

SECTOR SUPPORT FUND FINAL REPORT

South East Export Development (SEED) Project

1. INTRODUCTION

Exporting helps businesses grow and innovate but export levels in the SELEP area have been relatively low. Accessing export opportunities can help firms build resilience and spread risk across different markets but with recent uncertainties caused by Covid-19 and the UK's EU withdrawal (as well as the Ukraine war, supply chain issues etc.) additional help for firms was needed. The approach to exporting has also changed; during the pandemic traditional activities such as trade missions and trade shows were not able to take place, but the pandemic accelerated companies' use of digital technologies which provides new export opportunities.

SEED addressed known export barriers through an innovative support programme aimed at SELEP-based companies in 3 priority sectors:

1. Health & Life Sciences (including medical devices / technology, (e-)health, pharma, diagnostics)
2. Food & Drink (including manufacturers, processing, suppliers to the industry e.g. packaging).
3. Digital & Creative (including software solutions, apps, web services)

Project activities included:

- Business Engagement / Recruitment
- Export Readiness Support (training webinars, market insight reports, 121 advice where required)
- Virtual Trade Missions

International target markets were selected based on input from the Department for International Trade and the availability and willingness of suitable 'in-market' partners to work with. SEED focused on:

- Ireland, UAE, Malaysia, Canada (Health / Life Sciences)
- Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, Philippines, Vietnam (Food & Drink)
- Canada (Digital & Creative)

<https://www.kentinternationalbusiness.co.uk/seed>

The purpose of the report is to:

- Summarise the delivery progress against anticipated activities, including key barriers and enablers, following project completion in October 2022
- Provide a final assessment of the delivery of project outputs, outcomes, benefits and progress against agreed targets over the duration of the project (SSF projects to support one-off, discrete pieces of work of a pan LEP nature)
- Assess the implications of COVID-19 on the achievement of project outcomes to date and looking forward (where appropriate)
- Consider the anticipated outcomes/impact which may be delivered in the future

About the SEED Project

The South East Export Development (SEED) Project was part-financed by SELEP's Sector Support Fund and supported businesses from East Sussex, Kent & Medway, Essex and South Essex between March 2021 and October 2022. SEED's sector focus was on Food & Drink, Health & Life Sciences, and Digital & Creative. The SEED project helped businesses to get into overseas markets through an innovative virtual support programme culminating in a series of **Virtual Trade Mission programmes**. Participation for eligible businesses was free and the project partnership tested the virtual approach due to the pandemic.

The objective of the project was to help SELEP-based companies to access business opportunities in overseas markets virtually at a time when physical travel was restricted due to the pandemic.

The delivery partners supporting the various virtual programmes of activity:

- Kent County Council
- Essex County Council
- Medway Council
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Sussex Chamber of Commerce
- Support from DIT (in England & Overseas posts) and the International Chamber Network

What were the Activities?

The project delivered several market-specific virtual support programmes of activity to help eligible SELEP-based businesses to get into overseas markets.

The approach refined by the partnership for delivering Virtual Trade Mission programmes was as follows.

1. Company recruitment activities to invite potential participants
2. Market Insight Reports commissioned, produced and shared with companies - *Annex 1*
3. Online Market Briefing Sessions (group export training webinars) – *Annex 2*
4. Brochures compiled featuring participating companies (supported by sector-focused promotional videos) – *Annex 3*
5. 1-2-1 online consultations with both local and in-market experts
6. (Shipping product samples - food & drink sector only) – *Annex 4*
7. Virtual meetings with identified business contacts
8. Evaluation forms to capture benefits of Virtual Trade Mission programmes

The partnership organised the following market-specific Virtual Trade Mission programmes which took place between Autumn 2021 and Autumn 2022:



SEED Food & Drink Sector:

- Hofex Trade Show – Hong Kong (September 2022)
- United Arab Emirates (March – April 2022)
- Philippines (15 Sept – 19 Oct 2022)
- Vietnam (17 March – 24 Oct 2022)

SEED Health & Life Sciences:

- Ireland (December 2021 – August 2022)
- United Arab Emirates (July – October 2022)
- Malaysia (September – October 2022)
- Canada (June – October 2022)

SEED Digital & Creative:

- Canada (June – October 2022)

Updates per market per sector

1. Vietnam – Food & Drink

The British Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam was commissioned to support the delivery of this Virtual Trade Mission. 11 Food & Drink companies originally expressed an interest in participating in the programme. However, due to staff changes etc. at the chamber, the programme was delayed and, in the end, just 5 eligible businesses were able to participate in the mission (Karimix, Jim Jams Spreads, Retrocorn, Arrowtown and Barn Farm Drinks). In October 2022, these participants were introduced to the Masan Group, one of the largest enterprises within the food and drink sector in Vietnam. The lead partner (KCC) sent information about the SEED companies (products, target market etc.) to the Masan Group who will now decide which of the companies they wish to work with. However, due to national holidays, attendance at other events etc. the Masan Group have not yet been able to review all of the company information provided to them. Additionally, the Essex-based company Jim Jams Spreads will shortly receive an additional meeting with the interested Vietnamese contact Bao Quang Producing & Trading. KCC will continue to follow up with the Vietnamese contacts on behalf of the 5 SEED food & drink companies.

2. Ireland – Health & Life Sciences

The Department for International Trade in Dublin was commissioned to support the delivery of this Virtual Trade Mission. 4 Health & Life Sciences companies participated in the programme (IVDeology, Cubic Pharmaceuticals, Allot Ltd, Context Health). However, there were some challenges. DIT followed up with their in-market business contacts multiple times but were unfortunately unsuccessful in securing meetings for the SEED companies. A few of the contacts did respond that they would like to connect again if opportunities arise in the future, others responded to say they already carried a similar range of products. DIT provided KCC with a final outcomes report and DIT will be available to the contacts for further support should they require further assistance in future (for example, IVDeology who is looking to possibly open an office in the Irish market next year and now has the detailed market insight and DIT contact).

3. Philippines – Food & Drink

The British Chamber of Commerce Philippines supported the delivery of this particular programme. 9 Food & Drink businesses participated:

- **Essex:** Barn Farm Drinks, Boostball, G&I Spirit Group, Retrocorn
- **Kent:** Karimix, Maidstone Distillery, Must Chup, Old Dairy Brewery, Sugarbranding



35 online meetings and e-mail introductions delivered in total, 1-5 per company. A final meeting report was also provided by the chamber.

4. Malaysia – Health & Life Sciences

The British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce supported the delivery of this particular programme. 6 Health & Life Sciences companies participated:

- **Essex:** Allot
- **Kent:** eXroid Technology, The Medical Warehouse
- **Medway:** IVDeology
- **East Sussex:** Felcon, HyperHealthy

17 online meetings delivered in total, 1-4 per company.

5. United Arab Emirates – Health & Life Sciences

The British Centres for Business in the UAE supported the delivery of this Virtual Trade Mission. 7 Health & Life Sciences companies participated:

- **Kent:** Bedfont Scientific, eXroid Technology, Tonus Tech
- **Medway:** Cubic Pharmaceuticals, IVDeology
- **East Sussex:** Felcon, HyperHealthy

Also 17 online meetings delivered in total, 1-4 per company.

6. United Arab Emirates – Food & Drink

The British Centres for Business in the UAE supported the delivery of this virtual programme. 10 Food & Drink businesses participated:

- **Kent:** A Little Bit Food Co., Karimix, Kent Crisps
- **Medway:** Cocoba Chocolate
- **Essex:** Barn Farm Drinks, Gerald McDonald & Co, Jim Jams Spreads, Davina Steel, PLAYin Choc, Retrocorn

34 online meetings delivered in total, 1-5 per company.

7. Hong Kong – Food & Drink

The Department for International Trade in Hong Kong supported the delivery of this programme. 5 Food & Drink businesses participated (Kent Crisps, Wonderchup, Karimix, Nim's, Miracle Teas). The company Kent Crisps is now actively doing business in this market.

8&9. Canada – Health & Life Sciences and Digital & Creative

The Toronto-based specialist company, Bandwidth, supported the delivery of these two programmes of activity. 3 Health & Life Sciences companies and 5 Digital & Creative businesses participated:

- **Kent:** New Planet Film, Weald Creative, Durty Media
- **Medway:** IVDeology
- **Essex:** SmartBrief
- **East Sussex:** Felcon, Switchplane, Design Specific



A total of 4 meetings were arranged. However, due to some challenges the others did not receive business meetings for various reasons. This was mainly because some of these participants were fairly new to export and required a lot of additional support from the Toronto-based in-market contact to be 'export ready'. Bandwidth have confirmed that they will continue to support New Planet Film, Weald Creative and Dirty Media over the next 2-3 months to provide assistance in securing further meetings with relevant Canadian business contacts.

Some of the companies were operating in very difficult or niche markets. For example, the software company SmartBrief targeting railway operators in Canada – this is a very difficult market to build relationships with key decision makers during the lifetime of this project without pre-existing connections. There are also a lot of competitors providing remote workplace software. Going forward, Bandwidth will introduce SmartBrief to DIT Canada to provide further assistance long-term.

The digital company New Planet Film attended meetings with Toronto City Airport regarding their video production services and will remain in touch with the airport contact with the possibility of working together in the future. Bandwidth also provided the participant with a list of individual training provider contacts in Canada to follow up with once New Planet Film's separate training platform product is finalised (Bandwidth will provide additional support at no cost to this company or SEED over the next 2-3 months).

Lastly, the company Weald Creative had a very successful meeting with major Canadian retail company, Roots. The company is in the process of awaiting feedback following their meeting.

Overall, the participants received valuable market insight and 121 support from Bandwidth. All of the businesses have received detailed feedback and recommendations/next steps from Bandwidth. Most of the companies also attended a complementary one to one consultation with a Canada-based branding expert as part of the virtual trade mission programme. Bandwidth will continue to keep KCC updated on further results over the coming months.

Methodology for the final evaluation

61 businesses across the SELEP-area Expressed an Interest in the project and 70% of these businesses were able to be actively engaged in SEED (121s, market briefings, virtual trade mission meetings). These participating businesses benefited from the virtual programmes of activity delivered – they gained new knowledge, were connected to new contacts and exposed to opportunities in international markets.

The project included additional consultation from various 'in-market' contacts such as the British Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia, as well as British Centres for Business in the UAE, DIT in Dublin and Hong Kong, and specialist company, Bandwidth, based in Canada. These contacts advised on suitable SEED companies to join the market-specific programmes and provided support throughout, including 1-2-1 consultations to gain an understanding of the companies' offering and expectations, in order to best match them with suitable in-market stakeholders, for example, distributors, buyers etc.

A link to the online end of project evaluation form was sent out via e-mail and collated from participating companies towards the end of the project. Due to the virtual nature of collecting feedback forms, as opposed to physically, it was difficult to receive further feedback from all participants by the end of the project. 32 evaluation forms were received from businesses, which form the basis for this report.

Businesses were asked to rate their project satisfaction for the virtual support activities available to them through SEED and to report the outcomes of participating for their business. The responses were then collated and analysed by the lead partner (Kent County Council).

2. OVERALL REFLECTIONS ON PROJECT DELIVERY

Progress against project delivery

(Please provide a summary of the outputs/outcomes/benefits* delivered by the project)

Project Outputs	Project Outcomes	Benefits as set out in the SSF Application Form	Actual Benefits Delivered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-6 Virtual or physical group export & trade mission training sessions (market briefing sessions) 5 x bespoke international market insight reports, 50 x 1-2-1 export readiness assessment) 	<p>13 of the 25 companies that attended the group training sessions specifically stated that they gained knowledge about a (new) target market through webinar training sessions. 6 sessions in total were delivered.</p> <p>22 Companies gained knowledge about a (new) target market through market insight reports. 7 reports were produced in total.</p> <p>47 companies benefited from new knowledge thanks to a 121-export readiness session with a local or in-market advisor</p>	<p>New skills and knowledge gained by participating SMEs. 150 SMEs with new knowledge and boosted internal export capacity, from which 100 will be selected for trade missions</p>	<p>69% of participants who responded to our evaluation question reported the reports and webinars as being effective to very effective for their business</p>
<p>4-6 Virtual Trade Missions (80 companies participating)</p> <p>+ export brochures and promotional videos.</p>	<p>36 companies participated in a VTM programme</p>	<p>International exposure for SMEs. At least 100 SMEs exposed to new contacts & opportunities international markets.</p>	<p>Exposure for 36 companies to in-market business contacts / leads to follow up with post-project.</p> <p>The number of participants was lower due to the challenges with company recruitment largely at the beginning of the project.</p> <p>Additionally, most of the in-market contacts (chambers, DIT, etc.) advised due to timing and their capacity to recruit no more than 5-10 companies per programme. Lastly, for the Vietnam programme we originally began with 11 Food & Drink participants but due to delays with the programme on the chambers side, just 5 of these companies were able to continue their participation in this particular programme once it was able to restart.</p> <p>We would therefore not have been able to reach the required target no. of companies participating.</p>



<p>121 meetings organised for SMEs as part of virtual trade missions</p>	<p>191 1-2-1 meetings organised for 36 SMEs</p>	<p>Sales leads generated for companies. At least 3 sales leads per company participating in the virtual trade missions. <i>(300 leads total)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hofex – 78 in total (DIT in Hong Kong provided each of the 5 SEED companies with a list of trade contacts who visited the trade show stand and were then all able to individually follow-up with these leads) • UAE F&D – 34 in total (1-5 per company) • UAE H&L – 17 in total (1-4 per company). • Ireland – 0 • Malaysia – 17 in total (1-4 per company) • Canada – 4 in total (1-2 per company) • Vietnam – 6 in total (1-2 per company) • Philippines – 35 in total (1-5 per company) <p>= <u>191 leads total</u></p> <p>(300 target not fully achieved as some markets faced challenges in meeting arrangement)</p>
		<p>Export orders / contracts secured. New export orders for companies participating in the virtual trade missions in the year following the project implementation. <i>£500,000 estimate (Average £5K per company)</i></p>	<p>Over half of the respondents are still in the process of following-up with contacts made as a result of SEED.</p> <p>1 Food & Drink company is now exporting to Hong Kong with an estimated order value of £2-4K per month.</p> <p>22 of the 30 respondents who answered this particular question said that between 1-4 leads are likely to be converted to business.</p>
		<p>Increased export turnover for exhibiting companies. 5% increase in export turnover between the start of the project and 12 months after the end of the project. <i>£500,000 (average £5K per company)</i></p>	<p>5 companies out of the 12 that answered the turnover question said that there was a growth in percentage of annual turnover due to international sales between the start of the project (early 2021) and the end of SEED (late 2022).</p>
		<p>No. of new active international markets. SMEs</p>	<p>Despite many of the follow-up meetings still being in progress, as well as products currently still being evaluated by prospective in-market</p>

		trading in 1 or 2 new export markets as a result of the project's support.	contacts, two Food & Drink sector respondents have received confirmed orders for Dubai and the Philippines (value of contracts/orders to be confirmed). 1 Food & Drink company is now exporting to Hong Kong.
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*Note: Outcome – the change introduced by the output leads to an outcome, a final result, which offers direct benefits. Benefits – the real ‘why’ of the project. Benefits are measurable improvements resulting from the final result or outcome. Have all the anticipated benefits been delivered?

Key barriers and enablers

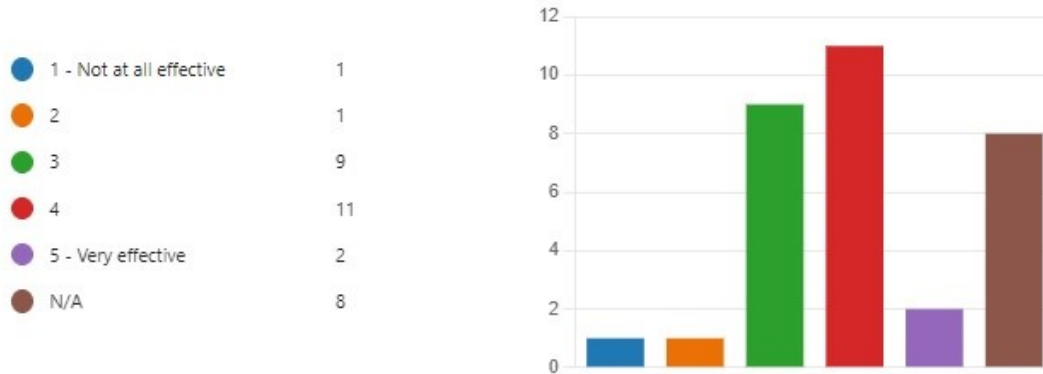
Enablers	Barriers
Virtual approach to international market access – easy and quick to schedule and hold meetings with the right contacts (even with time zone differences) for participating businesses (pre-121 consultations with in-market specialists to match with the right contacts).	Effects of global events (Brexit, pandemic, Ukraine, energy) meaning recruitment was a challenge as SMEs were dealing with more pressing issues and exporting was not seen as a priority.
More exposure for companies - physical trade shows only last for a few days, but virtual lasts a month or more online (to suit availability of both SEED and local business contacts, gain more meetings etc). Can also tailor approach of programme to suit needs of participants / international market.	Diminishing staff resources from project partners to support project planning implementation.
Better lead generation tracking - companies provided with contact information rather than e.g. a business possibly relying on memory when someone has expressed an interest in their product/service at a physical trade show.	Costs for some markets were prohibitive (US) – potential in-market partners had significantly higher fees than the SEED project had available for market insight and lead generation work. Identifying the right in-market partners was challenging at times.
	Staff changes within in-market partners meaning a lack of continuity between commissioning market support and implementing trade mission programmes.
	SMEs completing evaluation forms and providing post-mission updates.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES

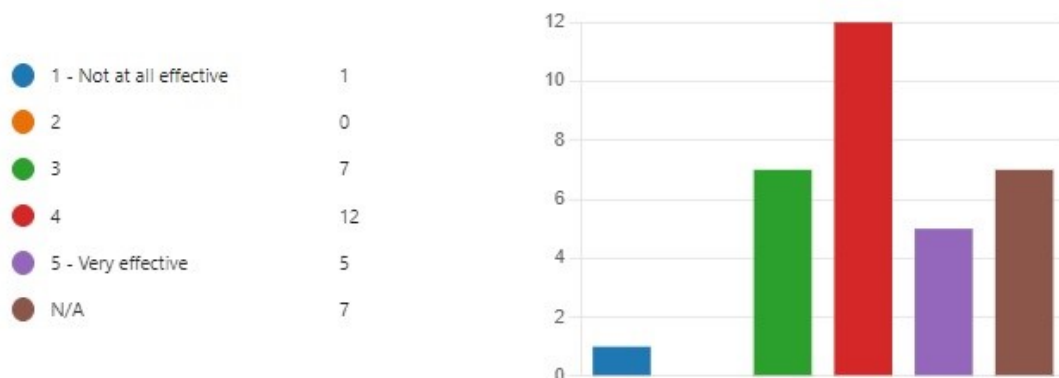
The figures on business project satisfaction and outcomes in this report illustrate overall high levels of project satisfaction. Participating companies also reported that they would like to remain in contact with SEED partners, as well as wishing to receive future support from SEED Partners and take part in a future project. This section summaries feedback received from 32 companies participating in the programme:

Project Satisfaction - How useful / effective were the different elements of the SEED project?

International market insight reports for the relevant international market:

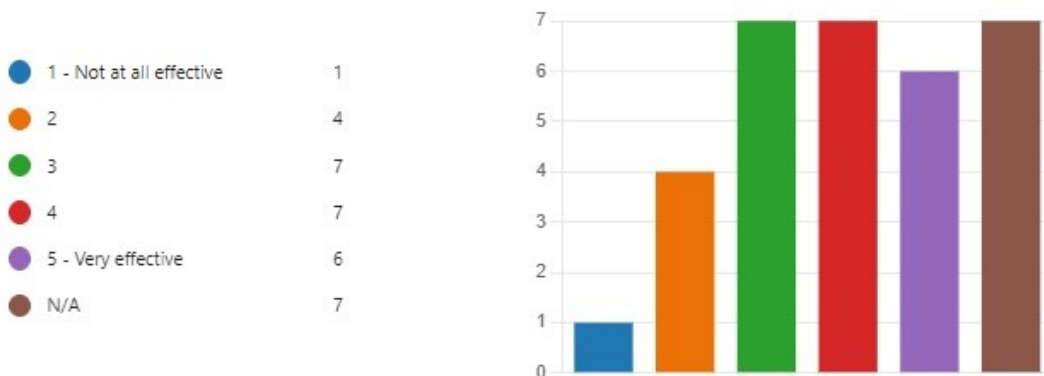


1-2-1 consultations with sector specialists within the relevant international market e.g. British Centres for Business, British Chamber of Commerce Philippines & Malaysia, Bandwidth:



*Note: some companies stated 'N/A' as they only participated in certain aspects of the programme. Additionally, where others were in fact noted to have received a 1-2-1, there may have been some slight confusion in their response. Other reasons are similar to those listed in the Virtual Trade Mission note directly below.

Virtual Trade Mission Meetings with in-market business contacts:



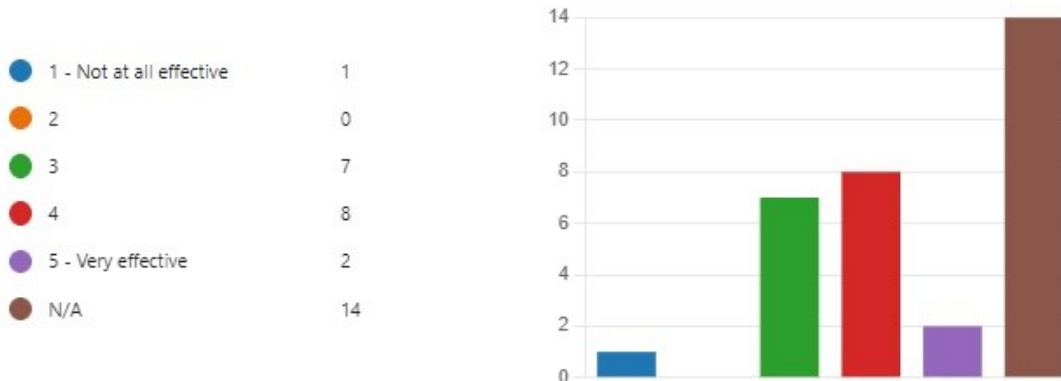
*Note: where a business has stated 'N/A' this was because they participated in the other virtual activities (market briefings, 1-2-1 support etc.), but did not progress to the virtual trade mission meetings for various reasons, for example:

- Companies participating in the Ireland programme which resulted in a total of 0 meetings delivered (this is explained further in the market update section in the report).
- Some companies participated in market briefings and came to the conclusion that it was not the right time or market for their business, or were not able to dedicate limited resources to pursuing opportunities etc.
- In one instance, the main contact had left the business, leaving colleagues unable to provide full feedback on their participation in the programme.
- Others currently have meetings scheduled but have not yet attended these prior to completing the survey.
- Some participants have not yet attended a meeting but support work for this small number of companies will conclude shortly (with the UAE Health & Life Sciences programme with British Centres for Business, as well as the Canada programme with Bandwidth (these are also explained further in the market update section in the report).
- One company was already trading in Canada, but they gained “some good insight into the Canadian psyche and introductions made that led to sound advice on setting up a Canadian subsidiary along with a better understanding of how hard it is to secure assistance with accounting in Canada across all states.”

Tell us more about the virtual trade mission meetings you attended for the particular SEED programme(s) you completed – who did you connect with?:

- “We are connected with GSK, Malaysia. We are pursuing them for a project.”
- “We attended the UAE SEED Programme where we connected with buyers and distributors for large supermarkets in the UAE such as Jones The Grocer and Spinneys and a few more.”
- “Vietnam SEED Programme - we connected with a large buying group who were interested in our fruit juices and are still awaiting to hear back from our previous meeting. Philippines SEED Programme we connected with a lot of buyers and distributors who were keen about our products and looked promising for the future.”
- “This [was] very useful, as a small business we cannot afford to visit overseas markets so virtual meetings with buyers are a good way forward. We have had meetings with buyers, but as yet no firm sales.”
- “We have received good support from Malaysia and managed to have two very good meetings set up for potential projects next year.”
- “Working with [Bandwidth] in Canada was great. We organised a very well attended webinar for in-market business contacts which resulted in greater connections... The Ireland process was good, but to be honest, we were not in the right place to implement much of the opportunities at the time due to resource capacity on our side. Having said all of that, we are looking to open an office in Ireland maybe next year, so I think we should revisit the Irish information in the coming months and see how this can benefit our potential expansion. We have had some really exciting exploratory meetings [for Malaysia] but very much at the early stages, so it is quite difficult to assess at the moment. The same really for UAE.”

121 SEED Export Readiness Assessment (with DIT or Sussex/Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce):



*Note: The figure for 1-2-1 meetings completed was lower than expected, as the project predominantly attracted the more experienced exporters who were looking for new markets rather than businesses which are completely new to export.

To add to this, partners found there was only a real need for a 121 meeting to take place if there was a question around the export readiness of a company. However, most companies were referred by an International Trade or Business Advisor hence were, in nearly all cases, already considered to be ready for the programme. Throughout the pandemic there were also various other types of ongoing online export information sources, materials, and webinars etc. available to businesses outside of the SEED project, which some companies may have continued to make use of rather than booking a SEED 1-2-1 export readiness meeting.

Please provide any additional comments to support your answers:

- “Overall, it was very helpful and could potentially lead to export sales in the future.”
- “Thank you for the support, for a small business this was an amazing opportunity.”
- “Abbey from BCB UAE was very supportive during the meetings and when setting them for us.”
- “The help and support provided by KCC SEED project has been invaluable to us as a business.”
- “I enjoyed attending the initial SEED group meeting and subsequent 1-1 meetings...”
- “It helped us to obtain contact with potential buyers.”
- “I found my conversations [with Bandwidth] very enlightening and progressive and [they] gave me some great advice on how to present my business internationally.”
- “Very pleased with the service, hope we can convert to new customers.”
- “We have worked closely with [Kent County Council] who [have] been very efficient in delivering the Seed project to us as small local Artisan businesses.”

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the relevant SEED Programme?

1 - Poor	2
2	2
3	10
4	14
5 - Excellent	4

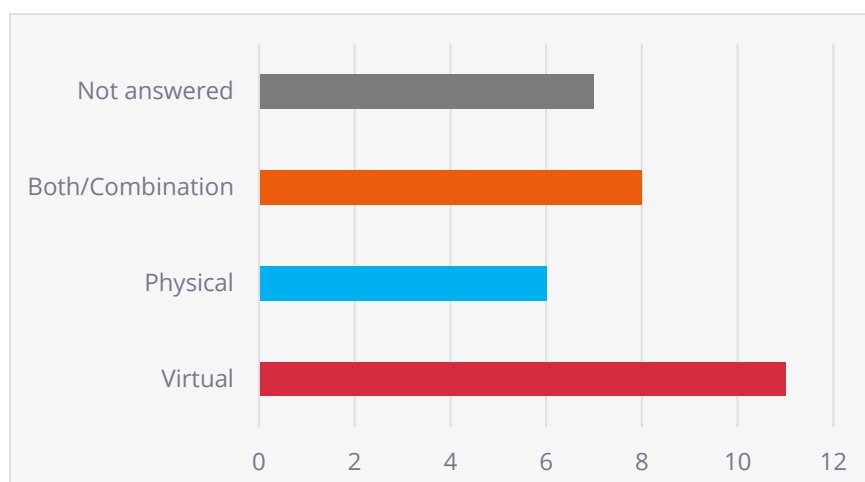


Please explain why you were satisfied or not:

- “It was very new to us at first and after the SEED Programme we felt a lot more confident with the process and knowing what to look for.”
- “Good contacts made even though they haven't amounted to anything yet.”
- “Meetings well organised and the right type of potential customers.”
- “Well organised and effective way of meeting buyers.”
- “Maybe it's too early to expect a positive outcome. I was really up for the challenge to open a new market from the three companies that showed an interest but as already explained I have yet to hear back.”
- “The support from SEED was very great at every stage and we are satisfied with the help we received from entire team.”
- “It wasn't really that relevant to what I do so I don't really have a strong opinion either way. I can see how it would have been affective for some. Also, I have no intention of setting up an office in Canada so most of the talks were really irrelevant.”
- “Great communication and opportunity for small businesses like us to tap into international markets and establish a presence in areas of the world which otherwise would have been impossible to achieve. A government funded project which I see as money well spent assisting SME's around the UK.”
- “I think perhaps Covid got in the way of project momentum.”
- “All the colleagues were diligent, personable and professional. Likewise, the partners introduced to were universally great fits and positive meetings.”
- “We are excited to explore more International trade opportunities.”
- “The KCC Seed project has been a critical help and support for our business. The virtual meetings with overseas Chamber of commerce and buyers has been so valuable and we would not have achieved this without this project, as well as the virtual events which have been extremely beneficial.”

Did you prefer the virtual approach for this programme, or would you have preferred a physical traditional trade show programme?

- Overall, 19 businesses of the 32 respondents showed a preference towards either the virtual approach, both, or a combination of virtual and physical programmes.



Examples of company responses to the virtual approach vs physical/traditional:

- “Traditional trade shows are helpful.”
- “Physical Traditional Trade show would make bigger difference.”
- “Virtual was handy in the sense that you did not have to travel and it was short sharp and effective, however a physical trade show may have gained a more personal level of business but overall it was good.”
- “I think [virtual] works very well from the time point of view.”
- “Virtual was suitable for the mission.”
- “The virtual approach was fine although perhaps a combination would have been beneficial.”
- “Virtual was quick and easy however you may have got to build better relationships in person.”
- “Happy with virtual trade show programme and B2B as for many small businesses we do not have the resources to attend.”
- “I think both are good options to have.”
- “Virtual is great for us.”
- “In the current climate, it makes sense to hold virtual meetings, however the traditional approach of one-to-one meetings is always the best in terms of developing closer relationships with potential customers. Virtual meetings are always much more cost effective if government funded, although if the budget permits trade shows and one to one physical meetings can't be replaced.”
- “I enjoyed the digital format, though would of course welcomed face to face opportunities as these are always more powerful.
- “Physical trade shows are preferable when discussing food so that prospect buyers can sample the product and review the packaging. However, in this digital age virtual meetings have a place.”

4. ANTICIPATED FUTURE OUTCOMES/IMPACTS

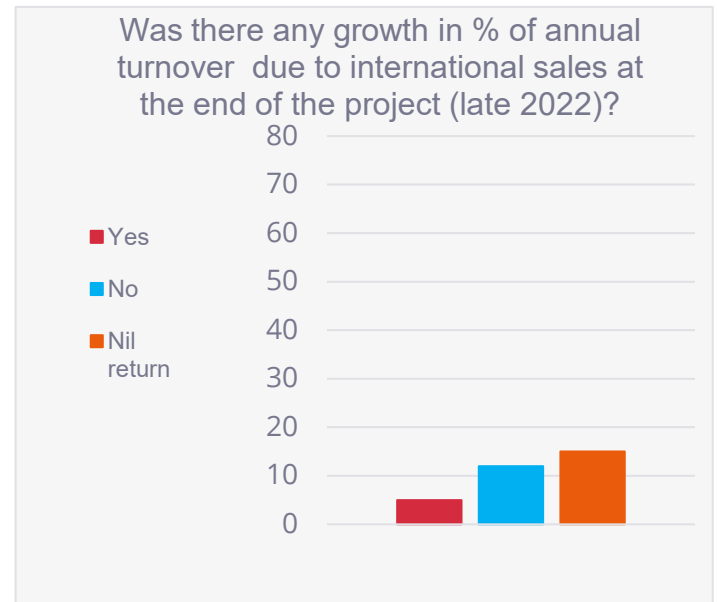
Business Outcomes & Results

Annual Turnover - International Sales:

- 5 companies said that there was a growth in percentage of annual turnover due to international sales between the start of the project (early 2021) and the end of SEED (late 2022),
- 12 companies said there was no growth, and 15 companies were a nil return response.

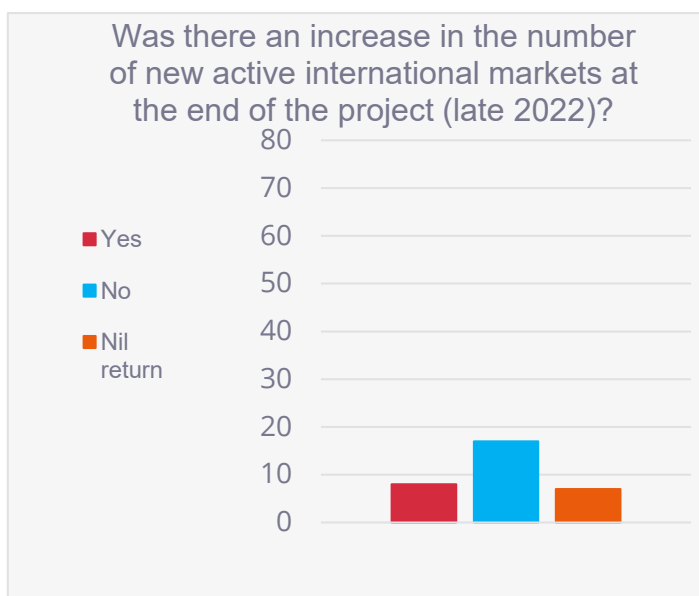
Additional comment from one of the businesses that responded to this question:

- “Very difficult to answer, as our sales dropped by 95% due to Brexit issues,...and due to COVID as well.”



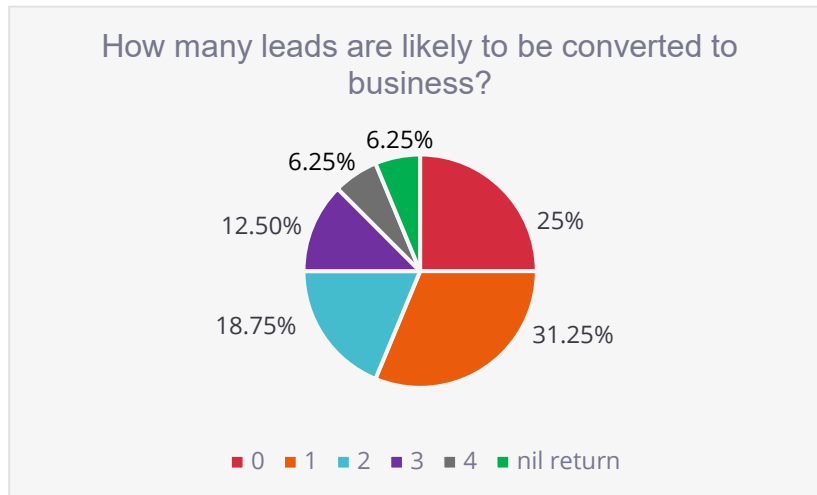
International Markets:

- 8 SMEs said there was an increase in the number of international markets between the start of the project and end of the project
- 17 businesses said there was currently no increase, and 7 companies were a nil return



Business Leads:

- 10 companies said 1 lead is likely to be converted to business,
- 12 companies said between 2-4 leads are likely to be converted to business,
- 8 businesses said 0 leads would likely be converted and 2 were a nil return.



Examples of initial progress made with key leads e.g. samples sent, follow-up meetings arranged etc.

- “We had a follow up meeting with one of the supermarket buyers and had sent out samples as part of the start of the SEED Programme.”
- “I have just started conversations via zoom meetings with Philippine companies arranged through the Seed Project and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce. Without being involved in this project, there would not have been the opportunity to make these contacts.”
- “We have had about 6 follow up meetings [as] a result of the progress. The generation of marketing material has allowed a more enhanced ability to connect with new customers.”
- “Samples have been sent to 1 customer in Dubai and I am just waiting on a confirmed order.”
- “I had a great meeting with a Canadian fashion brand called Roots and there was talk of doing future work. Currently waiting for feedback.”
- “We have yet to make any official deals from the show but I thought the calibre of attendee/buyer was high. For that reason alone I would give the big thumbs up.”
- “[We have] received NDA's back and the majority of prospective partners are currently evaluating the product, many with an eye to meet at Medica.”

Over half of the respondents saw the chance of follow-up/longer term collaborations with contacts made as a result of SEED.

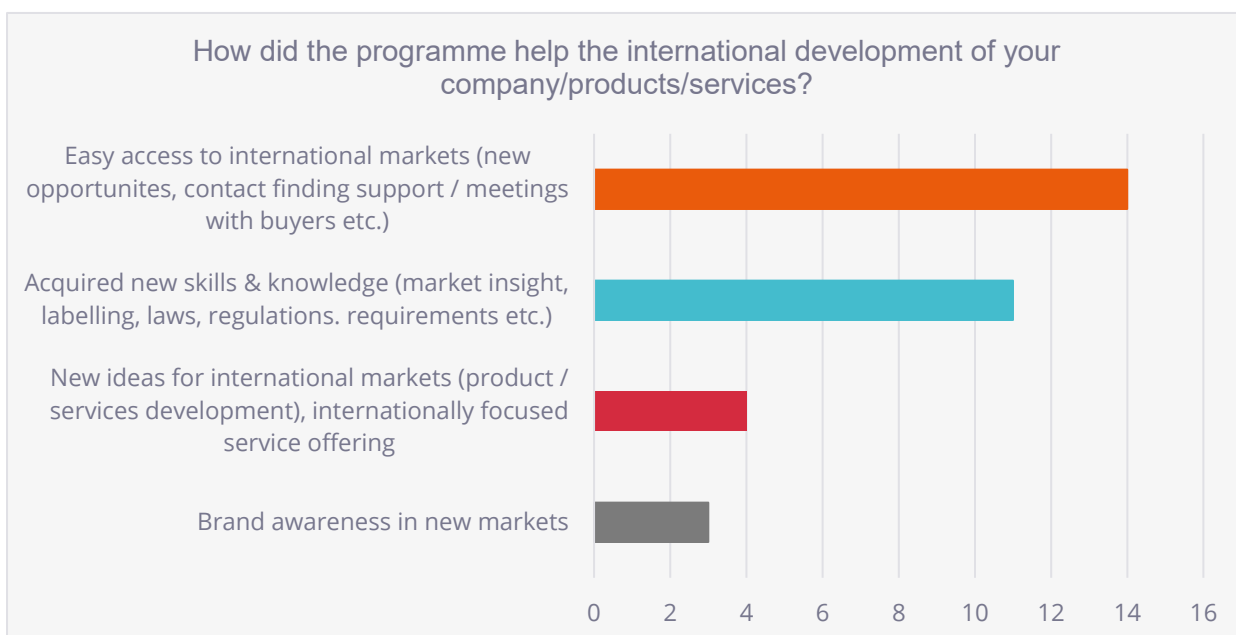
When asked if participating companies were actively doing business in a new country, or whether the business had won any new contracts or secured any new orders as a result of participating in SEED, most responded with ‘not yet’.

However, despite many of the follow-up meetings still being in progress, as well as products currently still being evaluated by prospective in-market contacts (due to programmes of activity running up until the end of SEED to maximise results), three of the respondents are already actively doing business in a new country.

- “Kent Crisps were delighted to take part in the Seed Project HOFEX programme for Hong Kong and we are pleased to have successfully grown our customer base in this territory this year. The support received from the programme was invaluable and we would highly recommend those looking to build on their export knowledge and sales to get involved and make the most of the advice and support available.” The company has confirmed that the estimated order value for the new business won is £2-4K per month.
- The other two food & drink companies (Kent & Essex-based) are also successfully doing business in new countries including the UAE and the Philippines (value of contracts/orders to be confirmed).

Additionally, another company based in East Sussex within health supplements is awaiting confirmation from a Malaysian contact they met with regarding a future partnership for the production of powder and chewable tablets. The same can be said for a Kent-based life sciences company who has had successful meetings with contacts in both Malaysia and the UAE with NDA’s signed and products currently being reviewed for future partnerships. Another life sciences based in Medway also had successful meetings and is currently in the process of scheduling further meetings with interested contacts in Malaysia and the UAE. Two of the digital companies are also in the process of following-up since attending meetings with Canadian contacts within retail, rail and aviation.

How did the programme help the international development of your company/products/services?:



5. PROJECT SPEND SUMMARY

Summary of spend delivering the project, including details of how the SSF has been applied and confirmation of the match funding used to support delivery

Spend Description	Spend Budget as per Original Application (£)	Actual Spend (£)	Remaining Funding (£)
Business engagement (in-market promo materials etc.)	3,000	344.80	2655.20
Export Readiness (group training, market insight reports)	27,000	21637.61	5362.39
Virtual trade missions (shipping costs, meeting arrangements, lead generation, promo videos)	39,000	Shipping 1,295.91 Lead gen, buyer meeting arrangements 36749.13 Videos 9,502.50	-8547.54
Project management costs	22,500	21970.05 (please note costs were higher but costs over and above the SSF allocation were shifted to in kind contributions and absorbed by KCC)	529.95
Totals	91,500	91,500	0.00
Total Match Funding applied*	40,000	50649.70	-10649.70
Total Funding	131,500	142,149.70	-10649.70

*Costs for the matchmaking software and in-market equipment hire were reallocated for the meeting arrangement work e.g. UAE and Canada.

6. CONCLUSIONS, KEY LEARNING AND NEXT STEPS

Summary of findings

Considering the various challenges faced throughout the project, including not being able to receive full feedback from all participants through the online evaluation form process - these are the main conclusions to draw upon:

- The overall project satisfaction was very high, and SMEs felt that SEED was very relevant and had helped their business to internationalise through gaining new relevant contacts overseas, as well as acquiring new knowledge and skills through the market insight and / or participation in the group briefing sessions.
- The majority of SMEs who reported taking part in 1-2-1 consultations found that these meetings were more than effective.
- Nearly all of the respondents who joined the Virtual Trade Mission meetings found these to be either effective or very effective.

- The positive feedback from the success of the Virtual Trade Mission meetings is also reflected in a very large number of businesses who responded (69%) reporting that 1-4 business leads are likely to be converted to business as a result of SEED.
- Over half of the respondents said they preferred the virtual approach or a combination of both virtual and physical/traditional. The majority of the respondents who preferred either virtual or both physical/traditional approaches were within the food & drink or health & life sciences sectors. However, a larger number of respondents were within the food & drink sector, and a smaller number of respondents were within the digital & creative sector.

Key learning

Looking to the future after SEED, businesses indicated that they would value further support specifically around the following:

- Revisits to markets (especially for those companies who may have not been ready at the time or felt they could have benefited more had they joined earlier on in the project).
- Support in arranging more virtual trade mission meetings for SELEP-based companies.
- Further practical advice, for example, around international financial transactions (tax, currency exchange fees etc.), as well as online portals which help with export documentation, cost effective shipping opportunities, and increasing reach in particular countries.
- Trade visits to markets, in combination with the virtual approach.
- A wider breadth of markets and more focus on individual mentoring.
- Support with the production of marketing materials, videos etc.

Respondents also suggested further follow-up support, continued support from the partners, and most of the businesses stated that they would like to be contacted to be involved in future projects.

Project legacy & next steps

Through the project seven bespoke international market insight reports, as well as promotional videos were produced, which participating businesses will be able to continue to access and make full use of. The SEED partnership will also continue to make this information available to businesses across the SELEP-area looking to get into overseas markets.

In terms of next steps, the lead partner (Kent County Council) will write to all participating companies formally to confirm the project has now officially ended and will also signpost companies where required, refer participants to DIT's Export Academy (as requested by DIT) which will serve as further project legacy in ensuring companies receive continued support with the several markets following the end of the project. KCC will also continue to follow-up with companies on further progress made with key leads over the next few months, with the support of the other project partners where possible and will of course report results to SELEP. Most of the in-market contacts established through the project have also expressed that they would be interested in assisting with any future support programmes for businesses.

Overall, the partnership has found that through delivering several virtual market-specific programmes of activity, that this has been a highly effective model for supporting businesses (especially those newer to export) in going further afield earlier than normally anticipated, and being able to explore new international markets virtually, without business being faced with upfront costs when doing this via the physical/traditional approach.

“The communication of the UK requirements in the global market is really important, the SEED project gave us the opportunity and confidence to do this.” – SEED Health & Life Sciences Sector

“[The] Seed project has been a critical help and support for our business. The virtual meetings with overseas Chamber of commerce and buyers has been so valuable and we would not have achieved this without this project, as well as the virtual events which have been extremely beneficial.” – SEED Food & Drink Sector



The South East Export Development (SEED) is a project funded by SELEP (the South East Local Enterprise Partnership).



Annex 1 - Bespoke International Market Insight Reports



UAE Food and Beverage Report

Produced by:
BRITISH CENTRES FOR BUSINESS



Trade Advisory Services

UAE's Healthcare Research Report



Produced by: Abbey Salako
Trade & Marketing Manager
June 2022

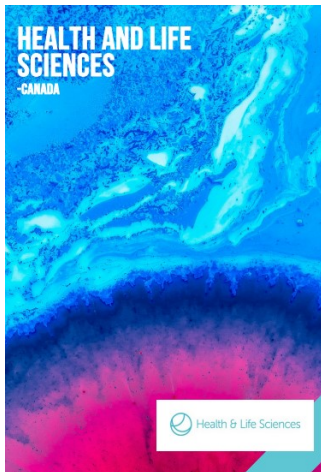


SEED Project
Malaysia Market Report:
Healthcare and Life Sciences

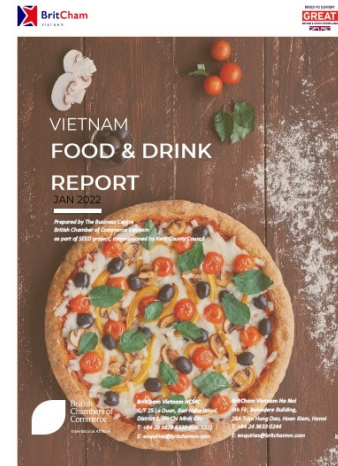
Delivered by: British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (BMCC)
Submission date: 14/7/2022

SEED UAE – Food & Drink + Health & Life Sciences

SEED Malaysia - Health & Life Sciences



SEED Canada – Health & Life Sciences + Digital & Creative



SEED Vietnam – Food & Drink

Department for International Trade | **Ireland – Healthcare Sector**

Sector Overview
The Irish Healthcare System
Healthcare in Ireland is two-tiered: both public and private sectors exist. The public healthcare system is governed by the Health Act 2004 which established a new body with responsibility for providing health and personal social services to everyone living in Ireland – the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Residents in Ireland are entitled to receive healthcare through the public healthcare system, which is managed by the HSE and funded by general taxation. A person may be required to pay a subsidised fee for certain health care received; this depends on income, age, illness or disability. All maternity services and childcare up to the age of six months are provided free of charge. GP visits up to the age of six are also free of charge, with a view to extend this to those up to the age of 12 in the coming years. Emergency care (without referral from a GP) is provided at a cost of €100 for a visit to the Accident and Emergency department. Under the Drug Payment Scheme, individuals and families are eligible for subsidies over approved prescription drugs, medicines, and certain appliances, and pay only a maximum of €14 per month.

The Medical Card – which entitles holders to free hospital care, GP visits, dental services, optical services, aural services, prescription drugs and medical appliances – is available to those receiving certain payments, low earners, those with certain long-term or severe illnesses and in certain other cases. The Medical Card is means tested in most cases.

The HSE manages the delivery of the entire public health service as a single national entity. In 2019, the government of Ireland announced plans to restructure the HSE which would split the country into six health regions. Health and social care would then be planned within each region accordingly. In May 2021, Minister for Health Stephen Donohoe announced this restructuring as part of health reform plans to be delivered over the next three years.

There are nine Community Healthcare Organisations (CHOs) across the country who are responsible for the delivery of primary and community-based services responsive to the needs of local communities. There are 32 Local Health Offices (LHOs), who are the entry point for citizens to access community health and personal social services.

The HSE is Ireland's largest employer with over 67,000 direct employees. Another 35,000 are employed by agencies funded by the HSE. The HSE has been allocated a budget of €22 billion for 2021 – the largest budget in the history of the State.

In 2017, the Dáil's Committee on the Future of Healthcare published the **Stáinleacra Report** which outlined a ten year plan to transform Ireland's health and social care services. The key aims of Stáinleacra are to improve patient and service user experiences, improve clinician experience, lower costs and achieve better outcomes. Some of the measures mentioned above such as the reduction in patient costs under the Drug Payment Scheme and the regional restructuring of the HSE are outlined within the report.

Disclaimer: While DIT Ireland will endeavour to keep the information in this sector report accurate, up to date and have taken reasonable care in compiling this, we cannot and do not guarantee the accuracy of the information, and we accept no responsibility, and shall have no liability, for any loss or damage which may arise from using or relying on the information.

SEED Ireland – Health & Life Sciences



Annex 2 – Group Training Webinars



SEED Vietnam – Market readiness / group training session (21 Feb 2022)



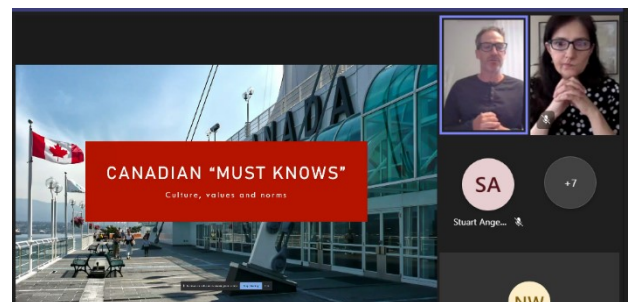
SEED Ireland – Market readiness / group training session (15 Dec 2021)



SEED Malaysia – Market readiness / group training session (6 Sept 2022)



SEED Canada – Market readiness / group training session (8 June 2022)



SEED Canada – Market readiness / group training session (4 August 2022)



SEED Philippines – Market readiness / group training session (15 Sept 2022)

Annex 3 – Export Brochures and Promotional Videos


SEED sector-specific promotional videos:

- [Food & Drink](#)
- [Health & Life Sciences](#)
- [Digital & Creative](#)



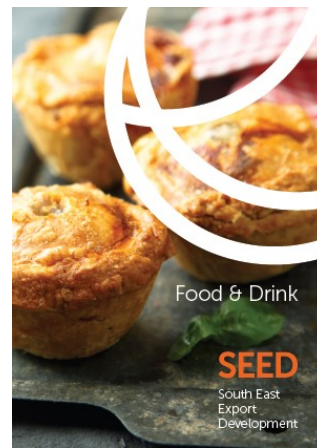
International export brochures:




wealdcreative	
Name	WEALDCREATIVE
Position in Company	MANAGING DIRECTOR / CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIST
Name of Company	WEALDCREATIVE
Address	204, LINDSEY ROAD, BURNINGHAM, LINCOLN, LN4 1AA, UK
Website	www.wealdcreative.com
Email	info@wealdcreative.com
Telephone	+44(0) 1522 454242
Company Profile	Creative Technology Agency specialising in Immersive Media, WebAR, VR experiences, mobile application design, digital transformation and strategy. Offering creative and consultancy services.
Business Story	I have previously been featured for technology from a range of age and in particular the major application of virtual for events and digital marketing. We are currently looking for international export partners across EU and USA to establish a presence in the market for our services.
Company Other	We are currently looking for international export partners across EU and USA to establish a presence in the market for our services.
Product	

SEED South East Export Development

Digital & Creative 11



Barn Farm Drinks	
Name	CHLOE WILKINSON
Position in Company	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Name of Company	BARN FARM DRINKS
Address	1, BARN FARM, 100, BARN FARM ROAD, BARN, WILTSHIRE, SN14 6JH, UK
Website	www.barnfarmdrinks.co.uk
Email	chloew@barnfarmdrinks.co.uk
Telephone	+44(0) 1245 624228
Company Profile	Barn Farm Drinks is an award-winning, natural fruit and herbal flavoured, based on the South Coast, UK, 100% UK produced and bottled, healthy, low sugar, low calorie, low fat, 100% natural and environmentally friendly. Incorporating the best of the best of the UK's produce, we are currently looking for international export partners across EU and USA to establish a presence in the market for our services.
Business Story	Our mission is to provide a healthy, natural, low sugar and low calorie, high quality, 100% UK produced, natural fruit and herbal flavoured, based on the South Coast, UK, 100% UK produced and bottled, healthy, low sugar, low calorie, low fat, 100% natural and environmentally friendly. Incorporating the best of the best of the UK's produce, we are currently looking for international export partners across EU and USA to establish a presence in the market for our services.
Product	

SEED South East Export Development

Food & Drink 14



IVDeology	
Name	STEVE ANGELL
Position in Company	OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
Name of Company	IVDeology Ltd.
Address	2112 THE DENNIS SHOP, HESTON, DOCKING ROAD, HESTON, MIDDLESEX, M18 7JH, UK
Website	www.ivdeology.co.uk
Email	steve@ivdeology.co.uk
Telephone	+44(0) 181 624 2222
Company Profile	UK based provider of specialist Quality and Regulatory consultancy services and compliance services for the medical device industry. Our expertise is in the design, development, production and technical documentation of the MD industry.
Business Story	Our aim is to provide a high quality, professional, and cost-effective regulatory compliance service to the MD industry. We are currently looking for international export partners across EU and USA to establish a presence in the market for our services.
Company Other	UK based QMS provider looking to expand across into the US market for MD medical devices, testing and consultancy in Q12 testing and QMS.

SEED South East Export Development

Health & Life Sciences 18

Annex 4 – Product Sample Shipping



Hofex (Hong Kong) – September 2022



UAE – Food & Drink Programme – April 2022



Philippines – Food & Drink Programme – September 2022

Annex 5 – List of Participating Companies (Virtual Trade Mission Programmes)

	Company	SELEP Area	SEED Sector	Hong Kong	UAE F&D	Philippines	Vietnam	No. of programmes attended
1	Kent Crisps	Kent	Food & Drink	X	X			2
2	Miracle Teas	Kent	Food & Drink	X				1
3	Nim's Fruit Crisps	Kent	Food & Drink	X				1
4	Karimix	Kent	Food & Drink	X	X	X	X	4
5	Wonderchup	Kent	Food & Drink	X				1
6	Barn Farm Drinks	Essex	Food & Drink		X	X	X	3
7	G&I Spirit Group	Essex	Food & Drink			X		1
8	Boostball	Essex	Food & Drink			X		1
9	Retrocorn	Essex	Food & Drink		X	X	X	3
10	A Little Bit Food Co	Kent	Food & Drink		X			1
11	Cocoba Chocolate	Medway	Food & Drink		X			1
12	Gerald McDonald	Essex	Food & Drink		X			1
13	Jim Jams Spreads	Essex	Food & Drink		X		X	2
14	Davina Steel	Essex	Food & Drink		X			1
15	Play in Choc	Essex	Food & Drink		X			1
16	Maidstone Distillery	Kent	Food & Drink			X		1
17	Must Chup	Kent	Food & Drink			X		1
18	Old Dairy Brewery	Kent	Food & Drink			X		1
19	Personalised Product Consultants	Kent	Food & Drink			X		1
20	Arrowtown Drinks	East Sussex	Food & Drink				X	1

	Company	SELEP Area	SEED Sector	Ireland	Malaysia	UAE H&L	Canada	No. of programmes attended
21	Allot Ltd	Essex	Health & Life Sciences	X	X			1
22	Context	Essex	Health & Life Sciences	X				1
23	Cubic Pharmaceuticals	Medway	Health & Life Sciences	X		X		1
24	IVDeology	Medway	Health & Life Sciences	X	X	X	X	1
25	eXroid Technology	Kent	Health & Life Sciences		X	X		2
26	Felcon	East Sussex	Health & Life Sciences		X	X	X	3
27	HyperHealthy	East Sussex	Health & Life Sciences		X	X		2
28	Medical Warehouse	Kent	Health & Life Sciences		X			1
29	Bedfont Scientific	Kent	Health & Life Sciences			X		1
30	Tonus Tech	Kent	Health & Life Sciences			X		1
31	Design Specific	East Sussex	Health & Life Sciences				X	1

	Company	SELEP Area	SEED Sector	Canada
32	Durty Media	Kent	Digital & Creative	X
33	New Planet Film	Medway	Digital & Creative	X
34	Weald Creative	Kent	Digital & Creative	X
35	SmartBrief	Essex	Digital & Creative	X
36	Switchplane	East Sussex	Digital & Creative	X

Annex 6 – List of Participating Companies (Market Briefing Sessions – Group Training)

No.	Company	SELEP Area	SEED Sector	Philippines	Vietnam	No. of training sessions attended
1	Must Chup	Kent	Food & Drink	X	X	2
2	Maidstone Distillery	Kent	Food & Drink	X		1
3	Old Dairy Brewery	Kent	Food & Drink	X		1
4	Karimix	Kent	Food & Drink	X		1
5	Boostball	Essex	Food & Drink	X		1
6	G&I Spirit Group	Essex	Food & Drink	X		1
7	Barn Farm Drinks	Essex	Food & Drink		X	1
8	Wonderchup	Kent	Food & Drink		X	1
9	Old Dairy Brewery	Kent	Food & Drink		X	1
10	Arrowtown Drinks	East Sussex	Food & Drink		X	1

No.	Company	SELEP Area	SEED Sector	Ireland	Malaysia	Canada (1 st session)	Canada (2 nd session)	No. of training sessions attended
11	Cubic Pharmaceuticals	Medway	Health & Life Sciences	X				1
12	IVDeology	Medway	Health & Life Sciences	X	X		X	3
13	Context Health	Essex	Health & Life Sciences	X				1
14	Allot	Essex	Health & Life Sciences		X			1
15	Felcon	East Sussex	Health & Life Sciences		X	X	X	3
16	HyperHealthy	East Sussex	Health & Life Sciences		X			1



No.	Company	SELEP Area	SEED Sector	Canada (1 st session)	Canada (2 nd session)	No. of training sessions attended
17	Creative Quills	Essex	Digital & Creative	X		1
18	Weald Creative	Kent	Digital & Creative	X		1
19	SmartBrief	Essex	Digital & Creative	X		1
20	The Familiar Tech	Kent	Digital & Creative	X		1
21	New Planet Film	Medway	Digital & Creative	X		1
22	Durty Media	Kent	Digital & Creative	X	X	2
23	Databox 360	Kent	Digital & Creative	X		1
24	Aviation Events Group	Kent	Digital & Creative		X	2
25	Indigo Productions	Kent	Digital & Creative		X	2

Annex 7 – International Partners

	SEED Market-Specific Programme	SEED Sector	Organisation
1	Hofex (Hong Kong)	Food & Drink	Department for International Trade (DIT) Hong Kong
2	UAE	Food & Drink	British Centres for Business
3	Vietnam	Food & Drink	British Chamber of Commerce Philippines (BCCP)
4	Philippines	Food & Drink	British Chamber of Commerce Vietnam (BritCham)
5	Ireland	Health & Life Sciences	DIT Dublin
6	UAE	Health & Life Sciences	British Centres for Business
7	Malaysia	Health & Life Sciences	British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (BMCC)
8	Canada	Health & Life Sciences	Bandwidth (specialist company based in Canada)
9	Canada	Health & Life Sciences	Bandwidth (specialist company based in Canada)