

A Nation with Ambition: a high tech, low carbon, inclusive economy

Discussion Paper – A digital approach to international trade

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Focus

We want to ensure Scotland's future as an innovative, outward facing trading nation. Business models are changing fast and new ways of trading are emerging. To remain competitive, businesses must seek fresh and ever more efficient and profitable ways of selling products and services overseas and new channels to export markets and customers. This workshop will explore how businesses can use digital means to identify and exploit trading opportunities and enter international markets. It will also seek to identify what support businesses need to adopt a digital approach to their growth plans.

Objective

The objective of the session is to allow participants to share their own experiences of using a digital approach to access international markets and how those experiences have shaped their business models. The discussion will explore what support might be offered to businesses seeking to further develop their use of digital channels to support trade growth and to those that are just beginning to factor this into their operating plans.

Background

The Scottish Government's approach to boosting Scotland's export performance is set out in its Trade & Investment Strategy: Global Scotland. One of the underpinning objectives of the Strategy is to help more companies to export more goods and services to more international markets. A digital approach to trade can help business to access new customers and new suppliers in markets across the world. Technology and an increasingly digitally connected customer base is driving demand for new products and services. Business that are able to adopt a digital approach to their operating model will be better placed to exploit these global opportunities.

Possible Discussion Questions

What has your business's experience been of using digital channels to identify and exploit new trading opportunities?

What lessons did you learn from the approach your business took and how has this shaped your future business model?

What are the key considerations for a business looking to develop this element of their operations?

What are the main barriers inhibiting businesses from a digital approach to international trade?

What practical support might help your business to overcome those barriers?