

Winning business overseas

Meeting the Global Challenge

DOUGLAS BARNES, Head of the Environmental Industries Sector Unit (EISU) reveals a few of the ways in which the Government is helping the industry to 'win business overseas'.

As part of the UK Trade & Investment (UKTI), EISU has a lead role in supporting the UK environmental industry. Global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation are accelerating the trend towards greener technologies and ways of doing business. The world market for environmental goods and services, estimated to be worth US\$548bn in 2004, is currently about £400bn and is forecast to grow by over 30 per cent to £688bn by 2010, and US\$800bn by 2015. The UK is well placed, and determined, to capitalise on the opportunities these figures represent. Environmental companies taking their first steps into the world's export markets may feel like vulnerable pioneers. The reality is very different, quite often the ground has already been well prepared by the UKTI.

A Unique Opportunity

UKTI is the government organisation that supports companies in the UK doing business internationally and overseas enterprises seeking to set up or expand in the UK. It brings together the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). With commercial teams based in offices around the world, and a network of specialists throughout the UK, we are uniquely positioned to help your business across national boundaries.

EISU is one of 13 sector units within the Sector Group (SG) of UKTI. EISU's role is to provide support to the UK environmental sector to help companies win business overseas. EISU has four key objectives:

- To help UK environmental goods and services (EGS) companies win business overseas;
- To identify and assess major business opportunities (including potential risks and rewards) overseas;
- To identify and develop specific business opportunities for EGS SMEs arising from major projects and international government initiatives, and to disseminate this analysis;
- To actively promote UK strengths and capabilities in environmental technology and solutions, along with HM Government's experience of applying effective policy and regulations, to influence and generate a favourable atmosphere overseas for UK firms pursuing new business opportunities.

EISU works in partnership with key industry stakeholders and multipliers, including the UK Forum for

the Environmental Industries, trade associations, professional institutions, the Environmental Sector Advisory Group, Department of Trade and Industry, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Environment Agency, in addition to the UKTI's overseas and UK regional network, together with its sector and business groups.

An example of such work is the recent launch of the UK environmental sector's competitive advantage statement: UK: a world leader in environmental solutions. The publication was launched by the Rt Hon Ian McCartney MP, Minister of State for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs saying: "Environmental issues are rising up the political and commercial agenda around the world. In the UK, perhaps more than in any other country, the political drive for environmental improvements has been matched from the outset by a determination to capitalise on the huge global business opportunities they represent. Today the UK is a world leader in the environmental industries field. As this guide from the Environmental Sector Advisory Group (ESAG) comprehensively demonstrates, the sector is set apart by the depth and breadth of its offer."

Colin Drummond, Chair of ESAG added "UK competitive advantage has been the focus of ESAG's work over the past 18 months. It is clear from this work, that the UK is a world leader in environmental improvement and is excellently placed to exploit the burgeoning worldwide opportunities in environmental goods and services. This publication summarises the ten main advantages that differentiate the UK from our competitors in the international EGS sector and provides case studies to showcase each."

Information Specialists

The Unit also provide a wide range of information and activities to support UK environmental SMEs overseas, including: production and dissemination of market research – Market Opportunity Briefs (MOBS) – analysis of opportunities, including the political, regulatory and economic environment; supporting inward missions to the UK where 'meet the buyer' events are organised at trade shows such as ET, CIWM and RWM to facilitate partnerships between UK suppliers and overseas buyers; promoting the industry's capabilities overseas through seminar missions; developing political and business networks (leading UK delegations into meetings with governments and

regulatory bodies) in the market; identifying finance and export credit sources, including aid funding (eg: EU and World Bank); supplying up-to-date information on UKTI portal and EISU website; publication of two quarterly magazines, one targeting an overseas audience, the other UK industry and other publications, including those online. For further information please visit

www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

ESAG has recently approved the EISU international strategy for 2007/08. The current target markets identified by the Advisory Group for the environmental sector are:

PRIORITY

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| Eastern Europe: | Turkey |
| Asia/Pacific: | China and India |
| Latin America: | Brazil and Mexico |
| Middle East/Africa | Saudi Arabia and S. Africa |

REGIONAL

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|------------------------|--|
| Southeast Asia: | Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines |
| Latin America: | Ecuador, Peru and Colombia |

OPPORTUNITY

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Central and Eastern Europe: | Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania and Latvia Estonia |
| Asia/Pacific: | Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam |
| Middle East/Africa | UAE and Kenya/Ethiopia |

The Unit's support to the EGS sector is further enhanced by the work of the International Business Specialist (IBS - formerly Export Promoters). There are currently two IBSs, one covering Asia Pacific markets and the other Central and Eastern European markets. They work on a one-to-one basis with UK EGS companies in their endeavour to help the companies develop business overseas.