

PSSA Members Approve New Policy

A special General Meeting of the PSSA at the Counter Terror trade show marked a significant step forward in the development of the Association.

At the 2013 AGM the Council of the PSSA were given the brief to examine how best all Members could be seen to be promoting professional standards in our sector. The result was the resolution passed at the GM to request all Members to embark on the journey to commit their company and products to Verification Scheme validation during the coming year – where an appropriate Scheme module exists. Over half of the PSSA membership has already committed and the new initiative is designed to help other Members gain public recognition of their support for raising standards in the sector. The current Scheme modules cover HVM products, fencing and the new installation initiative. Where a PSSA scheme does not apply, companies are expected to meet the appropriate external standards.

This is an exciting time for the PSSA - and, as our growing membership suggests, we have become a positive influence in helping to raise industry standards and, ultimately, sales levels!

The new PSSA policy, agreed by Members in General meeting, is;

“Where a PSSA approved Verification Scheme exists which is applicable to the products and services offered by a PSSA Member, then that Member will be required to commit to submit their company and products and/or services to the appropriate Scheme processes within one year of becoming a Member of the Association; or by 30th June 2015 for continuing Members”.

“New Member applications received on or after 1st July 2014 will be subject to a Scheme pre-entry assessment to assist in providing clear guidance towards a successful passage through the appropriate Scheme(s)”.

The intended benefits of these changes include;

1. Sending a clear message to the security market place that PSSA members are committed to high quality business practices, products and services;
2. Providing specifiers, customers and other stakeholders with a wider range of verified “high security assured” companies, products and services; and
3. Bringing the business benefits of Scheme participation to all our Members.

Rob Oliver, the Secretary to the Council of the PSSA explains,

“Over the next year it is planned that there will be a critical mass of companies and their products that have gone through the Verification Scheme. This will make it easier for product specifiers and users to stipulate that PSSA membership and Scheme compliance becomes a requirement for contracts. It also aligns with the original objectives of the PSSA, developed in consultation with the CPNI, that a Scheme would be delivered that would go beyond HVM product testing to cover company compliance and installation matters.”

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Townscape Products Join PSSA



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Join the debate!



NEWS *in brief*

UKTI Guides

For the latest UKTI guides for British businesses who are interested in developing their overseas trade and doing business overseas see - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/exporting-country-guides>.

Defence and Security

For more specific guidance on Defence and Security-related business see <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/defence-and-security-exporting-country-briefings-and-reports>.

Enhance your contacts in Overseas Markets!

The PSSA secretariat has developing contacts in the following markets: Mongolia, Canada, Guinea and Chile. For further information, email rob.oliver@admin.co.uk.

HVO's

UKTI's map of High Value Opportunities (HVOs) can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/high-value-opportunities>. Suppliers can register their interest in any of the major export opportunities identified.

PSSA Verification Scheme Update.

The most significant piece of news concerning the Verification Scheme is, of course, the decision by members to make the Scheme a mandatory part of PSSA membership. This signal from industry is one that has been long sought after by government agencies and others and heralds a new beginning for the Scheme. Only by adoption will the Scheme be able to deliver the benefits to Members sought by PSSA Council. As could be expected, enquiries about the scheme and requests for quotations have increased. Interestingly, since the Members' decision there have also been a number of new companies applying for PSSA membership.

Following over a year's hard work and investment, the new PSSA portal, accessible from www.pssaverification.com, has finally come on line. Companies new to the Scheme will immediately enjoy the benefits of the upgraded technology and ease of use. We are currently migrating existing Scheme member's data from the old system to the new in order to make the transition as easy as possible for them.

The pilot assessments of installation services also began this month. This key piece of the Scheme will seek to provide assurance that PSSA Member companies have the competence and capability to install perimeter security equipment to the standards required by government and the market at large. The initiative has been warmly received by counter terror advisors and others within the supply chain. Verification of installation services should also raise the awareness of the Scheme in general and create a 'market pull' for PSSA Verified products.



Mike's Tech Tips

Business Keys' Technical Standards Director, Mike Webb, highlights some important technical issues that can impact perimeter security equipment supply and installation

17th Edition Third Amendment

A new regulation book – BS 7671: 2008 Amendment 3 - is being developed to implement several changes to The IET Wiring Regulations. Publication is due in January 2015. It will then be a requirement that all electrical installations carried out after 30 June 2015 comply with the updated regulations.

Construction Products Regulations 2011

The EU Construction Products Regulation (No 305/2011) 2011, which came into force on 1st July 2013, brought significant changes to CE Marking and product safety testing. Where applicable, the Regulations make it mandatory for manufacturers placing product on the market to make a Declaration of Performance for the product and apply the CE Mark. There are also implications for contractors, specifiers, designers and builders including:

- Referring to harmonised technical standards and individual characteristics in drawings and specifications
- Reviewing the manufacturer's Declaration of Performance and confirming the product's suitability for the intended use

Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC)

Electromagnetic interference occurs when the circuits in electrical devices disturb each other. 'Noisy' electrical products can not only be annoying, they can be dangerous, which is why there are legal requirements in place to ensure that devices do not disturb, or suffer from disturbance from other devices around them. Because the effects of EMC cannot be seen or heard, there is a danger that risks might not be mitigated as thoroughly as with other product safety matters. The EMC regulations require that manufacturers or suppliers ensure that they comply with the relevant standards and must be able to show results of tests that support this. These tests may be performed by a lab., a consultant, or done in-house.

For further details or advice on these issues contact Mike Webb at: mike.webb@businesskeys.co.uk

PSSA Member News.



Above: Frontier Pitts Terra Hubble Bollard

Frontier Pitts Launch the Terra Hubble Bollard

At this year's Counter Terror Expo, Frontier Pitts launched the World's first BSi PAS 68 SIDE FOLDING BOLLARD; the ULTIMATE BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATION for Hostile Vehicle Mitigation.

The Terra Hubble Bollard is a Shallow Depth, Side Folding Retractable Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Terra Bollard which has been successfully PAS 68 impact tested stopping a 7.5t vehicle travelling at 30mph (48kph), with ZERO PENETRATION. The Hubble Bollard Innovative Direction of Travel - Side Folding Bollard uniquely raises and lowers.

The Retractable Bollard is twinned with a static unit and available as either automatic or standalone manual operation for remote sites and locations. The Terra Hubble Bollard can be retrofitted into an existing line of PAS 68 static bollards to provide an HVM access point. The Automatic Terra Hubble Bollard model has an industrial hydraulic pump drive unit which can be interfaced to any access control systems. Designed for ease of installation and maintenance. Traffic Light System included as standard on all automatic bollard systems.

Sally Osmond, Brand & Development Manager said "Frontier Pitts is proud to launch the Terra Hubble Bollard at the Counter Terror Expo as a very unique retractable to protect against potential VBIED (Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device) attack. This shallow depth solution is available as both fully automatic or standalone manual operation to cater for all requirements."



Above: The Smallest PAS 68 Terra Planter in the World from Frontier Pitts

Success at CTX for Frontier Pitts

The British Manufacturer of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation introduced TWO new innovative products at the show which now join Frontier Pitts existing Complete PAS 68 HVM portfolio.

The Smallest PAS 68 Terra Planter in the World was introduced.

The Terra Planter with its small, shallow footprint, joins Frontier Pitts PAS 68 Streetscape portfolio. This unique planter is designed to perfectly enhance your landscape whilst providing your building, and its assets, with the PAS 68 protection it requires to counter the threat of potential hostile vehicles.

Business Barometer Snapshot

The PSSA's Spring Business Barometer Survey key findings were;

- Two-thirds of respondents reported no change in numbers employed – and no change in UK sales.
- 50% of respondents reported an increase in sales to overseas markets.
- Two-thirds cited general competitive pressures as the biggest brake on business.
- The top 3 topics of most interest for PSSA action were
 - i) help in overseas markets,
 - ii) coaching on product compliance, and
 - iii) more contact with HMG on technical and regulatory issues.

PSSA New Member Profile

Townscape Products Limited

Townscape Products is a UK manufacturer and supplier of PAS 68 vehicle defence products for integrated Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM).



Above: Jonathan Goss, Townscape Products MD

Jonathan Goss, managing director, said:

"Townscape's HVM range is designed to give an aesthetically pleasing solution, fitting into the landscape surroundings, whilst providing the robust PAS 68 security standard. We're pleased to be part of an association which is committed to providing the highest levels of physical protection."

Townscape designs, manufactures and supplies CT blocks, bollards, barriers and planters.

For more information go to: www.townscapeproducts.co.uk

Below: Townscape Products Range



CT BLOCK



CT BOLLARD



CT BARRIER



CT PLANTER

PSSA Member News.

Heald Win Best Selected Exhibitor at Counter Terror Expo 2014

Here at Heald we were very proud of our stand at Counter Terror Expo this year; a lot of hard work went into the design of the backdrop and layout, not to mention the preparation of our products for display. So it was especially nice to hear that we have won the prestigious "Best Selected Exhibitor" award from the directors of Exhibition Update magazine. This award is presented to the exhibitors considered by the judges to be the most eye catching and impressive at the show.

This year, we had two demonstration products on the stand, the award winning Matador 3 surface mount sliding bollard system and the unique shallow mount Raptor rising bollard. These were operated by our revolutionary new Hydra remote control and monitoring system.

Heald Mantis 80 IWA14-1 Crash Test Success

Earlier this year, Heald's Mantis 80 shallow mount static was tested to the new IWA14-1 standard at MIRA's testing ground. With a classification of IWA14-1: 2013 V/7200[N3]/80/90 the Mantis will halt a 7.2 tonne truck travelling at a speed of 80kph (approx. 50mph). As well as proven high security, the Mantis is also designed to be easy to integrate with existing modern architecture and landscape design. It is available with a range of stylish stainless steel covers to blend in with any environment.

Heald Launch Revolutionary Hydra Remote Control and Monitoring System

Heald are already well known for innovation in roadblocker and bollard design, with an award winning range that includes the world's only surface mount sliding bollard system (the Matador), the world's only 30 tonne tested blocker (the Commander), the unique shallow mount Raptor bollard and the shallow mount Viper blocker. The new Hydra remote control and monitoring system is set to completely revolutionise the way that perimeter security systems are used.

The Hydra works on a master / slave principal. Slave units are installed in each blocking unit, and can be controlled by a central master unit through a static control panel, similar to existing systems. Each slave unit monitors the status of its blocker unit, and reports back to the master any changes in status. This could include raising and lowering or any faults. This information can be relayed to security operatives via the static control panel. However, this is far from the limit of the Hydra's communication abilities. Faults and status can be relayed via text message or via a tablet app, which can also be used to control units. The Hydra can also report specific issues that may occur in a bollard or blocker, allowing faster and more efficient repairs to be made. If the faulty or damaged unit is part of an array, the Hydra will allow remaining units in the array to function normally, causing as little disruption to traffic as possible. The Hydra is currently only available with Heald automatic perimeter security systems.

PSSA Members:

- Allens Total Perimeter Security
- ATG Access Ltd
- Avon Barrier Company
- Barkers Fencing Ltd
- Bavak Security Group
- Bristorm, Hill & Smith Ltd
- Broughton Controls Ltd
- Cova Security Gates
- Eagle Automation Systems
- The Expanded Metal Company
- Extradakerb (Maltby Engineering) Ltd
- The Fencing Partnership Ltd
- Fensec Ltd
- Frontier Pitts Ltd
- Hardstaff Traffic Barrier Services Ltd
- Heald Ltd
- Hesco Bastion Ltd
- Highway Care
- J B Corrie & Co Ltd
- J&S Franklin Ltd
- Marshalls
- Mira Ltd
- Securiscap Ltd
- Security Solutions Ltd
- Tata Steel
- Tescon
- Townscape
- TRL
- Vale
- Zaun Ltd

PSSA Teams up with MAS to Provide Match-funded Support

Improving Members' businesses and revenue growth has always come before tick-box compliance as an objective of the PSSA Verification Scheme. Consultancy and support to Members is an integral part of the PSSA's mandate to raise standards in the perimeter security supply industry.

Through its partnership with Business Keys, PSSA has not only been able to provide a simple, robust and cost effective way to differentiate Members' products in the market place but also the technical support that is inevitably required to innovate and keep ahead of changing regulations and standards.

And working with Business Keys might not be as expensive as you think. As registered MAS expert consultants, Business Keys is able to offer its clients the opportunity to receive 50% match-funded support through the Government sponsored Manufacturing Advisory Service. There is a wide range of qualifying projects, including quality and standards, operational improvement, design and CE Marking, which are core to product verification. The following details provided by MAS outline some of the help on offer.

Discussion is also currently taking place with MAS at the national level on supply chain issues in the high security sector, especially help with understanding the gap between 'buyer' requirements and 'supplier' capability. For more details on this initiative contact Stephen Munden - stephen.munden@businesskeys.co.uk, or for more information on the MAS offer, see contact details below.

MAS helps manufacturers to achieve their potential

The Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) is government's support programme for small and medium (SME) manufacturing companies based in England. Our team of specialist manufacturing advisors is dedicated to helping your business improve and grow. Working closely with your senior management team, we can help you to set out a strategy for success and then support you on that journey. We provide a free review of your business to develop an action plan tailored for your company needs, and you could then go on to commission an improvement project to address key needs. And if you are an SME with the ambition to grow we can also provide match-funded support of £300 to £3000 for improvement projects. MAS is working with nearly 10,000 businesses, focused on government's Industrial Strategy priority sectors for advanced manufacturing. These sectors include many for which high security is a pre-requisite for reasons of value-at-risk, safety or threats to sensitive information. Also included in our portfolio are cross-sector industries including materials and electronics/ photonics. MAS expert consultants deliver a wide range of services in four core areas: Strategy, Supply Chain, Innovation and Efficiency. Through our strong connections with other government support programmes we can refer you to other services at the right time including Growth Accelerator (for business development coaching, growth through innovation and access to finance), Technology Strategy Board (for technology prototyping) and UK Trade & Investment (for export advice).

MAS STRATEGY services help you to plan your business

MAS experts can help you to develop a strategy for success covering all of your business or focusing in more detail on key aspects to suit current priorities. Examples include: Manufacturing strategy; Business strategy; Sales growth & marketing strategy; Quality (ISO 9001), environmental (ISO 14001) & appropriate sector standards; E-business strategy; Skills and training strategy; Supply chain re-shoring; 'Financial Expert' awareness of tax and funding options (a free expert-led one day workshop)

MAS CONNECTS to help you grow your supply chain

MAS supply chain specialists work with buyers and suppliers to improve quality and delivery, and to open up opportunities for growth: Reviewing your supply chain strategy; Maximising involvement in existing supply chains; Getting into new supply chains and new sectors

MAS INNOVATES to develop your new ideas

Examples of the support MAS experts can offer include: Materials innovation; Product innovation; Product idea generation; Design for Manufacture and Assembly; Computer Aided Engineering and Design; Rapid prototyping; Automation; Product conformance and compliance; Key Stage Review; Intellectual Property audit; 'Innovation Expert' advice on product development (a free expert-led one day workshop)

MAS EFFICIENCY helps you improve your processes

MAS experts help you save cost and be more productive through: Value stream mapping; Process mapping; Team building; Improving quality & delivery; Improving resource efficiency; Improving layouts, space utilisation & cellular manufacturing; Lean efficiency; Waste reduction; 5S & visual management; Six Sigma & quality improvement

More detailed information and case studies of MAS support are available on the MAS website www.mymas.org. To be put in touch with an experienced MAS Advisor please contact Lee Candy via the MAS helpline 0845 658 9600 or email advice@mymas.org

60SECOND INTERVIEW

Mike Webb

Technical Product Assessor



What does your role in the PSSA involve?

Technical product assessor. Scheme advisor; Product conformity advisor.

What's your vision for PSSA over the next year/ 3 years/ 5 years?

To drive up/improve the level of product compliance/conformity currently demonstrated by PSSA members whilst aligning them with the discipline of the using quality, performance & safety standards.

Where have you previously worked?

British Standards Institution – 33 years in the area of product conformity; marketing & sales; Global product conformity consultant.

What's the first thing you would do if you were prime minister?

Improve the NHS.

Who would you most like to meet and why?

David Attenborough. A thoroughly nice, genuine gentleman with many stories to tell over a long career in broadcasting and Natural History.

Current List of Products

Manufacturer/Distributor	Product
ATG Access	SP400 Bollards
Broughton Controls	Defender 941 Barrier
Broughton Controls	Defender 942 Barrier
Cova Security Gates	Miti Gate 10930
Cova Security Gates	Miti Gate 10940
Cova Security Gates	Full Depth Rising Bollard 11840
Cova Security Gates	Shallow Pit Road Blocker 10506
Frontier Pitts	Terra V Gate
Frontier Pitts	Terra Sliding Cantilevered Gate
Frontier Pitts	Terra Ultimate Barrier
Frontier Pitts	Compact Terra Barrier
Frontier Pitts	Terra Blocker
Frontier Pitts	Terra Shallow Blocker
Frontier Pitts	Surface Mount Blocker

DIARY DATES

You are invited to attend **MEI's Security & Resilience Briefing on Thursday 3rd July** at the Head Office of Mott Macdonald, Global Engineering Consultants in London, from 2.00 - 5.30pm. Places are limited at this event and should you wish to come, and or bring a colleague or customer with you, please let them know as soon as possible. For more details contact:

Richa Ghai: rghai@majoreventsint.com or call +44 207 934 9004 or visit www.majoreventsinternational.com

UK

IFSEC international 2014

17th - 19th June 2014
Excel, London
<http://www.ifsec.co.uk>

Securing Asia and Africa 2014

14th - 15th July 2014
QEII Conference Centre, London
<http://www.securingasia.com>

Transport Security Expo 2014

2nd - 3rd December 2014
Olympia, London
<http://www.transec.com/>

Overseas

National School Safety Conference 2014

28th July - 1st August 2014
<http://www.sourcecurity.com>

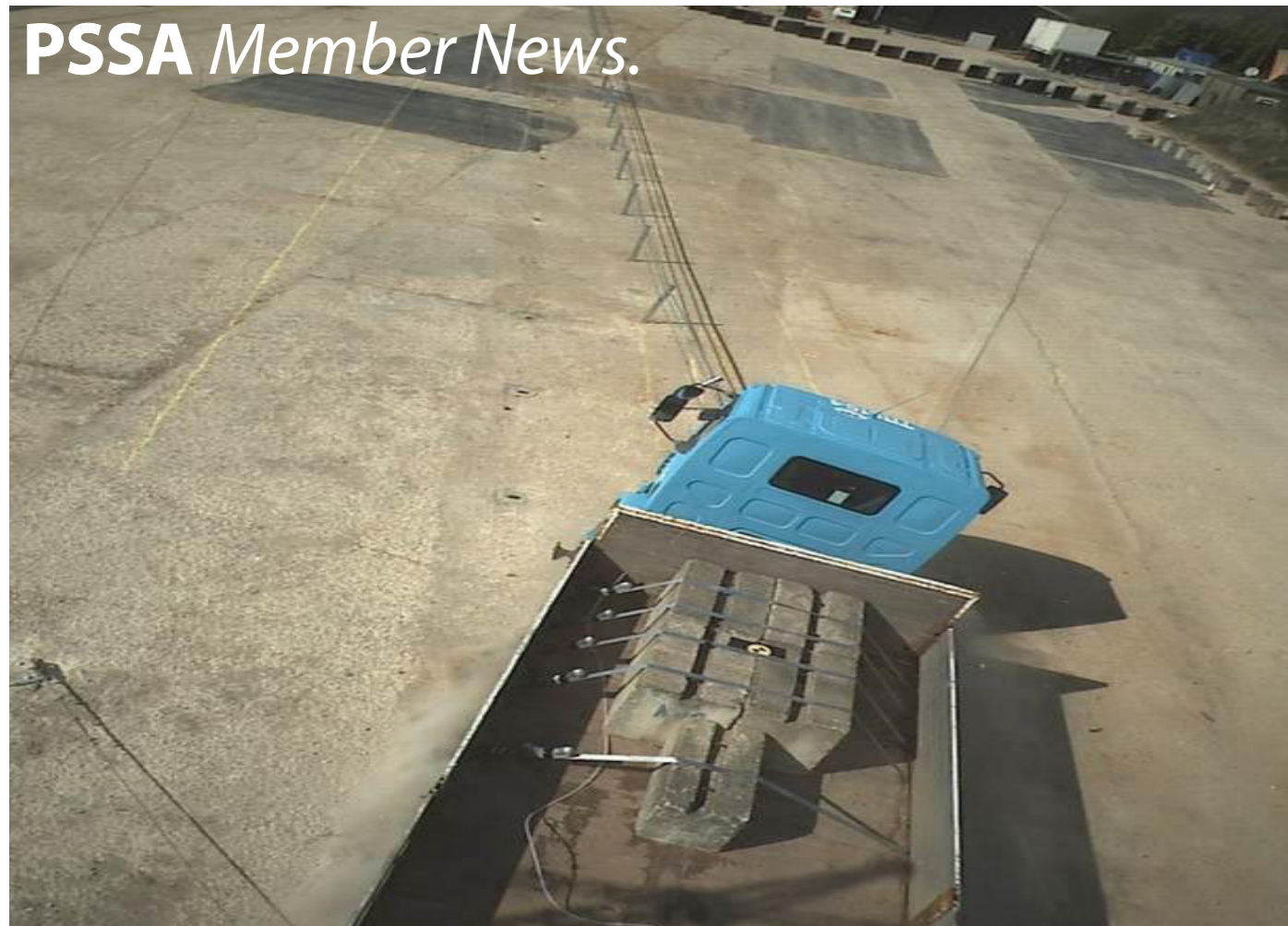
WA Safety Show 2014

August (2014)
Perth Convention & exhibition centre, Australia
<http://www.wasafetyshow.com>

8th International Exhibition & Conference for Police and Special Equipment

9th - 11th September 2014
Leipzig, Germany
<http://www.gpec.de>

PSSA Member News.



Above: TRL's new high energy impact test facility

Investment made in new TRL test site

TRL's new high energy impact test facility is operational at Membury in Berkshire.

Just 30 minutes west of the TRL Headquarters, this major investment is now up and running. The move started at the end of 2013 and the entire project team has worked hard to ensure that testing programmes were interrupted for the minimum time possible.

"We have installed a new electric winch that is capable of pulling heavier loads, reaching higher speeds more quickly and is far easier to control for accuracy of speed and impact point" explained Nick Anderson who was lead for the project. He went on "This means that we can deliver a wider range of impact tests and an improved site configuration that will enable us to deliver impact tests on target and speed for our customers".

In fact, so confident is he of these operational improvements that he has undertaken to provide a free retest to customers if these performance measures are not met. Kevin Ell is the Site Manager for Membury and he will be working hard to ensure that the site is fully completed and that our customer service is second to none.

"We have a much more flexible site here and we can plan for a far greater range of testing for our customers. In fact this new area is being developed to deliver a bespoke testing facility for safety and security barrier testing, as well as specialist testing for new vehicle developments" he explained. "We are up and running but there are a range of additional improvement works that will be phased in over the next year or so. These include black topping most of the existing concrete surfaces, a new visitor and meeting centre and improvements to data acquisition, communications, power and access facilities. When it is finished this will be a world leading facility."

High energy impact testing started at Membury towards the end of March and was then assessed for a range of testing by UKAS. This means that we are now accredited to provide testing to EN1317, NCHRP350, MASH09, TD49/07 and EN12767 for safety barriers, truck mounted attenuators and roadside equipment, as well as testing to PAS68 (2013) and the new IWA14-1 standard for vehicle security barriers at the new site.

For further information please contact Kevin Ell at Membury on 01344770544 email kell@trl.co.uk or Nick Anderson at TRL Crowthorne on 01344770005 email npanderson@trl.co.uk

Focus on UKTI

With the PSSA forging closer links with UKTI, David Lines, Assistant Director Support to Business, talks about the role of the SME within the security sector.

SMEs (defined as companies employing up to 250 staff and with a turnover not exceeding €50M) are the lifeblood of the UK economy. Nationally SMEs account for almost 50% of private sector turnover and almost 60% of the working population is employed by an SME. UK SMEs play a vital role in sustaining and developing the UK's defence & security industrial base – a powerful contributor to the UK economy – by maintaining our reputation as world leaders in the field of niche and innovative technology and by providing our leading prime contractors with the capabilities and solutions necessary to underpin their equipment and services. The role they play in securing both home and overseas sales cannot be overstated and they require, and deserve, the best possible government support.

The defence and security sectors have remained relatively buoyant throughout the financial downturn with the UK maintaining its position as second only to the US in terms of defence exports (averaging 20%, with sales of £8.8Bn in 2012) and winning 3% of the security export market in 2012 with record sales of £2.7Bn. The versatility of UK SME products/ services means that there is scope for many more to become involved in defence/security exporting. However breaking into the overseas defence and security markets can be challenging, if not daunting, for smaller companies and even for those that persevere and become successful it can be a long, slow process, putting considerable pressure on company resources and other priorities.

It is hoped that the DSO pages on the .GOV UK website will provide the required level of advice, information and support to serve up to 95% of our SME customers at any one time. Visit www.gov.uk/ukti-dso. For the 5% or so that need more specific, hands-on assistance we are here to help wherever we can. We have teams of civilian and military experts who can provide market-related advice and our Market Analysis team generates both global and sector-specific market data, free examples of which are available online. We have DSO military and civilian staff present at a number of key UK and overseas defence/security exhibitions and many of our overseas Embassies and High Commissions also have UKTI officials on hand to provide in-country support. Our hands-on advice will tend to be strategic, focusing upon a specific project or outcome and is designed to get the company back on track and under self-control as soon as possible.

The UKTI DSO Small Business Unit (SBU) also conceives, develops and delivers a range of events and activities designed to identify new potential exporters and to deliver specific support and services to established exporters. A series of round-Britain seminars brings our advice, information and support closer to the customer. Getting our message out to prospective new defence/security exporters remains a major challenge for us.

We have developed important working relationships with the principal national and regional defence/security trade bodies and they help to promote our support and services. We also visit a number of relevant UK exhibitions and shows each year to meet new companies on their stands and help with their export issues and queries.

In 2013 we delivered a very successful Symposium for small business with almost 250 SMEs from over 180 companies in attendance. We also offered three 'Meet the Buyer' networking sessions with overseas government officials and industrialists in conjunction with the DSEI show in September. These were attended by over 120 SMEs. Our range of events and activities throughout 2014 will vary from this but will be equally as versatile and, we hope, beneficial to UK SMEs.

Support from our colleagues within UKTI as well as those in key government departments is crucial to our ability to provide a fully rounded service to UK SMEs. UKTI has nine regional International Trade Teams (ITTs) within England (separate arrangements exist within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and we are in regular contact with all parties to ensure that we fully support each other's activities and ventures for the wider benefit of UK SMEs. Our regional colleagues help us to promote and administer our round Britain seminars, from where they are able to explain to SMEs the range of services available from UKTI on a more local basis. In turn we are always on hand to help promote and support regional activities that have a defence/security application. Our working relationship with UKTI colleagues extends to UK Export Finance, a sister group specialising in overseas trade credit insurance and other financial services.

A sound working knowledge of the UK's export licensing regulations is vital, especially where military goods and services are involved. We work very closely with the BIS Export Control Organisation, giving their export advisers a platform to address current and would-be SME exporters about understanding their role and responsibilities in the export process.

For many UK SMEs the defence/security sales journey will begin by trying to sell their goods and services to our own Armed Forces. Our relationship with the MoD is vital to us providing a comprehensive advisory and support service, both for home and overseas sales, to UK SMEs. Together we speak at a number of defence/security seminars and conferences organised by various trade groups and private sector events organisers as well as ourselves to offer a comprehensive support package to UK SMEs in the defence/security sectors.

For more information see www.ukti.gov.uk

Skills Cards

To all those working on Construction Sites or completing PQQs to be considered for work:-



The issues around CSCS Cards, & more recently SMSTS or SSSTS Certification, & the NVQs you will need to get cards, if you let them lapse regardless of your qualification & experience is getting much more difficult. Likewise if you want to operate plant the CPCS Cards that many big contractors insist upon, but you are multi skilled, so not solely operating say an excavator is nigh on impossible to keep up honestly. Also did you know that CSCS is not acceptable in court as proof of competence, you will need other systems in place to cover you for this? If things do go wrong so the skills cards are not much use except as an access to work on these particular sites, or as someone said as ice scrapers or packers.

Some of the many serious questions being asked recently:-

- 1 - Why do experienced workers have to renew the card except for the updates on Health & Safety?
- 2 - Why NEBSH and SMSTS etc which more stringent are NOT recognized by CSCS?
- 3 - Why DWP give grants to foreigners to gain the card as a means of ID not for skills?
- 4 - Why have a competency skill/trade on the card when it's never been enforced? Landscapers & Groundworkers are often installing Fencing for example.
- 5- Is "No Card - No Work" actually legal? Surely if you are properly competent to do your job & safe that should be enough?

Some more points of concern:-

They are excluding the experienced guys from the system & trying to force them to go through NVQs to renew their cards if they lapse, when they have records on the system even though there is a gap. For multi tasking guys who operate plant why, for example, do our guys have to operate the plant for a minimum of 40 minutes per working day to keep their CPCS card? "In November I paid Construction Helpline for 2 CSCS tests and cards for 2 of my employees. Now in May I have still only received 1 despite dozens of phone calls. They tell me that CSCS has sent out originals and replacements yet not one has arrived in the mail."

"Why do they force Professionals (eg Senior Planners, etc.) to do unnecessary NVQ's. For me, there is no NVQ that is directly applicable to project planning, but CSCS stated I could do one in Project Controls or Project Management, which wouldn't prove I was a competent planner at all." "I am a Senior QS with 50 years experience on construction sites. I needed to renew my platinum CSCS card recently but exceeded the 6 months renewal period as I had a job in the office. Therefore I had to apply for a new CSCS card. To my amazement the CITB would not let me apply for a professional/black card as I had not paid my RICS annual subscriptions for 15 years.

They forced me to apply for an operative/visitor card which is surely nonsense?"

Then there is the cost of the cards, the courses, the time off, the expenses which also mount up too. You can easily spend £1,000 per person to get the necessary paperwork in place for each person, when they already have qualifications & a track record which should be more than good enough for them to prove their skills & competence including legally in a court of law. We wonder how many of these issues our members & readers have encountered with Skills Cards because to more & more people the system is not fit for purpose? The Cards work for college leavers & people coming into Britain from elsewhere but not for those who have worked in the industry for years. It is also encouraging our skills base to haemorrhage to other countries & early retirement. Let us know your thoughts! Feedback via Claire Kelly at PSSA offices.

PSSA Contact Details:

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SUDOKU

