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Scotch Whisky trade body backs drive to boost UK food and drink exports

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has welcomed the UK Government's initiative launched today (27 January) to boost exports of food and drink to fast-growing global markets.

As part of the project steering group, the SWA worked with government and industry to develop the Food and Drink Export Plan. It will promote the quality of British food and drink, help open up markets, remove trade barriers and encourage more businesses to explore overseas opportunities.

The food and drink sector is vital to the UK's economic growth. UK food and drink exports grew by 12 per cent in 2010 to £16.1 billion. Scotch Whisky is one of the success stories, with exports hitting a record £3.45bn that year. The SWA has made great strides in targeting emerging markets, for example in South America and Asia. The new Export Plan is designed to help more sectors target fast-growing economies, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and Mexico.

Gavin Hewitt, chief executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, said: "We have worked with Government to come up with a joined-up approach to market access which will help the food and drink sector drive up its exports, to the benefit of the entire UK economy. The SWA plays a key role in promoting exports in our industry and we hope others can learn from some of our achievements."

In particular, Mr Hewitt welcomed the increased focus on removing trade barriers, closer co-ordination on Ministerial visits, and efforts to protect products in overseas markets, for example through recognition of geographical indications (GIs).



Notes to editors:

- The exports plan was developed by Defra, UK Trade and Investment, industry trade associations (including the SWA) and top exporting companies. The Exports Action Plan will be available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/food/food-industry/exports/>
- GIs identify goods which have a given quality, reputation or other characteristic attributable to its geographical origin. Scotch Whisky is now registered as a GI throughout the European Union and several other countries, including India, Panama, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Turkey, meaning it is recognised as a product that can only be made in Scotland.
- For further information on the SWA please contact Rosemary Gallagher, SWA communications manager, Tel 0131 222 9230/0743 260 5385 or email rgallagher@swa.org.uk. Website www.scotch-whisky.org.uk