



News Release

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Commerce, SBA Launch New Online Tool To Help Small Businesses Begin Exporting

New Site: Six Steps to Exporting Success

WASHINGTON – Small businesses interested in exporting now have a new online tool to help them tap into the global marketplace to grow their business. Developed by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Small Business Administration, Six Steps to Begin Exporting, www.export.gov/begin, is the latest tool in the National Export Initiative toolbox to help entrepreneurs begin exporting.

The six-step process begins with a self-assessment to help potential exporters gauge their readiness to successfully engage in international trade. The self-assessment is followed by sections on training and counseling programs; resources to create an export business plan; information on conducting market research; assistance for finding foreign buyers; and investigating financing for your small business exports, foreign investments or projects.

Upon completing the self-assessment, businesses receive a score indicating their level of readiness. Based on the score, additional resources are identified fitting their specific needs, including SBA and its nationwide resource partners SCORE and Small Business Development Centers, as well as Commerce's U.S. Export Assistance Centers, which provide individualized support.

“This practical, interactive website is just the latest example of the commitment the Obama administration has made to helping American businesses – especially small businesses – sell more of what they make around the world,” U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said. “Connecting America’s entrepreneurs and small businesses with new buyers and new markets abroad will help create jobs and spur sustainable economic growth.”

“With nearly 96 percent of the world’s customers living outside the United States and two-thirds of the world’s purchasing power in foreign countries, tapping into opportunities in the global market makes perfect sense and is more attainable than ever for small business owners,” SBA Administrator Karen Mills said. “One of the main hurdles potential exporters face is their fear that exporting is too complicated. This six-step process addresses and dispels that concern. Across the administration, we continue to strengthen the tools and resources so we can be the best possible partner in helping small business owners grow their customer base beyond our borders and, in doing so, create new jobs here at home.”

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This joint Commerce-SBA effort is part of an array of activities by federal agencies to support President Obama's National Export Initiative, which calls for doubling U.S. exports and supporting 2 million jobs over the next five years. So far this year, U.S. exports have increased nearly 18 percent compared to the same period in 2009.

President Obama has outlined five steps the Administration is taking to help U.S. firms expand sales of their goods and services abroad: creating a new Cabinet-level focus on U.S. exports, expanding export financing, prioritizing government advocacy on behalf of U.S. exporters, providing new resources to U.S. businesses seeking to export, and ensuring a level playing field for U.S. exporters in global markets.

For more information on export services for small businesses or to find local counseling and technical assistance resources, please visit www.export.gov.

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