



House of Commons
Public Accounts Committee

Government support for UK exporters

Twenty-First Report of Session
2019–21

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 19 October 2020*

The Committee of Public Accounts

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Summary

It is now 4 years since the Department for International Trade (the Department) was formed. It has established the functions it needs to support exports and, in that time, has made many statements of future intent. However, it has not demonstrated measurable progress to tackle the big strategic challenges it faces in supporting economic recovery in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in advancing the UK's future trading relationships. A lack of robust performance measures means that it is not possible to hold the Department accountable for the effectiveness of its action to deliver Government's ambition to grow exports to 35% of GDP. The Department and UK Export Finance (UKEF, which is a separate ministerial department) must work more closely to respond to new export growth opportunities, such as by identifying and investing in new businesses in developing sectors, including renewable energy.

The Department and UKEF have also not yet developed sufficient understanding of the challenges that smaller businesses face in exporting, such as applying for finance, and are not delivering the support they need to help them grow. Out of an estimated 5.9 million UK businesses, the Department targets its bespoke support at just 230,000 potential exporters, and UKEF directly supported only 199 customers in 2019. The Government expects that the free trade agreements it is pursuing will boost UK exports and help smaller businesses. But there is evidence that small companies do not benefit from trade agreements as much as larger firms. The Department and UKEF need to improve what they offer to smaller businesses as a matter of urgency. One example is that smaller businesses would benefit from shorter turnaround times and simpler requirements when they apply for export finance. Yet businesses who are not customers of five of the largest commercial banks are not able to use the online portal that is available to others to speed up the process.

Introduction

In 2019, the UK exported £701.2 billion of goods and services to overseas countries. The UK is currently the sixth largest exporter in the world, behind China, the United States, Germany, Japan and France. The Department for International Trade (the Department), established in 2016, is responsible for delivering the UK's independent trade policy. It promotes exports by connecting UK businesses with overseas buyers and by working with foreign governments to resolve trade barriers. The Department works with UK Export Finance (UKEF), the UK's official export credit agency. UKEF, which is a separate ministerial government department, helps UK companies to win contracts by providing finance and insurance to exporters and their overseas buyers.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. **A lack of strategic alignment between the Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance means that opportunities for exports may have been missed.** The Department and UKEF have not yet signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets out clearly how the two separate departments will work together. An MoU between the two would ensure that the outcomes they are seeking are consistent and aligned, and that the two departments have clear expectations of what they do for each other. Clearer mutual objectives would support more effective collaboration between UKEF managers and the Department's International Trade Advisers, including on industry sector events, and a more integrated web presence. In addition, UKEF is concerned that Department for International Trade staff who are not experts may not understand export finance well enough to promote it, and may have missed opportunities to support UK exports in some markets. Of 503 staff in the Department who had enrolled for export finance training, only 149 had completed it by March 2020. The Department and UKEF both recognise the benefits of an MoU but their evidence to us was not clear or consistent on when they would develop and agree it.

Recommendation: *By the end of 2020, the Department and UKEF should agree how they will work effectively together to ensure consistency in strategic outcomes and objectives, and formally set these arrangements out in a signed Memorandum of Understanding, reporting publicly on progress, for example in their annual reports.*

2. **The Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance are not yet doing enough to identify and help the businesses of tomorrow to export.** The Department's level of insight into exporters in different sectors of the UK economy is variable. For example, the Department is still developing its understanding of which businesses are ready to export in emerging sectors, such as renewable energy and low carbon industries. Over the last year, the Department has developed its sector teams by recruiting sector leads to help it better understand emerging sectors. The Department also continues to offer peer support where firms get an opportunity to hear how it is done from an experienced exporter. Initiatives such as the Europe trade hub have been welcomed by businesses of all sizes. We remain concerned, however, that the Department focuses on identifying which overseas markets might provide contracts for the UK's existing exporters, rather than pursuing opportunities for future export growth by supporting new, innovative businesses. The Federation for Small Businesses (FSB) informed us that there needs to be a greater link between innovation funding and export finance. But, the Department is not confident that UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) fully understands what support companies need to become exporters, or whether its own staff consider whether innovation funding might be available to support a potential exporter.

Recommendation: *The Department and UKEF should develop a more integrated approach for working with other government departments, in particular with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and UK Research & Innovation, in order to build the UK's industrial capability and prioritise investment in sectors of growing importance and export opportunity, such as renewable energy. The*

Department should also consider other ways of supporting potential exporters and companies exporting for the first time, for example, by encouraging more peer support to companies or by considering the merits of rolling out initiatives such as the Europe trade hub to the rest of the world. The Department and UKEF should report back to us by September 2021 on the arrangements they have put in place.

3. **The Department for International Trade’s contribution to export performance is unclear because of a lack of robust metrics.** It is important for any public body to be clear about and accountable for what it is trying to achieve, and the criteria it will use to judge whether it is being successful, including performance information that allows Parliament and the taxpayer to understand how effective they are and what impact they are having. However, the government has not set a timescale for achieving its export growth ambition to increase from 30% to 35% of GDP, and the target is dependent on multiple factors such as economic conditions and contributions from other parties including independent efforts by UK industry. The Department measures its annual exports performance through its ‘export wins’ measure but this target does not encourage it to focus on longer-term export growth. The Department was unable to provide us with details of other measures that cover the broad scope of its role in supporting exports, such as removing market access barriers. The Department says that it aims to develop better measures for understanding the impact of FTAs and to help it target specific markets.

Recommendation: By the end of 2020, the Department should set out longer-term outcome measures that enable us, Parliament and the taxpayer to hold it to account for its impact on exports, and which capture the full range of its activities to support exports. Measures should include supporting exports, such as removing market access barriers, including better international comparators, the impact of free trade agreements and the number of exporters. DIT’s performance against all measures, existing and new, should be reported transparently.

4. **The Department for International Trade is not doing enough to address the challenges that small businesses face when they export.** Out of an estimated 5.9 million businesses in the UK, the Department focuses its bespoke support on around 230,000 which has been almost identical for many years, with a turnover of over £500,000 and directs businesses below this threshold to digital services on its website. Levels of satisfaction with the Department’s digital services are low (under half of the Department’s clients report that services to help them identify export opportunities are good at meeting their needs) and use of these services is declining (registrations have dropped from 816 per month in 2018, to 450 per month in 2019). Small businesses with fewer staff may not be able to afford the time required to use the Department’s website to identify the right opportunities. In addition, smaller exporters are concerned about the varying quality of the Department’s International Trade Advisors, opportunities for businesses to report trade barriers, and the financial support available for attending trade shows. The FSB has welcomed the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) chapter in the free trade agreement with Japan. The Department intends to include such chapters in all its trade agreements, but the FSB informs us that utilisation of FTAs by smaller

businesses is disproportionately low when compared to larger firms. There is scope for the Department to learn from other countries, such as Denmark, about how it could better target support at individual companies.

Recommendation: DIT should take urgent action to ensure that more small businesses become exporters. Specifically, it should:

- *Improve the support it offers to smaller businesses. It should improve the quality of the International Trade Adviser service and explore the merits of introducing accreditation, ensure that its digital services meet the needs of smaller businesses, ensure all SMEs are aware of how they can report trade barriers, and, if resources allow, increase the financial support available for SMEs attending trade shows. There should be a comprehensive SME chapter in every free trade deal negotiated.*
- *Conduct a comprehensive exercise to determine why some small businesses export and some do not. This should include targeted research to better understand what these businesses need and the barriers to exporting, and more comprehensive international comparisons to learn from other countries that support small businesses well, such as Denmark.*
- *Measure the effectiveness of its work to build export capacity in SMEs and set clearer milestones for measuring its progress in supporting SMEs. For example, it should set out how it will increase the number of UK businesses that currently export and aim to increase the proportion of companies who start exporting or increase exports as a result of going to trade fairs.*

5. **UK Export Finance directly supported only 199 customers in total in 2019–20, failing to meet its own target of 500.** UKEF attributes failing to meet its customer target to a lack of awareness among smaller businesses of what UKEF offers, a potential decline in demand, a lack of appetite from banks and issues with its application process. UKEF is introducing more flexible products which are expected to be more attractive to smaller businesses in a wider range of markets and help increase customer numbers. These include the General Export Facility which will support businesses' overall export working capital requirements, rather than linking this support to specific contracts. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic it has also expanded the scope of its Export Insurance Policy to a wider number of markets, with the aim of protecting UK exporters from the risk of non-payment, and it has taken steps to proactively engage with the renewable energy sector, supporting projects in Taiwan, Spain and Ghana. However, how effective UKEF is at meeting its customers' needs is unclear because, unlike the Department, it does not survey its customers to assess their satisfaction with its products and application processes.

Recommendation: UKEF should report back to us in writing by September 2021 with an update on progress and action it has taken to:

- *Proactively target the green technology and renewable energy market.*
- *Increase the number of SMEs it is supporting in a wider range of countries through take up of its new General Export Facility, and consider using UKEF recently approved marketing budget to do that.*

- *Support exporters during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to the expansion of the scope of its Export Insurance Policy to a wider number of markets.*
 - *Develop and implement a customer satisfaction survey. UKEF should consider the merits of developing its own survey as well as working with the Department to identify opportunities to include questions on export finance in the Department's survey. It should commit to sharing publicly more of the results.*
6. **It is more difficult for businesses who are not customers of five of the largest commercial banks to access export finance.** Smaller businesses would benefit from shorter turnaround times and simpler requirements when they apply for export finance. UKEF has introduced greater delegated authority to five of the largest commercial banks who can apply for some of UKEF's products using an online portal and obtain immediate cover. In 2019–20, 389 applications were made through this portal. However, we heard that businesses who are not customers of these five banks cannot access the portal. Instead, they need to use a manual process that takes much longer. UKEF said that it intends to expand the number of other banks that can apply for its products using an online portal 'shortly'. First, it wants to establish the system with the big five and create a single set of standard documentation.

Recommendation: *To make it simpler for smaller businesses to apply for export finance, UKEF should accelerate its expansion of the number of banks that can apply for UKEF's products using the quicker online process. In its Treasury Minute response, we expect UKEF to confirm by when it expects to achieve this.*

1 Promoting export growth

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Department for International Trade (the Department) and UK Export Finance about support for exports.¹
2. In 2019, the UK exported £701.2 billion of goods and services, 31.7% of GDP. The UK was the sixth-largest exporter in the world by export value in 2018; the world's tenth-largest exporter of goods by value; and the second-largest services exporter by value. The United States is the UK's largest export market outside the EU Single Market. However, government considers that the UK is not yet meeting its export potential and has ambitions to boost the role that exports play in the economy. Growing exports is also an important element of the government's industrial strategy.²
3. The Department for International Trade was established in 2016 to deliver the UK's independent trade policy following the UK's decision to leave the EU. It promotes exports by connecting UK businesses with overseas buyers and by working with foreign governments to resolve trade barriers. The Department has around 275 UK-based international trade advisers who provide information, advice and support to businesses across England, as well as an overseas network of more than 1,400 staff who promote UK business interests in overseas markets.³
4. The Department also works closely with UK Export Finance (UKEF) – the UK's official export credit agency. UKEF is a separate ministerial government department with a statutory mandate to support UK exports and investments. UKEF helps UK companies to win contracts by providing attractive financing terms to their overseas buyers, to fulfil contracts by supporting working capital loans and to get paid by insuring against buyer default.⁴

Lack of strategic alignment between the Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance

5. The Department and UKEF have not signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between them to support closer working.⁵ UKEF commented that an agreement covering the administrative management of UKEF's overseas employees was no longer needed. However, UKEF acknowledged that the two departments had yet to agree an MoU that would ensure that their objectives were consistent and that there was a mutual understanding of what the two departments would do for each other. For example, an MoU would: support more effective collaboration between UKEF managers and the Department's International Trade Advisers; help ensure that UKEF was present and able to promote its products at industry sector events run by the Department; and enable a more integrated web presence.⁶ UKEF told us that it hoped to agree the MoU in the next few weeks. The Department confirmed it was committed to agreeing the MoU but considered

1 C&AG's Report, *Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance: Support for exports*, Session 2019–21, HC 574, 15 July 2020

2 C&AG's Report, paras 1.2–1.3.

3 C&AG's Report, paras 4 and 5.

4 C&AG's Report, para 6.

5 C&AG's Report, paras 18 and 2.31.

6 Q 47

that it would be most useful once it has confirmed its priority sectors and markets as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Review. The Department suggested they could either agree a mini-MOU now, or wait until they have determined their strategic priorities.⁷

6. The Department has more than 1,400 staff overseas, but those who are not finance experts may not have the technical skills to promote export finance. UKEF said that although these staff did not necessarily need to be experts in export finance, they should be competent enough to identify opportunities and bring in UKEF expertise where it was needed. UKEF had created an online training module to help the Department's staff better understand its products.⁸ As at March 2020, 503 of the Department's staff had enrolled in the online training on export finance, but only 149 staff had completed the training.⁹ The Department told us that it wants to ensure all those who have enrolled complete the online training module.¹⁰

7. UKEF is concerned that where the Department's staff do not have the technical skills to promote export finance, UKEF may consequently have missed opportunities to use export finance to support UK exports in some markets. For example, UKEF had supported exports to 72 countries in 2018–19, but 80% of the value of these exports was concentrated in five of these countries.¹¹ UKEF informed us that it does not want export finance to be overlooked and, over the least two years, it has recruited 12 export finance executives to support the Department's teams in overseas regions. These 'country heads' help the Department to respond to opportunities and have a closer, more regular interaction with exporters and buyers in their region. UKEF told us that it planned to place up to 20 country heads in embassies around the world.¹²

Helping the businesses of tomorrow to export

8. The Department's insight into exporters in different sectors of the UK economy is variable; stronger in well-established sectors, such as aerospace, but less developed and less well-understood for some emerging sectors such as renewable energy.¹³ The Department told us that it has aimed to substantially increase the skills of its sector teams over the last year, and has recruited a number of sector directors to help "get under the skin" of those sectors where the Department's knowledge was less well advanced, and where it was less able to support businesses. The Department highlighted that the transition to low carbon industries is a priority for the Department as it is for other government departments.¹⁴ The Department also noted that it expects the technology sector to play a large part in any future government strategy and that it is seeking to support more technology exports. For example, it referred to its recent success in a collaborative bid with the Department for Culture, Media & Sport to put a digital trade network into the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁵

7 Qq 48, 49

8 Q 42

9 C&AG's Report, paras 18, 2.30.

10 Q 44

11 C&AG's Report, paras 18, 2.29.

12 Qq 42, 43

13 C&AG's Report, paras 15.

14 Q 50

15 Qq 11, 67

9. We were concerned that the Department concentrates on identifying which overseas markets might provide contacts for the UK's existing exporters.¹⁶ These may be larger firms in more established markets that already generate high value exports. However longer-term export growth will come from focusing on some of the smaller innovative businesses which have potential to grow. The Department noted that large companies often employ a lot of people and create a lot of value but agreed that it should also focus on smaller firms, and encourage companies that are not currently exporting to do so.¹⁷ The Department recognises that one of the most significant things in encouraging businesses to export is peer support and hearing from others of how it is done.¹⁸ The Department also emphasised that it seeks to put resources into regions where it expects growth. For example, it has increased its staff in both Africa and Latin America, while more mature markets like North America have received less additional funding over the past few years.¹⁹ The Department established the Europe trade hub in April 2019 to provide extra support to businesses in recognition of the changing trading environment resulting from the UK leaving the EU. It was considered successful and welcomed by businesses of all sizes.²⁰

10. Although sector teams within the Department for Business, Energy & Industry Strategy and the Department for International Trade work together, officials at both departments consider there is scope for a better joint understanding of how to exploit emerging opportunities in overseas markets.²¹ The Department noted that there is a high correlation between innovating, high productivity and exporting, and that it does work with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). However, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) considers that there needs to be better links between innovation funding and export finance.²² The Department acknowledged that not everybody in UKRI is fully aware of what support a company needs to export and that its own staff may not consider what innovation funding is available when working with businesses.²³

Lack of robust metrics

11. In 2018, the Government announced its export strategy and an ambition to raise exports as a proportion of GDP from 30% to 35%.²⁴ This committee has recently highlighted how important it is for any public body to be clear about and accountable for what it is trying to achieve, and the criteria it will use to judge whether it is being successful. Furthermore, we emphasised the need for performance information that helps public bodies understand how effective they are and what impact they are having, so they can judge progress and take corrective action when they are not on track.²⁵ However, the Government has not set a timescale for achieving its export growth ambition, and the 35%

16 Q 54

17 Q 24

18 Q 70

19 Q 67

20 Qq 40, 41

21 C&AG's Report, para 2.14.

22 Federation of Small Businesses written evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into Government support for UK exporters, 11 September 2020, para 11

23 Q 69

24 C&AG's Report, para 13

25 Committee of Public Accounts, 107th Report, 2017–19, *Consumer Protection*, 12 July 2019, HC 1752

target is dependent on contributions from other parties including independent efforts by UK industry.²⁶ In our view, the measure is not satisfactory because it can also be affected by fluctuations in GDP.²⁷

12. The Department informed us that it has a “raft of other measures” that it could be measured against, including international comparators. It highlighted its ‘export wins’ measure, which is the value of exports that it thinks it has directly contributed to, as determined and agreed by the companies that it has helped.²⁸ However, the Department’s annual export wins target has limitations because it focuses efforts on short-term export support rather than on longer-term activities that are needed to grow exports. Activities that require a longer timeframe (for example, building capacity in domestic supply chains and understanding the impacts of addressing market barriers) are not currently captured in the Department’s metrics.²⁹ The Department said that there may not be a single measure that provides a link between its own contributions, export performance and UK prosperity. It plans to develop new performance metrics that will help it to understand the impact of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), and to segment and target support better to individual companies.³⁰

13. The Department told us that it has recently introduced a value for money model to assess the impact of its different interventions, but it is still relatively new. It recognised that there is work to do to improve its overall evidence base, particularly how exports change over time, and to make sure that it understands the long-term impacts of its interventions.³¹

26 C&AG’s Report, paras 13, 1.16

27 Q 21

28 Q 21

29 C&AG’s Report, paras 22, 3.13

30 Qq 18, 22

31 Q 30

2 Supporting smaller businesses to export

The challenges that small businesses face when they export

14. The Department intends to focus its bespoke support on around 230,000 businesses that have greatest potential to generate high-value exports, specifically those with a viable service or product to export and a turnover above £500,000. We were concerned that this is a small fraction of a total of 5.9 million businesses in the UK.³²

15. The Department will provide support to all other potential exporters mainly through its website services.³³ However, the National Audit Office reported that businesses have low satisfaction with the Department's digital services (under half of the Department's clients reported that services to help them identify export opportunities were good at meeting their needs). In addition, use of these services is declining (registrations have dropped from 816 per month in 2018, to 450 per month in 2019, although the Department noted that businesses can use its services without registering).³⁴ Small businesses with fewer staff may not be able to afford the time they need to use the Department's website to identify the right opportunities, and that smaller exporters often receive little follow-up once they have registered with the website.³⁵

16. The FSB also reported that the Department's International Trade Advisors can vary in quality, that small businesses do not know about the Department's 'Report a trade barrier' scheme and are not using it, and that very small firms do not have the opportunity to apply for a Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) grant.³⁶ Pact (which represents the independent television, film and digital media production sector including many small businesses) told us that, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many trade shows will take place virtually for the foreseeable future. However, TAP grants are not available for virtual trade shows and many businesses may not be able to attend without financial support.³⁷ In written evidence, the Department informed us that it currently assesses the performance of TAP through its client survey but that it intends to develop ways of measuring the long-term effectiveness and impact of the programme.³⁸ There is scope for the Department to learn from other countries, such as Denmark, about how it could better target support at individual companies.³⁹ The department should look at how many businesses export once but not again, and the reasoning why.

17. The FSB informed us that the utilisation of Free Trade Agreements by smaller businesses is disproportionately low when compared to larger firms. It has welcomed the inclusion of a small business chapter in the published objectives for each of the FTA

32 Q 70

33 C&AG's Report, paras 12, 1.13.

34 Q 34; C&AG's Report, para 2.20

35 Q 35

36 Federation of Small Businesses written evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into Government support for UK exporters, 11 September 2020, para 6; and Qs 35–39.

37 Pact written evidence to the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into Government support for UK exporters, September 2020, para 2.1.

38 Department for International Trade written evidence dated 25 September 2020

39 Q 18

negotiations with the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, respectively.⁴⁰ The Department confirmed that it aims to have a chapter that is supportive of small businesses in all trade agreements.⁴¹

Failure to meet customer targets

18. In 2019–20 UKEF directly supported 199 customers, falling short of its target to support 500. A further 140 customers benefited as suppliers to UKEF-supported projects. UKEF attributes lower than expected growth in the number of customers it supports to a lack of awareness among small businesses of what UKEF offers; a lack of appetite from banks to support smaller exporters; declining demand from exporters; and issues with the application process for UKEF products.⁴² Pact has informed us that UKEF products and services are not used by the creative businesses it represents because they are not tailored to their needs.⁴³

19. UKEF said that its biggest problem is raising awareness with businesses and among the relationship managers of the banks it works with to provide export finance. UKEF encourages banks to lend by offering to guarantee up to 80% of their risk exposure, so if a bank is prepared to lend £100,000 to a company, then with the UKEF guarantee it could lend up to £500,000 to the company.⁴⁴ UKEF has a marketing budget and has developed an awareness-raising campaign called Exporters' Edge. UKEF informed us that, since the start of the campaign, awareness among small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) has risen from 20% to 31%.⁴⁵ We asked whether UKEF undertakes a customer survey. UKEF informed us that, because it has so few customers, it does not survey them directly and instead it regularly talks to trade associations.⁴⁶

20. UKEF said that from next month (October 2020), it will introduce a general working capital facility, which will be more usable for smaller exporters. It will enable them to go to their bank and get UKEF support for their total export working capital requirements rather than linking this support to a specific export contract. UKEF hopes that this more flexible product will be a real driver of the number of small businesses that benefit from its support.⁴⁷

21. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic it has also expanded the scope of its Export Insurance Policy to a wider number of markets, with the aim of protecting UK exporters from the risk of non-payment should UK exporters' customers become insolvent or their government actions make fulfilling the contract impossible.⁴⁸ It also told us that it is being proactive in engaging with the renewable energy sector and has recently financed projects in Taiwan, Ghana and Spain. However, UKEF told us that its work is largely reactive and sector-agnostic, responding to demand in the market. Consequently, the lack

40 Federation of Small Businesses, 11 September 2020, paras 17, 18

41 Q 17

42 C&AG's Report, paras 21, 3.9,

43 Pact, written evidence, September 2020, overview

44 Q 73

45 Q 75

46 Q 59

47 Qq 58, 72

48 Q 72

of a domestic supply chain in the UK in these sectors was identified as a constraint.⁴⁹ The Environmental Audit Committee also noted that UKEF has been criticised for the ‘proportion of its support for the energy sector which goes to fossil fuel projects’.⁵⁰

Accessing export finance outside of the five largest banks

22. The National Audit Office reported that UKEF application processes can be slow and smaller businesses would benefit from simpler requirements.⁵¹ The FSB told us that it also wanted to encourage UKEF to simplify and shorten the application process for any future export finance product.⁵²

23. To speed up application processes, UKEF delegated greater authority to five of the largest commercial banks who can apply for some of UKEF’s products through an online portal and can get immediate cover, and UKEF streamlined its eligibility criteria for applicants. In 2019–20, 389 applications were made through the portal, of which 62% were eligible for immediate cover using the online process. The digital process is quicker, but when applications do not meet the eligibility criteria UKEF reverts to a manual process, which takes on average 49 days.⁵³

24. As it currently stands, UKEF confirmed to us that businesses who use banks other than the five with UKEF delegated authority, cannot benefit from this streamlined process. UKEF told us that it planned to expand the number of other banks that can apply for its products using an online portal ‘shortly’. First, they wish to establish the system with the existing five banks and create a single set of standard documentation.⁵⁴

49 Q 68

50 Environmental Audit Committee, Nineteenth Report of Session 2017–19, *UK Export Finance*, para 6.

51 C&AG’s report, para 2.41

52 Federation of Small Businesses, 11 September 2020, para 10.

53 C&AG’s Report, paras 20, 2.41.

54 Qq 78, 79

Formal minutes

Monday 19 October 2020

Virtual meeting

Members present:

Meg Hillier, in the Chair

Gareth Bacon	Mr Richard Holden
Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown	Craig Mackinlay
Dame Cheryl Gillan	Nick Smith
Peter Grant	James Wild

Draft Report (*Government support for exporters*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 24 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Twenty first of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Thursday 22 October at 9:15am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 14 September 2020

Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary, Department for International Trade; **Louis Taylor**, Chief Executive, UK Export Finance; **Darren Tierney**, Director General, GTI Policy, Programmes, and UK Regions, Department for International Trade; **Catherine Vaughan**, Director General, Chief Operating Officer, Department for International Trade

[Q1–81](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

GSE numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Federation of Small Businesses (Mr Filippo Pollara, Senior Public Affairs Advisor) ([GSE0002](#))
- 2 Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT) ([GSE0001](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2019–21

First Report	Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities	HC 85
Second Report	Defence Nuclear Infrastructure	HC 86
Third Report	High Speed 2: Spring 2020 Update	HC 84
Fourth Report	EU Exit: Get ready for Brexit Campaign	HC 131
Fifth Report	University Technical Colleges	HC 87
Sixth Report	Excess votes 2018–19	HC 243
Seventh Report	Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people	HC 134
Eighth Report	NHS expenditure and financial management	HC 344
Ninth Report	Water supply and demand	HC 378
Tenth Report	Defence Capability and the Equipment Plan	HC 247
Eleventh Report	Local authority investment in commercial property	HC 312
Twelfth Report	Management of tax reliefs	HC 379
Thirteenth Report	Whole of Government Response to Covid-19	HC 404
Fourteenth Report	Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak	HC 405
Fifteenth Report	Improving the prison estate	HC 244
Sixteenth Report	Progress in remediating dangerous cladding	HC 506
Seventeenth Report	Immigration enforcement	HC 407
Eighteenth Report	NHS nursing workforce	HC 408
Nineteenth Report	Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster	HC 549

