

Small Talk

Vol 2. Issue 6

The Newsletter for UKTI DSO Charter Members

Dear Charter Member,

Since the Charter scheme was launched in 2004 as a means of channelling our support for UK SMEs it has undoubtedly been a success story. True, it has not been able to help every member in every circumstance but the vast majority of you have been able to take some advantage of the wide range of advice, information and support on offer. Aside from the fundamental Charter Account Manager service of effecting introductions and providing first line advice the Small Business Unit has, over the years, hosted and contributed to a number of events and other activities aimed at increasing your chances of winning overseas business. These include Meet the Buyer sessions, one to one business surgeries and a Small Business Symposium. Elsewhere we made a significant contribution to the setting up of business consortia such as the Ballistic Tool Kit and INFREG—success stories in their own right. At its peak the Charter scheme had over 650 members, reporting export sales of over £750M.

However we have now been asked to extend our support and services across the whole SME defence/security community. With an estimated 8-10,000 SMEs actively involved in defence/security exports this is clearly a challenge beyond the capacity of the Charter concept. This is why we are developing a new business support model for SMEs to replace the current Charter arrangement. Full details are overleaf.

Whether you have been a Charter member from the outset or have only recently joined the scheme I hope that you have been able to get some real value out of it. Rest assured that the SBU and our support for SMEs is not going away, just evolving. We look forward to working with you throughout 2011 and beyond.

Wishing you, your families and your businesses all the very best at Christmas and for the New Year.



Howard Gibbs
Head, Small Business Unit

CONTENTS

Page 1: Editorial

Page 2: Support for SMEs—A Fresh Approach

THE TEAM

Head of Small Business Unit

Howard Gibbs - 020 7215 8204
howard.gibbs@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

Business Account Managers

Alex Holdsworth - 020 7215 8222
alex.holdsworth@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

Kim Packham - 020 7215 8221
kim.packham@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

Alka Patel - 020 7215 8181
alka.patel@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

Teresa Earl - 020 7215 8247
teresa.earl@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

Administrative Support

Alex Clarke - 020 7215 8180
alexandra.clarke@ukti.gsi.gov.uk

9th Floor
Kingsgate House
66-74 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6SW

SMALL BUSINESS UNIT

Support For SMEs: A Fresh Approach

The Government has set us all a stiff challenge. In recognition of the vital contribution SMEs make to UK industry, and your importance to the UK's economic recovery, Government has pledged to do more than ever to provide the vital support and assistance you are seeking. For us in UKTI DSO this means opening up our wide range of advice, information and support to all UK SMEs actively involved in the defence/security export arena—an estimated 8-10,000. For you it means becoming even more proactive in order to take full advantage of the opportunities and benefits on offer. In addition the impact of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review on our future resources to aid and assist you has yet to be realised. All of which means we need to find a smarter, more effective and efficient way of helping you. It is clear that the Charter initiative is no longer the right model for us to deliver our support and services—a fresh approach is needed.

Work is well advanced on the creation of a new UKTI business model for SMEs, at the heart of which will be an open, versatile UKTI website area. The intention is that, when operational, this web facility will meet the immediate needs of around 95% of those SMEs who are considering export opportunities. The website will offer a wide range of Government and non-Government advice, information and support in three clear stages—to those new to exporting, those preparing for market and, for those ready to actively seek overseas contracts, current and future marketing and business opportunities.

New or inexperienced exporters will find some basic advice and guidance which will help them to determine whether or not they are ready to indulge in the export market and the risks involved in so doing. Those that have decided to take the plunge will be able to consider the export options available to them and understand the regulations and obstacles that may confront them. A comprehensive list of UKTI DSO and other services will also be available. For those more experienced exporters—those all ready to go with competitive exportable goods and services— there will be a regularly updated listing of current and future business opportunities, UK and overseas exhibitions, meet the buyer sessions, etc.

Even the most proactive, experienced and successful SMEs will need more specialised help from time to time. Companies that have fully exhausted the range of web-based advice and support on offer or are at an advanced stage of the exporting process will still be able to engage with us on a personal basis. Many Charter companies will already regard themselves as being in this position, based on past experience of working with us and the strong relationships that have developed. Please be reassured that the SBU remains at your disposal under much the same arrangements as the Charter provided. Other Charter companies may benefit from engaging with the website initially before seeking individual help. The aim is to ensure that all SMEs have access to fundamental advice appropriate to their circumstances, allowing us to focus our personal attention on those companies that most need it.

The Charter scheme will continue to run until the new website is ready to be launched. We anticipate that this will be at the end of 2010. At this stage the Charter website will be dissolved and replaced by the open network site as described above. You will receive notification by email when the changeover takes place. To prepare for this please visit our website at www.ukti.gov.uk and register your details. You will then be able to set up an e-business profile that will allow you to receive email alerts concerning your business sector interests.

PS. Keep an eye out for an email announcing our Small Business Symposium for 2011.