

RIA reacts to new government export action plan

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The Government has announced a new strategy to boost exports to £1 trillion.

In response, the Railway Industry Association (RIA) was positive — especially when it came to supporting businesses visiting trade shows overseas — but said more detail is needed.

The UK Government's new programme has twelve key points, including:

- Launching the ‘Made in the UK, Sold to the World’ campaign, which champions the UK’s priority sectors through an “innovative”, localised marketing campaign promoting British goods and services.
- The Export Support Service, which is designed to be a single point of contact for exporters to Europe. Since launching in October, the UK Government says the new export hotline and online service has helped hundreds of businesses to get exporting (4).
- A UK Export Academy expansion, which will offer SMEs in all parts of the UK, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the opportunity to learn how to navigate the technicalities of exporting and how to seek out new opportunities in overseas markets.
- A new UK Tradeshow Programme that will be “bigger and better targeted” to give UK companies, especially SMEs, a leg-up to exhibit their first-class products at the world’s biggest tradeshows.
- UK Export Finance expanding its offer with new products and a wider delivery network that will make it easier for UK exporters to secure business from overseas buyers.
- Export Champions – a way to ensure businesses can build and learn from exporting successes through business-to-business networking and peer-to-peer learning
- The Internationalisation Fund. Open to SMEs in England, it will aim to grow international sales, and has facilitated £4 million of support to SMEs attending Trade Fairs.

RIA said it appreciated the new initiative, highlighting its tradeshow programme. However, it said it needed to fully understand how the initiative would work.

Neil Walker, exports director at the Railway Industry Association (RIA), said: “Whilst it is positive to see the Government’s Exports Strategy today, particularly the announcement of a new Tradeshow Programme to encourage SMEs into exporting, we do need to see how the programme will operate.

“The rail industry has previously benefitted significantly from Tradeshow Access Programme grants for SMEs to attend overseas shows, which has helped businesses attend exhibitions like InnoTrans and Middle East Rail. These small, but pivotal grants can introduce smaller companies to the world of exports, helping them to develop a presence in key markets around the world, thereby helping to boost the UK’s trade portfolio. It is important that the new programme is as effective as the one it replaces.

“We will continue to work with the Department for International Trade to help UK rail suppliers sell their innovative and world-leading products and services, promoting clean growth across the globe.”