



For Immediate Release

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Yell Group takes strategic step with UKTI partnership to drive SME exports

Prime Minister supports "Open to Export" tie-up as part of Government export push

Yell and UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) today announce an exciting partnership to provide vital support and guidance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) looking to expand internationally. The aim of the partnership – called 'Open to Export' – is to provide a dedicated platform that enables UK-based companies to collaborate and share intelligence about export market opportunities, means of entry and participation.

Speaking at the UKTI event "SMEs Exporting and Growth" in central London today, Prime Minister David Cameron said:

"UKTI is working with Yell to develop an online service called Open to Export which will provide SMEs with access to more information, advice and support from intermediary organisations like many of you here today."

Lord Green, Minister of State for Trade and Investment, welcomed the partnership:

"Local businesses are the lifeblood of our economy and their success is key to getting the UK economy moving. By helping SMEs grow exports, we will see a significant boost to UK economic growth."

"This innovative partnership between Yell and UKTI – Open to Export – will provide an invaluable online marketplace where SMEs will be able to overcome the complexities of trading overseas through relevant advice and support."

The initial pilot will be built on Yell's local eMarketplace platform to act as a hub where content and services are shared and SMEs can transact with service providers who are specialists in supporting exports.

Mike Pocock, Chief Executive Officer of Yell Group, said: "This partnership is an important element of Yell's strategy to become a leader in the emerging eMarketplace connecting SMEs and consumers locally. The 'Open to Export' platform is a model which Yell Group can extend across its geographies to help governments drive export growth for SMEs."

Bob Wigley, Chairman of Yell and one of the Prime Minister's Business Ambassadors, said: "I have committed to devote my time as one of the Prime Minister's Ambassadors for UK Business to championing the interests of our SME customers. Yell delivering Open to Export forms part of that commitment."

About Open to Export

Open to Export is a partnership between Yell and UKTI aimed at helping local businesses trade overseas. The initiative comprises a new online portal – currently under development – where local businesses, existing exporters and export industry suppliers can find and transact with each other much more easily and effectively. Yell was selected as a partner by UKTI following an open competition.

Open to Export will give SMEs access to service providers and trade bodies they need to connect to. This will mean that local businesses get the right support they need when considering or wanting to export.

The portal will offer forums where SMEs can ask questions, get advice and share information. To support this drive, the portal will also feature detailed content such as a 'Beginner's Guide to Export', guides on exporting to specific countries and the option for users to rate and review what they read. Trade bodies, industry experts and service providers will also be able to post informative articles or blogs. Service providers ranging from legal firms to freight companies or non UK-based specialists such as accountants, will be able to promote their products and services and SMEs will be able to transact with them.

Ends

Notes to Editors

Open to Export is part of Yell Group's strategy to become the leading provider of digital services to SMEs and the consumers they serve, enabling them to connect and transact in what it has defined as the emerging local eMarketplace. This is intended to be the destination of choice for local entrepreneurs and business owners who want to gain easy access to a complete portfolio of digital services, including social, e-commerce and mobile web capabilities.

Open to Export will be the export element of this approach, which in the UK is built on Yell's long-established relationship with the SME community – currently Yell has access to more than 2.2 million UK SMEs and more than 331,000 SME customers.

Recent research in the UK by Yell indicates that while a large proportion of businesses that are not exporting understand the opportunity exists, they appear to lack the confidence and desire to pursue it. In July this year¹, of just over 700 SMEs surveyed by Yell, 28% of those not exporting identified that exporting was not part of their business plan despite them believing that they had appropriate goods or services. A further 20% of those not exporting chose to be a local business only, further reinforcing the view that there are unexplored opportunities within those businesses.

In other research commissioned by Yell this year and undertaken by YouGov², SMEs identified competition with the global marketplace as one of the largest external barriers to growth, as well as difficulties with regulation and legislation.

¹ Yell Census , amongst SMEs known to Yell, Critical Research July 2011

² YouGov Barriers to Business Growth February 2011

About Yell

Yell Group is a leading provider of print and digital services within the emerging local eMarketplace for consumers and SMEs across its operations in the UK, US, Spain and some countries in Latin America.

Building on its strong presence in the local market through its current digital and print portfolio, Yell is developing a broad range of digital services tailored to the converging needs of SMEs and consumers.

These address both the SME need to grow, transact and be efficient in the digital world, and the consumers' need to connect locally to the goods and services they want, in a way which saves them time and money, and moves their lives forward.

In the year ended 31 March 2011, Yell Group has over 1 million SME advertisers.

About UK Trade & Investment

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) is the government department that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high quality investment to the UK's economy – acknowledged as Europe's best place from which to succeed in global business. UKTI offers expertise and contacts through its extensive network of specialists in the UK, and in British embassies and other diplomatic offices around the world. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage.

For more information on UKTI, visit www.ukti.gov.uk or telephone +44 (0)20 7215 8000. For latest press releases, visit the online newsroom at www.ukti.gov.uk/media. You can also keep in touch with developments at UKTI through www.blog.ukti.gov.uk, www.twitter.com/ukti and www.flickr.com/photos/tags/ukti

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