

Press release: Department for International Trade: 2 years on

Two years ago the UK voted to leave the EU, triggering the formation of the Department for International Trade (DIT) to help businesses export, attract investment, negotiate market access and free trade deals, and champion global free trade.

In that time, the department has seen exports grow by an average of £7 billion per month for the last 23 months with DIT actively helping firms secure more than £70 billion worth of export wins. During that same period, DIT has overseen a boom in total trade which has grown 15.7% to a record-breaking £2,381.8 billion.

Jobs have been created across the country with DIT figures showing that 4,337 investment projects were recorded over the last 2 financial years, creating 151,194 new jobs and safeguarding 47,735. This amounts to nearly 1,500 new jobs per week.

Two years on and DIT is also nearing the completion of a capability building programme ahead of the UK's exit from the EU. In that time, the department has grown from some 2,500 people at inception to around 3,500 people now – more than 500 of whom work in DIT's specialist trade policy group.

More recently, there have been significant additions to the senior leadership team and changes to how DIT operates, with 9 new Her Majesty's Trade Commissioners to lead the trade and investment business across the world and new Directors-General for Exports and Investment with decades of experience at the world's biggest banks.

All this work will ensure that DIT is able deliver on the government's ambition to build a truly global Britain operating the UK's first independent trade policy in more than 40 years.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The UK has always been an outward-facing, trading nation and as we move towards our departure from the European Union, our priority is to establish the UK as a fully independent member of the international trading system and pursue trade agreements with new friends and old allies.

Since its creation 2 years ago, the Department for International Trade has formed strong global trading relationships, begun the process of establishing Britain's independent seat at the table, supported British businesses to export to new markets, and set out the strategic direction for exports and investment post-Brexit.

We have come a long way in a short space of time, and I look

forward to seeing this work reach fruition, as we exit the European Union.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP said:

As we celebrate our second anniversary, there are many great achievements which reflect the dedication and hard work of my international economic department. After 150 years, DIT has reconstituted a Board of Trade for the 21st century, we have developed export and investment strategies; and have begun legislating for our trading future by taking the [Trade Bill](#) through Parliament.

We have succeeded in ensuring continued record export performance which has seen the trade deficit narrow by £3.9 billion in the year to May 2018, and made sure the UK remains the number one destination for inward investment in Europe.

Permanent Secretary Antonia Romeo commented:

The department published its flagship piece of legislation, the Trade Bill, currently in Parliament, established a new approach to foreign direct investment and outward direct investment and we are shortly to publish our Export Strategy.

As we reach our second anniversary, I am proud of the significant progress the department has made.

Second Permanent Secretary and Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser, Crawford Falconer said:

This department has become the hometown stadium for a fantastic team of dedicated professionals, that have already built a formidable trade policy machine from the ground up. It's nothing less than a privilege to be adopted by it.

Earlier this year, DIT launched the International Trade Profession, a government profession designed to build trade expertise across the civil service, in the UK and overseas, maximising opportunities for the UK with an independent trade policy. I look forward to heading up this exciting new profession and helping to develop a new wave of trade talent.

[Since DIT started 2 years ago](#)

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- The Department for International Trade Annual Report and Accounts 2017 to 2018 can be found at: [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- Export and total trade figures measured over 23-month period between July 2016 to May 2018 and comparable to the prior 23 months to May 2016. Trade deficit figures measured over the latest available 12-month period between June 2017 and May 2018 and comparable to the prior 12 months to May 2017.
- Export wins figures consolidated over 2 year period, where there has been a change to methodology and validation. In 2016/17 there was no systematic validation in place, but in 2017/18 2 new processes were introduced to deliver a proportionate but robust validation approach.
- £70 million export win figure is measured from April 2016 to March 2018.

For further information