



# Home and Away



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David Smith,  
CEO of Scottish Development International

Any sustainable, successful modern economy requires a number of interdependencies: an incessant appetite to innovate; a skilled, empowered workforce; access to the opportunities global markets present and the support and infrastructure needed to turn ideas into profitable realities.

**T**his places Scotland in a very strong position, for these interdependencies have come to characterise our economy. Over centuries we canny Scots have become experts at exploiting the indigenous resources at our disposal, whether mineral or intellectual, and exporting these across the globe. Scottish influence in the industrial age is enviable and, arguably, unparalleled.

Our history of innovation can be traced back to the dawn of international trade, through to the building of the world's first great industrial empire and to the development and refining of global markets.

Today we continue this proud legacy. Over the past 30 years Scotland has emerged from its industrial heritage to become the archetypal knowledge-based economy. Life sciences, renewable energy, and digital technology sectors thrive, providing groundbreaking solutions and first-rate opportunities for today's, and tomorrow's, pioneers. On virtually a daily basis, companies in each of these sectors are testing, developing and delivering products and services that will quite literally transform the world in which we live.

From bio-engineering to nano-technology, wave and wind power to digital gaming, Scottish innovators continue to blaze a trail. And that's not where it ends. A strong financial service sector remains an integral part of the Scottish business landscape, while the sustainable exploitation of our breathtaking landscape and mouth-watering produce continue to serve a burgeoning tourist trade.

It is no mean feat to be able to deliver any of this to an increasingly discerning customer. And this is where the Scottish workforce excels. Schools, colleges and universities have adapted to meet the pragmatic demands of today's economy. Our modern, forward-thinking education system delivers the skills and attitude our people need. Vibrant, exciting towns and cities offer opportunity and a quality of life that not only encourages locals to stay, but also the talented from other climes to join us. So, Scotland has a lot to be encouraged by. Convincing the rest of the world of this is where Scottish Development International (SDI) plays a critical role. We have the tools and provide the support our business communities need to find and serve the customers they need, wherever they are.

Working in partnership with Business Gateway, SDI prepares companies to trade internationally, helps them develop appropriate strategies and mentors and markets them. This final, crucial interdependency is what we will explore in the following pages. It is pivotal to our ability to take full advantage of the fantastic opportunities the efforts of our business community is creating, and to Scotland's ongoing and increasing influence in the modern world.

[ From bio-engineering to nano-technology, wave and wind power to digital gaming, Scottish innovators continue to blaze a trail. ]

# International Support

**SMEs continue to make up the vast majority of Scotland's business community. Many thrive servicing local, domestic markets. But an increasing number are looking further afield to realise their full potential and fuel their ongoing development, thanks in no small way to the support and effort of SDI.**



**A** comprehensive range of services is available to businesses as they embark on, develop and consolidate their international aspirations. Taking the first steps beyond the domestic markets can be daunting. But it is made easier thanks to services like the International Preparedness Programme (IPP). IPP helps companies with a turnover of £400,000 or more develop their key skills in a range of international business activities. It is free, although there is a significant time commitment, and typically takes three to four months to complete.

## **IPP is split into two levels; Introductory and Advanced.**

An Introductory level targets companies who are relatively inexperienced in international trade. This level aims to establish more structured international trade activities through development of business practices and processes. It takes groups through a series of modules, covering both theory and practice in key areas of international business. These include identifying and researching potential markets, production, support and finance, finding and utilising routes to market and the development of an international action plan.

The Advanced level is aimed at companies with more experience of international trade and helps them to develop a deeper understanding of internationalisation opportunities. It takes groups through a series of in-depth modules covering a range of topics, including contracts, licensing, joint ventures and acquisitions. It culminates in the presentation of an international development plan.

Embarking on international trade is not to be taken lightly. Planning makes perfect. A carefully considered international strategy is essential. SDI offers a range of interactive, bespoke programmes designed to help companies develop a strategy for international growth or to review current strategies.

Ongoing support is offered by SDI through its mentoring service. Companies with limited international business experience often need someone with expertise to help them make the most of the opportunities that doing business internationally presents.

A comprehensive understanding of the markets you operate in is critical to businesses' ongoing international success. Overseas Market Support facilitates their



Life Sciences

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understanding of conditions in the markets. A range of reports and information is available to businesses.

Once businesses have the confidence, skills and understanding, they need to open doors.

SDI can introduce you to new partners, buyers, agents or distributors through a programme of exhibitions, outward missions and learning journeys.

Once businesses have a foothold, they may still be nervous about over committing. Expensive, long term commitments to premises may hinder their ambitions. But eligible businesses have access to on-site incubation, meeting rooms and support services provided by SDI throughout the USA. Elsewhere, they work with office giants Regus, providing discounted office space at nearly 1000 centres across the world.

So, whatever the business, wherever

they want to go, seeking out new international markets is not something that needs to be done alone. With the SDI's help, the only limit is ambition.

For Scotland, international business is a two-way street. As well as helping Scottish businesses to seek, find and service new markets, SDI also works hard to encourage foreign investment in our country.

Selling the benefits of doing business with, or being part of, Scotland's business community is a key part of our work.

The appeal of Scotland as an inward investment location is easy to identify. But with so many others competing for the same investment, it is crucial that we make the strongest possible case.

Whether attracting individuals with specialist skills, or persuading multinationals to set up or expand operations here, SDI invests considerable effort selling Scotland abroad.



For individuals, Talent Scotland sells Scotland as a place to relocate. It extols the virtues of our country, from the quality of life to the exciting career opportunities available in key sectors, including electronics, life sciences, energy and financial services.

It does so by encouraging others who have moved to Scotland to share their experiences. As well as offering practical advice, it introduces the lifestyle, geography, history and culture of our country.

A practical website presents a portal to potential employers, while a lifestyle magazine provides a soft sell to those considering the move.

The Talent Scotland strategy is a key part of ensuring that our economy can attract and keep the skills it needs to develop.

Leading global corporations have invested in Scotland after they recognised all we have to offer. Our world class education system and culture of innovation make Scotland the ideal destination for business, and research and development.

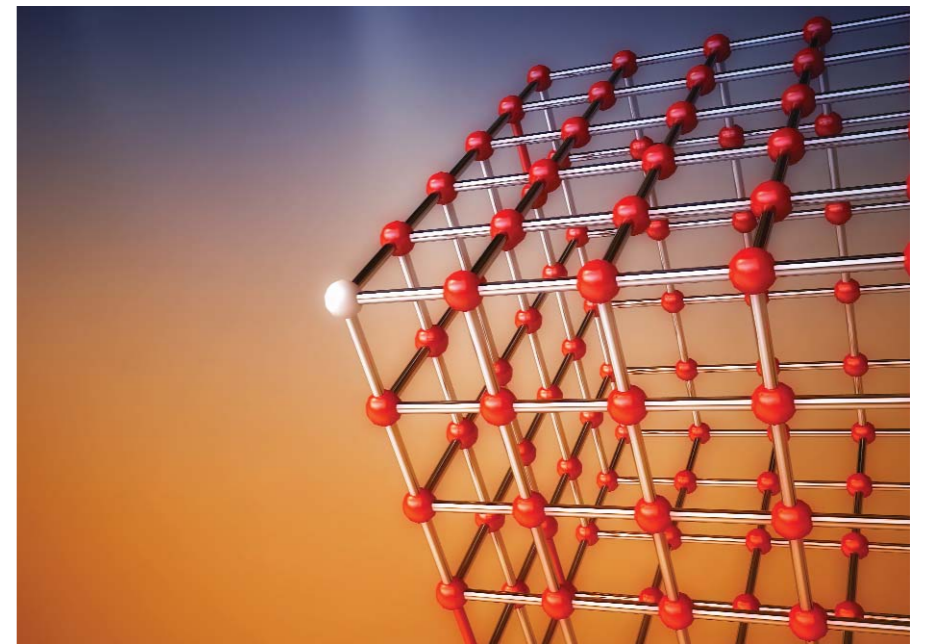
Encouraging our rich diaspora to champion and further the economic success of our country is another element of SDI's strategy.

GlobalScot harnesses the drive and talent of successful Scots around the world. These outstanding individuals advance Scotland's economic success by providing companies with free advice, access to contacts and other support.

For more information on how SDI is supporting the Scottish economy and can support your business, visit [www.sdi.co.uk](http://www.sdi.co.uk)



Highland Cows



Nano Technology

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