

Press release: Businesses to access millions in government export support through partnership with high street banks

Secretary of State for the Department for International Trade, Liam Fox, has today announced that UKEF will partner with five of the UK's biggest banks to deliver government-backed financial support to exporters more quickly and efficiently.

Partnering with Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group, RBS/NatWest and Santander, UKEF will also be able to extend its support to supply chain companies of UK exporters, significantly increasing the number of businesses able to access UKEF-backed trade finance.

As a result, smaller companies that support big UK exporters will be able to secure government-backed financing to deliver products and services and benefit from their clients' international business.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Liam Fox, said:

As an international economic department, this new partnership shows the Department for International Trade's commitment to help small businesses seize the global demand for British exports. Providing easily accessible finance, backed by UKEF's guarantee, will lift a common barrier to exporting. Providing that finance to suppliers as well as exporters means spreading the benefits of global trade, supporting more jobs and growth for companies large and small.

Jeff Longhurst, UK Finance Head of Commercial, added:

The industry is committed to making it easier for UK exporters to access finance and UK Finance has worked closely with lenders and UKEF to make this process simpler. With nearly 70% of international SMEs planning to grow in the next 12 months, today's announcement is a boost for both SMEs and the wider economy, helping support businesses across the country.

Through this new model, banks will be able to provide export-related trade finance, for example working capital loans and bonds required by overseas buyers, to support their SME customers directly, and with UKEF's guarantee in place should it be needed.

At the same time, UKEF will make trade finance support directly available to

direct suppliers supporting UK exporters, in a major enhancement to its existing offer. This will allow thousands of companies in manufacturers' and service providers' supply chains to access contract bonds and working capital loans with the government's guarantee.

All of this is being delivered to banks through a new and secure digital platform to help ensure the quickest response times and most efficient customer experience.

John Mahon, Head of Barclays Corporate Banking, said:

Barclays' partnership with UKEF is an important part of our trade and working capital strategy, and this initiative will allow us to deliver more comprehensive support to our clients. Delegated authority will make accessing UKEF guarantees simpler for many businesses and will help companies we work with grow more quickly. Both exporters and companies involved in international trade through supply chains will benefit, and we look forward to further collaborating with UKEF and our colleagues across the industry to find more new and innovative ways to help UK businesses take full advantage of export opportunities.

Ian Tandy, Head of Global Trade and Receivables Finance at HSBC, added:

HSBC supports many of the UK's SMEs so we welcome any initiatives designed to help our customers. We look forward to working closely with UKEF and continuing to support the UK's hard working, creative and inspiring SMEs.

Steve Everett, Head of Propositions & Product for Lloyds Bank, Global Transaction Banking, added:

In line with our helping Britain prosper commitment, the Government and Lloyds Banking Group are working closely to deliver even more comprehensive and streamlined support for our customers to trade internationally.

Alison Rose, CEO, Commercial and Private Banking at NatWest welcomed the initiative, saying:

We're delighted to continue our partnership with UK Export Finance, working to support businesses that export. As part of our mission to become a simpler bank for our customers, we are committed to making it as easy as possible for all UK businesses to access export finance whenever it is required.

Mike Ellwood, Managing Director, Santander Corporate & Commercial, added:

We want to help businesses prosper and for many, going international will help them do just that. We're passionate about connecting up our five million SME customers around the globe, and enabling them to make the most of the exporting opportunities that exist. SMEs make up the majority of British business, yet four in five of them do not export. We are fully supportive of the objectives of UKEF, specifically the delegation and digital projects which are aimed at making it easier for SMEs to access finance and making that process more efficient.

Since UKEF's trade finance products were launched in 2011, nearly 300 companies have benefited from nearly £500 million in support for several billion pounds worth of overseas contracts. This development follows a partnership agreement between the Department for International Trade and the five banks signed in July 2016.

Notes to editors

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: manufacturing, construction, oil and gas, mining and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport.
4. UKEF has a regional network of [24 export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
5. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:
 - Bond insurance policy
 - Bond support scheme
 - Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
 - Direct lending facility
 - Export insurance policy
 - Export refinancing facility
 - Export working capital scheme
 - Letter of credit guarantee scheme