

## Business in the Parliament Conference 2023

### Workshop 5: Scotland's Business on the World Stage: Trade & Exporting Hosted by Scottish Chambers of Commerce

#### Overview

Exporting continues to be vital to Scotland's economic success as well as growing and renewing our economy over the next ten years, and beyond. The **International Trade Partnership between Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) and the Scottish Government** serves has helped to mobilise hundreds of new Scottish businesses to trade the world over, aligning with the Scottish Government's Export Growth Plan, "[A Trading Nation](#)" (ATN) and the "[National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#)" (NSET).

Export support empowers business to reach new markets for their goods and services and enables them to take advantage of the emerging opportunities presented by the transition to net zero, including those in renewable energy, hydrogen, high value manufacturing, space, and many others. The rapidly changing landscape of domestic and global economies demands a joint approach from the public and private sector if we are to continue being competitive and increase Scotland's GDP.

SCC has secured significant wins and alliances for businesses in Scotland through its trade expertise and practical business support. They provide advice, training, documentation, and most importantly, the business to business (B2B) connections which are critical enablers to companies new to exporting or expanding into new markets. The SCC are in their fourth year of delivery and have retained its focus on delivering Chamber-led B2B trade missions, attracting more Scottish businesses to export.

#### The Purpose of this Workshop:

We know that some potential exporters are dissuaded from taking the first steps through lack of funding, inexperience, poor research, a shortage of resources and the right connections. As such this workshop aims to explore:

- The challenges and common barriers to growing exports and how these could be overcome.
- How the Scottish Government, its partners and businesses can work together to overcome these barriers to achieve the ambitions set out in ATN and NSET.
- The support exporters need to take advantage of new opportunities, and how the current landscape helps businesses internationalise to increase their existing exports and / or access new markets.
- Where the opportunities are for Scottish businesses in developed and emerging markets, and how this information is disseminated and with a co-ordinated approach.
- How a more cohesive approach can be taken by partner organisations such as the Scottish Chambers, Scottish Development International and other agency partners to share information and knowledge to help businesses make informed decisions, working more closely in partnership while avoiding duplication of effort.
- Provide practical advice and real-life examples of companies that have successfully managed to enter new markets and trade internationally by utilising the support available

#### About the Scottish Chambers of Commerce

The SCC network is a leading, global and entrepreneurial business network representing nearly 13,000 businesses and over 50% of Scotland's private sector workforce. It comprises 30 local Chambers of Commerce and is part of the International Chambers of Commerce Network, making it the largest B2B organisation in the world.

The SCC is a strategic partner in the delivery of some of the key actions within ATN. Through the International Trade Partnership (ITP2), SCC, SG and SDI work together to deliver trade missions to onboard and internationalise new and early stage exporters, growing their network and exports.

## Background

As highlighted in [NSET](#), exporting plays a fundamental role in the Scottish economy and aims to create jobs, help our economy to grow while helping businesses to improve productivity, become more resilient and is key to Scotland's economic recovery.

As a nation, Scotland exports over £30bn worldwide<sup>1</sup>, however our exports as a percentage of GDP have remained largely flat over the past 20 years. In response to this, the Scottish Government launched [ATN](#), in 2019 with the ambitious target of growing exports to 25% of GDP by 2029. Since the launch of ATN, we have experienced the challenges of EU Exit, the global pandemic, and the cost crisis, which businesses have had to adapt to and to change at pace. Despite this changing landscape, Scotland's international exports remain at around 21% of GDP<sup>2</sup>, Accordingly much of the support provided through ATN has been adapted and flexed to support recovery as well as future growth.

### Key Deliverables so far of *A Trading Nation* include:

- The SCC has delivered nearly 90 trade missions through ITP2 to top priority markets and sectors as per ATN, with projected sales expected to exceed £20m from participating companies.
- SDI's targeted export support to companies has delivered an additional £3bn in planned international sales (over 3 years) with over 1300 company projects.
- SDI has supported Scottish exporters to enter 350 markets new to them between May 2019 and March 2022, with over 250 new products and services leaving Scotland for these markets.
- The Scottish Government's Trade & Investment Envoy Network has grown to 11 Envoys covering more markets
- The Scottish Government's GlobalScots network has grown to 1100 across over 60 markets
- Publication of Sector Export Plans for Technology and Life Sciences Sectors, with a Renewables Plan to be published shortly.

### Suggested Discussion Questions

- Nearly four years on from the launch of the Export Growth Plan, *A Trading Nation*, what is working well and what more can be done?
- How do we empower businesses to export, giving them knowledge, expertise and clarity?
- What are the biggest barriers to exporting, and how can these be overcome?
- How does the current business support landscape support new and existing exporters. Is there more that can be done to join this up?
- In which markets and sectors do the future exporting opportunities lie – short term and longer term and how are these prioritised?
- How does Scotland get ahead of the competition and remain globally competitive?
- What's the best way to distribute information to businesses in Scotland so they can take advantage of these opportunities?

### Key Challenges and Opportunities

There are a number of challenges to both new and existing exporters including:

- Difficulties trading with the EU since Brexit
- Cost of doing business, impact of the energy crisis, inflation and increases in the cost of shipping
- Tariffs (taxes or duties on imports/exports) and red tape
- Global supply chain crises
- Lack of input into free trade agreements (FTAs) or lack of preferential FTAs
- Scotland standing out and being competitive in their offer to businesses

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<sup>1</sup> [Export statistics Scotland: 2019 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [GDP Quarterly National Accounts: 2021 Quarter 1 \(January to March\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

## Business Organisation Workshop Host



**Seona Shand, International Trade Director, SCC** – with over a decade of experience in the field of international trade, doing business in new markets, Seona's role is to expand and establish new trading alliances and support capacity building within the SCC network to deliver additional international support to the business community.

Seona aims to maximise SCC's international relationships with the global Chambers of Commerce network, other key global businesses, governments and partners.

## Panel Members



**Graeme Clarke, owner and MD of The Ochil Fudge Pantry** - has over 30 years' experience within the food and drink industry, from field sales and retail development, to rolling up his sleeves in production of Ochil Fudge Pantry's multi-award winning, traditionally handmade product. He oversees the entirety of the business process from building supplier relationships to delivering sales to both retail and

wholesale customer.



**Gary White, Senior Director, Strategic Site Solutions** – Deputy Chair of Scottish Life Sciences Industry Leadership Group and part of IQVIA leadership team, he has over 22 years in international preclinical and clinical biopharmaceutical product development, research and healthcare delivery. Gary works across Europe with clinical research sites, to accelerate patient recruitment and driving

healthcare forward. He leads the strategy with external clinical site networks and SMOs as well as the development of IQVIA's support model for Academic Investigator Research, focusing on developing commercial and non-commercial collaborations to bring new innovative therapies to patients.



**Eric Balish, Head of Corporate Trade Sales UK & Ireland at ABC International Bank plc (Arab Banking Corporation)** – leads the corporate team responsible for corporates exporting from UK & Ireland (NI and Irish Republic). Eric has worked with innumerable global importers and exporters, from university spin outs to the largest of multi-nationals, across all sectors and industries. At Barclays' he developed its international business (Scotland & Ireland), focusing on

Energy and Renewables where he supported US, Canada and London based Oil and Gas/ Mining and Minerals teams and has developed a strong understanding of Sub Saharan and North Africa. Eric is Convener of the China Scotland Business Forum; member of Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on China and serves on International Banking and Trade Finance committees with UK Finance.



**Gemma Connelly, Head of Trade and Investment Services, Scottish Development International** – responsible for Financial Incentives, Reporting, Analysis and Policy functions across both Trade and Investment, as well as Trade Digital Services and a range of partnership focused activities. A qualified chartered accountant with over 10 years' experience in economic development at Scottish

Enterprise, Gemma previously took part in Deutsche Bank's International Graduate Training Programme in Legal, Risk and Capital and worked as a Senior Derivatives Accountant at Scottish Power.