week, we announced a deal with 5 of Britain's biggest high street banks to deliver government-backed financial support to exporters more quickly and efficiently. The deal also extends to supply chain companies of UK exporters, which will boost lending to typically smaller companies that might need finance to buy equipment or increase the number of employees to meet the demands of large contracts.

With UKEF taking on most of the risk, banks will be able to provide working capital loans and bonds required by overseas buyers, supporting their SME customers directly. We are dismantling a common barrier to exporting that has persisted for too long.

As a department, we are listening and responding to business concerns, and ensuring trade remains at the heart of all government policy making.

One of these concerns has naturally been the uncertainty around Brexit, which brings me onto my final point.

Brexit

Almost one third of small firms trade with or within the EU, so let me reassure you that for the moment, nothing changes.

Our trading relationship with the EU is unchanged until we formally leave. The Prime Minister has made clear that we want the greatest possible barrier and tariff-free access to the European Market, whilst offering European businesses the same access to the UK market. This works both ways.

It is in our mutual interest: as it puts businesses, jobs and economic security front and centre. Above all we feel this is achievable, given that we're beginning from a position where we have zero tariffs already, not to mention 100% regulatory and legal equivalence.

The mantra for negotiations should be prosperity first, politics second. No-one wants to see a dislocation in trade. Nor do they want to see a bitter divorce.

Rather the UK wants a deep and special relationship with our European friends and neighbours, with whom we will continue to work across many areas including defence, security and academia. Brexit is not a rejection of our shared values, nor our European identity.

A referendum cannot change that. But whilst we will continue to trade with Europe, we've always been a globally minded nation. The EU Commission itself admits that 90% of future global growth is set to occur beyond the borders of Europe.

The UK, with an independent trade policy, will be able to strike trading arrangements with these dynamic growing markets. We are already making progress, laying the groundwork for our trading future and seeking greater opportunities with the wider world.

We have already established 10 trade working groups with 15 key markets around the world, including China, India, the Gulf nations and latterly our single largest trading partner, the United States. I am delighted to see that small businesses are already alive to the global opportunities beyond Europe. According to the FSB, 1 in 5 exporting small businesses trade with emerging markets such as China and the UAE.

This reinforces my long held belief that small businesses are always thinking big. In fact this very region, the Midlands, shows us how it's done. Over 27,000 businesses in these surrounding areas export nearly £40 billion worth of products to over 100 countries.

Conclusion

So I am confident that we can see Brexit as the opportunity that it is, and thrive. The UK has some of the most innovative and ambitious small businesses in the world – ably demonstrated by those present today. You've heard about the incredible opportunity that exists overseas. You've heard about the unprecedented level of support available. And you've heard that exporting, though once complex, is now increasingly simple. So to coin a phrase from the last session, I truly believe that there has never been a better time to 'Go Global'.

Thank you.

[News story: CNC officer flies to LA to compete in International Games](#)

PC James St Leger took part in the CrossFit Open competition in March 2017, along with 324,307 other people across the world. Every entrant competes across five different workouts over five weeks, including various weight-lifting challenges, strength tests and endurance events.

James finished eighth in the UK in the general category. There was also a subsection for police officers, firefighters, the military, and other emergency workers, where he finished first in Europe and seventh in the world in the police category.

As a result of his amazing results, the CrossFit Games organisers have invited James to compete in an invite only, three day CrossFit competition, in the Elite category. He will be flying out to Los Angeles on 12 August, with the competition starting the very next day. Around 8,000 athletes, representing more than 65 countries over 65 Olympic style sports, will be taking part in the Games.

James's training in the lead up to this competition has had to be extremely varied, as he will not know the exact details of the workouts until the day of competition. He is expecting there to be tests of strength, aerobic fitness, barbell and gymnastics movements – most likely with some of them mixed together to form very gruelling workouts.

PC St Leger said: "As part of my role as an Authorised Firearms Officer it is important I am fit to be able to carry out my role protecting critical

national infrastructure, and events like these really push me to my limit!

“It’s an honour to be invited to the games in LA and I will be the only police officer from the UK competing in the event, so I hope I can do my country and UK policing proud! I have set up a [Just Giving page](#) and would be so grateful if anyone wanted to sponsor me. Any money raised will be split between the charity the Police Treatment Centre and offsetting some of the cost of the trip, which I am funding myself.”

To sponsor James and find out more about his endeavours, visit his [Just Giving page](#). To find out more about the World Police and Fire Games, [visit their website](#).