

## **Design Partners - Business Plan**

September 2001

### **About Design Partners**

*Design Partners aims to increase the level of international design business by co-ordinating the activities of design industry bodies and government agencies and departments.*

To achieve its aim, Design Partners develops policies, programmes and activities – specifically focussed on design - to help Trade Partners UK (the lead government support service for British businesses trading abroad) fulfil its own role, which is to help new and established exporters develop overseas trade capability and new opportunities abroad.

Trade Partners UK is responsible for trade development across the UK regions, national trade support services, the commercial work of diplomatic posts and exporters' interests within Government. Design Partners' role is to work to ensure that the design industry gains maximum value from these services.

Design Partners therefore brings together the representative bodies of the country's design industry and government to enable Trade Partners UK to provide design businesses with a range of relevant and timely services to increase their export potential.

Design Partners is resourced through the group's secretariat at Trade Partners UK and via contributions of time, effort and knowledge from the members. To achieve fully the activities outlined in this plan, Design Partners will need to secure an increase in sponsorship from government or other sources.

### **About the design industry**

Design Partners supports three elements of the UK design industry:

Designer-Makers

Design Consultants

Architects

The design industry is a significant export performer with overseas revenue of £68 million from architecture, £40 million from crafts and £1 billion from design consultancies. The design industry also enhances the international commercial potential of other UK products and services, aiding UK competitiveness and encouraging inward investment from companies looking for partnerships with design-led British businesses. In 2000, the value of design-related activity within the UK economy as a whole was estimated at £26.7 billion.

## **Target markets for design**

The current target markets are:-

Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Scandinavia, Switzerland and the USA.

These will be reviewed on a regular basis.

## **Design Partners activities**

Design Partners main activities are:

- Fostering collaboration between industry groups and undertaking specific initiatives
- Identifying suitable target markets for the design industry
- Co-ordinating medium to long-term support programmes relevant to those markets, including inward and outward missions and seminars
- Helping to build partnerships in the appropriate countries
- Undertaking research on the design industry (current activity, scale, trends etc) and overseas markets (scoping studies to quantify potential)
- Working to become established as *the* information resource on design-related export activity
- Identifying and re-assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the industry
- Facilitating export training for industry and briefings/training on the design industry for government personnel
- Facilitating the 'joining-up' of the government agencies involved in export support to make the best use of the overlaps and interdependencies that exist
- Facilitating communication on potential opportunities for businesses. This incorporates export promoters, Business Links, the Regional Development Agencies of England, Scottish Trade International, Trade

International Northern Ireland, Wales Trade International, representative organisations and designers

- Producing an annual report setting out the progress of Design Partners towards meeting its objectives and also outlining its activities for the coming year. The report would also enable the publication of research and act as media briefing material.

Further details on how these activities will be taken forward are set out in a separate document, the Design Partners Action Plan.

Design Partners will measure its performance at various levels, wherever it is practicable and reasonable. The results of our performance measurement will be published in the Design Partners annual report.

## **Membership**

Trade Partners UK  
Department of Trade and Industry  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
The British Council  
Crafts Council  
Design Council

British Design & Art Direction  
British Design Initiative  
Chartered Society of Designers  
Design Business Association  
Royal Institute of British Architects  
British European Design Group  
Institute of Practitioners in Advertising

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