

Whilst I am not a 'small business' I work in Commercial Banking within NatWest which typically looks after businesses with t/o between £1m and £10m and have many years of experience of the SFLGS and its nuances.

I would advise the following should be considered.

1) The internal (external?) paperwork I have to complete from a Bankers point of view is highly time consuming with numerous forms required. The customer also has to sign into lots of these forms which is off putting for both Bank & Customer.

2) The end to end process is far too long and it is the DTi that actually slow it down the most. From initial discussion with a customer it takes as a minimum 2 months I would say to get a facility in place.....I detail below the procedure as I see it.

- a) Discuss project/proposition with customer
- b) Bank provides scheme requirements and SFLGS application forms. Customer completes forms and produces business plan.
- c) Bank assesses and obtains sanction to credit risk of the project subject to DTi ratification of g/tee.
- d) Bank sends to internal co-ordinator the SFLGS forms.
- e) Bank internal co-ordinator sends forms to DTI for g/tee signing
- f) DTI then takes 2-4 weeks to action them.
- g) DTI sends forms back to Bank's internal co-ordinator.
- h) Internal co-ordinator sends forms back to the likes of me with all my further requirements.
- i) I then produce idiots guide to customer and draw up facility letter also.
- j) Customer gets facility letter and all other forms, completes and returns to me.
- k) I then requisition mortgage debenture if not already in place for other facilities
- l) customer gets, executes and sends back mortgage debenture
- m) Bank registers mortgage debenture and makes SFLGS loan available.

Also from my discussions with accountants the key issues for them with the SFLGS is also the timescale/paperwork to complete one. If you can sort this out then I suspect a lot more use would be made of the scheme which in theory is an excellent one.

Feel free to contact me if you wish.

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