

Smart-City firms announced for Export Academy to Asia-Pacific

30 British tech companies have today been announced as the first participants in the Department for International Trade's (DIT) new Tech Export Academy programme that will begin this week.

The new Academy was launched in June 2020 at London Tech Week Connects by Secretary of State Liz Truss. It will see the first 2 cohorts of smart city tech firms participate in a 9 month programme that will provide a package of support to help them expand and grow their business in the Asia Pacific region.

108 companies applied for the programme across smart cities capabilities, from smart mobility and infrastructure to smart buildings and cyber security. An independent panel selected the successful companies based on the strengths of their products and services, their focus on exporting to the Asia-Pacific region and their commitment to diversity and inclusion, a key priority for DIT and the tech sector more widely. The 30 successful companies are based across all 4 nations of the UK.

The panel consisted of DIT's Chief Scientific Adviser Dr Mike Short, Oriel Petry (Director of the Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Directorate), Colin Sinclair (CEO of the Knowledge Quarter in Liverpool) and Jane Morrison-Ross (CEO at tech trade body ScotlandIS).

The programme is being supported by the following companies: PWC, Linklaters, Deloitte, KPMG, BDO, Taylor Wessing, EY, HSBC, Santander Grant Thornton and Clifford Chance. These partner companies will host bespoke sessions with the cohorts on regulatory, tax, intellectual property and legal issues in the Asia Pacific region.

The programme will also include opportunities for the businesses to meet investors, undertake pitch training and learn about UK Export Finance support as well as participate in virtual trade missions to the Asia-Pacific region.

In light of the growing relationship between DIT and the Thai Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, which oversees smart cities development in the country, there will be an opportunity for the companies to attend a dedicated trade mission to Thailand next year. During the mission, the companies will showcase their expertise, products and services to the Thai market.

The names of the chosen tech firms were revealed in a speech by the Minister for Exports Graham Stuart MP at London Tech Week 2020.

Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart MP said:

Congratulations to the brilliant British smart cities businesses chosen to take part in this ambitious scheme. The programme will

help the companies unlock their export potential and get a foothold in one of the fastest-growing regions in the world.

There is an increasing global demand for smart city technology, as we design urban environments that better suit the needs of 21st century life, from transport to energy to residential design. It is businesses like these joining the programme today that are working on and discovering the best solutions.

I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this scheme, and what opportunities these innovative businesses grasp over the next 9 months.

Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific, Natalie Black said:

Smart cities technology is a key area of interest across Asia Pacific. Governments and corporate businesses are keen to collaborate so I am delighted the Tech Export Academy has chosen to focus on this region first and look forward to supporting the first 30 selected companies in growing their business in this part of the world.

Adrian Fisher, Partner at Linklaters, said:

We're excited to partner with the Department for International Trade to support the growth ambitions of some of the UK's most promising tech companies. The evolving legal and regulatory landscape in the tech sector requires careful navigation – from data governance to financial regulation. Getting the legal and compliance issues right from the outset will go a long way in boosting the exporting successes of the companies taking part.

Sally Jones, EY's Trade Strategy and Brexit Leader, said:

EY is delighted to be supporting the Department for International Trade and its Tech Export Academy. The UK is a hotbed for tech innovation and helping these companies gain the skills and knowledge to access a global marketplace will be vitally important to the UK's future economic success. EY has worked with and supported many fast-growth, innovative companies through its Entrepreneur Of The Year programme and we're relishing the opportunity of helping many more through this new initiative.

Ben Powell, Public Sector Partner at Deloitte said:

With the number of trade deals set to increase following the UK's departure from the EU, we are proud to support the Department for International Trade in helping UK businesses take advantage of new opportunities.

The UK already has a strong and vibrant technology sector and Asia-Pacific is a key destination for growth. Businesses exporting technologies related to smart cities may need to understand new legislation, customs rules, trade regulation and export controls to operate in the region.

We aim to bring the full range of Deloitte's experience – from tax and export compliance, to technology and digital products – to continue supporting some of the country's most innovative small and medium sized businesses thrive in these markets.

Programme applicants:

Cohort 1: Avalon

Cohort 2: Camelot

- Conigital Ltd

- Datactics
- Emu Analytics
- Intercede
- Ovon Technology
- See.Sense
- Sensat Surveying Limited
- Space Syntax
- Sycous Limited
- Telensa Systems Pty Ltd
- UrbanTide
- UtterBerry
- Vivacity Labs
- Vortex IoT Ltd
- Vucity Limited