

to each SME was customised through the work of the Account and Client Managers in SER and the Business Gateway in conjunction with the RIEP Counsellor.

These supports were designed to raise the awareness of, the importance of and ensure effective strategy and planning and implementation of internationalisation.

PROJECT FINANCE

Funding Partners	Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire
Eligible Costs (£)	£963,698
ERDF/ESF Support (£)	350,208
Priority/Measure	Western Scotland Objective 2 2000-06 Priority 1: Develop the competitiveness and innovation of the region's SMEs 1.2: Enhance SME advice and support services to develop a competitive and innovative business base.

PROJECT PERFORMANCE

At the time of writing, June 2007, this project was on-going.

Indicator	Target	Achievement	% Target Achieved
Total no of existing businesses assisted	54	36	66.67%
Total no of instances of assistance to existing businesses	180	151	83.89%
Total no of existing businesses assisted	110	88	80.00%
Total no of instances of assistance to existing businesses	546	298	54.58%

PROJECT FUTURE

Due to the overall consistency of support offered locally, nationally and internationally to SMEs wishing to export, the scope for significant future development of the project is limited. However an evaluation undertaken by EKOS, identified areas that Scottish exporter businesses agreed would be beneficial to assist their exporting needs. Some of these themes are already carried out by RIE; however it is important to outline what advice, financial support and information Scottish exporting businesses wish to receive.

The following key themes emerged as to what assistance was most required:

- information is the most important tool for exporters – this needs to be readily accessible, reliable and adaptable in order for them to exploit exporting opportunities
- greater awareness of current provision and availability of export programmes is needed
- benefits of exporting and support from export partnerships should be further promoted to dampen unfounded fears regarding export activity to encourage new exporters
- export partnerships need to be adaptable and not view SME's as a homogenous entity, in order to be useful
- there are different stages of export development that need to be appreciated and targeted individually by any export partnership.