

UK Government Trade Hub launched to support Scottish businesses

- New hub launched by UK Department for International Trade (DIT) to help thousands of businesses in Scotland thrive internationally
- Based at government's new Edinburgh HQ, Queen Elizabeth House, the Hub will help businesses in Scotland recover from the coronavirus pandemic
- This comes as UK Export Finance (UKEF) appoints first renewables-focused export finance manager in Scotland

A new Trade Hub dedicated to helping businesses in Scotland thrive and grow internationally has been launched today, providing much-needed support for thousands of companies in economically challenging times.

Based in Edinburgh's Queen Elizabeth House, a UK government HQ opened last month which will house 3,000 civil servants from multiple departments, the UK DIT's new Scotland Hub will provide businesses with greatly increased trade support.

Through the Trade Hub, businesses will be able to utilise the UK government's global networks, expertise and influence, as well as world-leading credit agency, UKEF, to grow their overseas trade and build back from the impact of coronavirus. Leveraging the strength and reach of the UK government, the hub will deliver effective services for people and businesses in Scotland.

UK Government Exports Minister, Graham Stuart MP, today met with Scottish businesses and representative organisations, including FSB Scotland, NFU Scotland, the Scottish Council for Development and others, to discuss the support available for companies in the region.

UK Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart MP said:

One of the UK Government's key priorities is to champion all four parts of the UK and demonstrate how beneficial a strong Union is for all. This specialist Hub for Scotland will provide businesses with the support and guidance needed to boost their profits and harness their full potential.

Trade is crucial to the UK's recovery from coronavirus and will be the foundation of our relationships across the globe after the transition period ends this year. I want to ensure that businesses in Scotland benefit from our new trade deals with the world's biggest markets, as we remove barriers that they previously faced.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

This new UK Government Trade Hub in Edinburgh is fantastic news for Scottish businesses. It will help them make the very most of the global trade opportunities once the EU transition period ends.

I urge Scottish businesses to work with the Trade Hub to expand their export business, especially Scotland's famous food and drink sector. This is a real boost for Scottish produce. Recovering our economy from coronavirus is a national effort. We are working as one United Kingdom to support businesses in Scotland.

The Trade Hub will be based in Queen Elizabeth House, the UK government's new flagship building in Edinburgh. It is a clear demonstration of our commitment to strengthening the Union and delivering for people in Scotland.

In another first, UKEF has appointed a specialist to focus on renewable exports and to support energy transition in Scotland, further demonstrating the continued commitment to supporting energy companies across Scotland and helping them succeed abroad.

Having previously worked to strengthen the outreach of UKEF's regional network of Export Finance Managers, Alistair McMillan takes up this new role. He will support companies that wish to export renewables as well as those wishing transition from other forms of energy, using his 25 years of experience in the international finance and trade arenas.

The announcement follows the allocation of £2 billion of direct lending to green projects in the latest budget. This additional finance will support clean growth projects as global economies shift away from fossil fuels to renewable and low carbon solutions.

Gordon Welsh, Head of UKEF's Business Group said:

I am pleased to make this announcement which demonstrates UKEF's continuing commitment to energy transition and clean growth. We look forward to supporting energy companies across Scotland and helping them succeed abroad.

In Queen Elizabeth House, DIT will be joining the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland, Office of the Advocate General, HMRC, HM Treasury, Cabinet Office, the Office for Statistics Regulation, the Information Commissioner's Office, and the Government Actuary's Department. Additional UK government departments are expected to confirm occupancy in the coming months.

The UK government building will be fully occupied as soon as it is safe to do

in a Covid-secure way.

Work is also underway to set up a flagship UK government building in Glasgow. The Edinburgh and Glasgow buildings are part of the UK government's commitment to delivering excellent public services for people in Scotland, building a strong civil service outside London and leading the way in local regeneration.