

News story: 236,000 UK businesses making the most of overseas opportunities

Published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the Annual Business Survey shows further good news for the UK economy. Figures demonstrate an increase in the number of companies of all sizes selling their products to overseas buyers.

Figures released earlier this month show that total exports from the UK reached £637bn in September, an increase of 4.4% on the previous year. This demonstrates that demand for British goods and services continues to grow from around the world.

Key highlights from the report show:

- The number of SME companies exporting abroad increased by 6.6% to 232,000 (9.8% of all SMEs), whilst the number of large businesses who export increased by 6.1% to 3,500 (41.7% of all large businesses)
- New businesses are making the most of export opportunities, with the number of companies which are less than 2 years old and exported last year increasing by 19.9% to 47,000
- Established businesses are also making the most of support that is on offer for exporters, as the number of businesses over 10 years old who export also increased by 10.2% to 115,300

Figures released today (28 November) by HMRC also show that nearly 36,000 British businesses are exporting goods to the US, with another 15,000 sending their goods to Australia. The news follows the conclusion of the Department for International Trade's consultations on potential Free Trade Agreements with both countries.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP, said:

Today's news is further evidence that the high-quality goods and services produced by British businesses are selling all over the world. As an international economic department, when my Ministerial team and I travel abroad, we see first hand the unprecedented demand for British products, and the results of the Annual Business Survey show that we are responding to the demand.

Our Export Strategy sets out an offer to every business that has the ambition to start exporting or increase their existing operation, as we look to move exports as a percentage of GDP from 30% to 35%.

This weekend marks the annual celebration of UK SMEs with government Ministers out across the country to mark Small Business Saturday. DIT's Ministers will visit companies across the country, emphasising that exporting can increase the profitability and sustainability of businesses, as well as having a positive impact on their local economy.

Gnaw Chocolate is just one of the British companies that is finding international success. Founded in Norfolk in 2011, the business now exports to over 20 countries worldwide. In the first six months of 2018 alone, Gnaw launched its products in the US, China, France, Morocco, South Africa, Germany and are soon to launch its Single origin Brooke & Amble range in Russia. Future target markets for growth include Australia and expansion of its markets across the Middle East.

Matt Legon, Gnaw Chocolate's Founder, said:

There are opportunities all over the world for ambitious businesses. If you are looking to build your business at a faster rate, then it is worth seriously considering the benefits exporting can bring. Exporting has provided the cornerstone of what we have been able to achieve here at Gnaw.

In August, the government launched a new [Export Strategy](#) which sets out how DIT will support businesses of all sizes to make the most of the opportunities presented by markets around the world.

A collaboration with business, developed after extensive engagement with a range of UK firms – the Strategy sets a new ambition from government to increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%.

It presents a streamlined and targeted offer for businesses of all sizes, set to raise productivity, boost wages and protect employment across the UK.

Further Information:

[News story: Support for UK's continued access to £1.3 trillion market](#)



Government Procurement Agreement
(GPA)



Support gained for UK's independent membership of the Government Procurement Agreement.

The 19 members of the GPA committee met on Tuesday (27 November) at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva, endorsing the terms of the UK's offer. The next formal step is expected when they meet again December.

The UK is currently a member of the GPA through the European Union and our continued participation would mean that British businesses would be able to continue to bid for overseas public sector contracts worth £1.3 trillion each year.

It also means that overseas firms can bid for some UK public sector contracts, which delivers better value for UK taxpayers. Our proposed terms do not open up contracts for health services and other vital services, which will continue to be protected.

The Department for International Trade will continue to work with GPA members so that our membership can be finalised shortly.

International Trade Secretary Liam Fox said:

We are pleased that our proposal to join the Government Procurement Agreement as an independent member has been supported today and look forward to finalising our independent membership shortly.

This was an important step as continued participation would give UK businesses certainty they need to continue accessing overseas procurement markets worth £1.3 trillion after we leave the European Union.

We look forward to taking our independent seat on the GPA after we leave the European Union and will play an active role in ensuring the agreement continues to provide fair and open competition for the benefit of all members involved.

Further Information:

- The WTO Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) is a plurilateral agreement within the WTO system consisting of 19 parties. It mutually opens government procurement markets between these parties

- Following support from all parties for the UK's market access offer, the GPA committee will meet again in the coming weeks to take the next formal step in the process

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[News story: Crowdsourcing data for maps and locations: apply for funding](#)



Users of mapping apps and websites will be supported to become active participants in creating and maintaining geographic information.

More accurate, complete and open data on geographic locations could help improve public services and increase the impact of charities working in social or environmental fields.

Innovate UK is working in partnership with the Geospatial Commission to invest up to £1.5 million in projects that allow users of mapping apps and websites to participate in creating and maintaining geographic information.

The commission is an expert committee based in the [Cabinet Office](#). It was established by the UK government in 2017 to maximise the value of data linked to location, which could be worth up to £11 billion a year for the economy.

Making information more accurate and complete

The aim of this competition is to support the Geospatial Commission to make information on location more accurate, complete and reliable.

Projects should look at how to give users of mapping services the ability to identify and correct missing, out-of-date and incorrect information.

They should support one of the following areas to:

- improve the delivery of local authority services such as parking or disabled access

- support third-sector organisations in improving their work in social or environmental fields
- enhance existing public sector open data, such as information on publicly accessible green space

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 30 January 2019
- projects can be led by a business, research and technology organisation or local authority, and must include the owner of the data that is being worked with
- funding is available for a range of project types including feasibility studies, industrial research and experimental development
- we expect total project costs to range in size between £50,000 and £750,000 and for projects to last up to 10 months
- businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
- a [briefing event](#) will be held on 3 December 2018 to find out more about the competition and making a quality application

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[Press release: 55 years on, Dartford crossing looks to the future](#)

The original tunnel opened to traffic on 18 November 1963 and has since been used to make 1.5 billion journeys, with around 155,000 vehicles currently using it each day.

Although it has been added to over the years, with a second tunnel opening in May 1980 and the Queen Elizabeth II bridge opening in October 1991, the Dartford Crossing is still the only road crossing of the River Thames east of London.

Highways England is currently seeking views on proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing – which will provide an additional route over the Thames from 2027.

David Manning, Development Director for the Lower Thames Crossing, said:

At 55 years old, Dartford Crossing remains a vital piece of national infrastructure having provided decades of service to the country. However, being the only way to get across the Thames east of London, it carries more traffic than it was ever designed for –

leading to regular delays.

This anniversary co-insides with our public consultation for the Lower Thames Crossing, a new route across the Thames connecting Kent, Essex and Thurrock. We want everyone to get involved and help us shape our plans and maximise the benefits, a transformational project of this size can deliver.

The existing Dartford Crossing is designed to carry up to 135,000 vehicles a day, although it regularly carries more than 180,000, with that number increasing every year. Keeping it running is a 24/7 operation, and involves major maintenance and a regular inspection programme. In recent years the two Dartford Tunnels have been fully refurbished with new lighting, ventilation and fire suppression systems that significantly improve safety standards. Virtually all the work has been carried out overnight or at weekends, while keeping the Crossing open to traffic.

The multi-billion pound Lower Thames Crossing would nearly double road capacity across the river Thames and almost halve northbound journey times at Dartford Crossing.

The 14.5-mile route connecting Gravesham in Kent and Thurrock in Essex is expected to reduce traffic at Dartford by 22% with 14 million fewer vehicles using it every year. It will almost halve the morning peak average journey times between M25 junctions 1b and 31 from nine minutes to just five.

A consultation on the latest proposals – which aim to maximise the project's huge benefits – is currently underway. It ends on Thursday 20 December 2018. Find out more about the public consultation and give your feedback at the [Lower Thames Crossing website] (www.lowerthamescrossing.co.uk/haveyoursay).

Additionally, 60 events are being held between 10 October and 20 December across Kent, Thurrock and Essex for residents, businesses and communities to ask questions and provide their views.

Press release: Britain's creative industries break the £100 billion barrier

- New figures show bumper growth in Britain's film, TV, music and advertising industries
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's sectors are now worth £268 billion

- Record breaking figures in the digital industries which are now worth more than £130 billion

The UK's roaring creative industries made a record contribution to the economy in 2017, smashing through the £100 billion mark.

Its value of the creative industries to the UK is up from £94.8 billion in 2016 to £101.5 billion, and has grown at nearly twice the rate of the economy since 2010, according to [figures](#) published today by the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS).

Film, TV, radio, photography, music, advertising, museums, galleries and digital creative industries are all part of this thriving sector.

The increase has been driven in part by a boom in the computer services sub-sector which includes video games such as Batman Arkham made by London-based games company, Rocksteady Studios and Red Dead Redemption 2 produced by Scottish company, Rockstar Games. This sector alone is worth £5.11 billion.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Jeremy Wright said:

Our creative industries not only fly the flag for the best of British creativity at home and abroad but they are also at the heart of our economy.

Today they have broken the £100 billion mark and continue on a hugely positive upward trajectory, outperforming the wider UK economy and bringing joy and entertainment to millions.

We're doing all we can to support the sector's talent and entrepreneurship as we build a Britain that is fit for future.

The strength of the creative industries is matched by the UK's world leading digital and tech sector, which has seen its contribution to the UK economy increase by 7.3 per cent between 2016 and 2017 and by 32.9 per cent since 2010. It is now worth more than £130 billion.

It continues to perform highly and over the last two months British tech firms Monzo, Farfetch and Funding Circle have surpassed the [\\$1 billion mark](#), meaning they are now so-called 'unicorns'.

The Government continues to back the creative industries. Dedicated tax reliefs supporting high-end television and film productions such as Peaky Blinders and Darkest Hour have seen a boom worth £12.6 billion since the schemes were introduced. There was also £1.38 billion of inward investment in the film industry last year as a result of tax relief.

As part of the Government's Industrial Strategy, [nine new Creative Clusters](#) across the UK have benefitted from £80 million funding to boost innovation by part-funding research partnerships between universities and industry. They aim to increase the use of digital technologies to improve audience

experience in the screen and performance industries, and shorten production times in the design industry.

This dovetails with investment in the UK's digital sector. This month's Budget included nearly £300 million of investment in emerging technologies including AI and quantum, with up to £50 million to be invested in [new Turing AI Fellowships](#) to help bring the best global researchers in AI to the UK, and [£235 million](#) to establish a new National Quantum Computing Centre, a quantum challenge to bring the technology to market and new centres for doctoral training.

Britain's thriving tourism sector makes up almost four per cent of the UK economy – worth £67.7 billion in 2017.

The value of sport to the UK economy has increased by 5.3 per cent year-on-year and by 40 per cent since 2010. Sport's value, which includes sport equipment production and the operation of sports facilities, rose to £9.8 billion, although this does not include the sports broadcasting rights or sports advertising markets.

DCMS sectors' contribution to the UK economy overall continues to rise, with GVA at £267.7 billion in 2017, up 3.4 per cent year-on-year. DCMS sectors now account for 14.6 per cent of the UK's GVA.

Notes to editors

- Media enquiries: DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210
- Gross value added measures the value of goods and services produced without associated costs.
- This release provides estimates of the contribution of DCMS sectors to the UK economy, measured by gross value added (GVA), in current prices i.e. not taking into account inflation.
- The 2017 figures are provisional and are subject to change when ONS National Accounts are published next year.
- These are all part of the Government's modern Industrial Strategy, and its the sector deal which will drive the development of the most potentially revolutionary, cutting-edge technologies, and accelerating their adoption in real-world, industrial environments in order to realise their benefits for business, consumers and wider society.
- The Film Tax Relief was introduced in 2007 and High-end TV Tax Relief was introduced in 2007.