



BRITISH EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION

28th November 2017

Department for International Trade

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-our-future-uk-trade-policy>

Preparing for our future UK trade policy

Overview of BExA

The British Exporters Association (BExA) is an independent national trade association representing the interests of the UK's exporters. Our membership is drawn from across the exporting community, including capital goods manufacturers and international traders (large corporates, MSBs, SMEs and Micro exporters), and their bank, credit insurance and other service providers. BExA seeks to promote the interests of its members and all UK exporters, with a particular focus on trade finance and export credit insurance.

Response

BExA has lobbied for a comprehensive UK Trade Policy for a number of years and welcomes this first step towards producing this. Whilst the paper sets out the desires of the Department for International Trade ("DIT") for the UK's trade policy, and to which BExA broadly agrees, it does not go far enough.

The exit from the EU provides the UK with a once in a lifetime opportunity to rebase the UK's position in global trade. This needs to include a whole Government approach to the UK's trade agenda - DIT cannot do this alone and needs coordination with HM Treasury ("HMT"), Foreign and Commonwealth Office ("FCO"), Business Energy and Industrial Strategy ("BEIS") and the Department for International Development ("DfID") at a minimum to ensure that the needs of UK businesses overseas come first.

DfID needs to start working to the benefit of both the developing nation and the UK when providing aid. It is anathema to UK business that it should be so difficult for them to access DfID projects overseas. This needs to change and the needs of UK businesses ranked equal to the development needs of the target countries.

BExA understands that the Secretary of State views the setting of Trade Policy and the provision of support to businesses as separate areas – this is simply not the case. The two must go hand in hand to ensure that the trade policy provides the framework in which UK businesses can obtain the support they need to export. BExA again recommends that DIT use a similar approach to the Dutch model "A World to Gain"¹, which demonstrates a framework that links trade, aid and investment in one coordinated policy.

The UK has a huge number of businesses that are capable of exporting but choose not to. It is down to the DIT to ensure that appropriate tools and support are available to ensure that these potential exporters are able to access overseas markets, meet clients and secure business without undue financial hardship. Support our businesses in entering new markets and our exports will grow, setting a trade policy that does not cover exporter support will extend the current export hiatus.

¹ <https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/letters/2013/04/05/global-dividends-a-new-agenda-for-aid-trade-and-investment/a-world-to-gain-en.pdf>