

## PRESS RELEASE

### SCDI LAUNCHES 2009-10 TRADE VISIT PROGRAMME

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The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) has announced details of its 2009-10 trade visit programme, targeting opportunities for Scotland's businesses in the growing markets of India, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

Working in partnership with Scottish Development International, the programme provides financial support and a route to market for Scottish SME's to grow their international activity.

SCDI's 2008-09 programme has involved more than seventy businesses and already generated more than £3.5m in exports.

**Dr Lesley Sawers, Chief Executive of SCDI, said:**

"Despite the challenges in the global economy, there has never been a better time for Scottish businesses to think about breaking into new markets.

"The weaker pound means that our products are more competitive, and new ways of communicating and doing businesses have stripped away many of the barriers to trading overseas.

"And the reputation of Scottish firms in energy, education, life sciences means that there is a real and genuine interest around the globe in working with Scottish suppliers and partners.

"We would urge any SME that is looking to grow their business to join our visits to these key growing international markets."

**Lena Wilson, Chief Executive of Scottish Development International, who last night addressed an audience of key SCDI members, said:**

"Trade missions are vitally important in helping Scottish businesses to explore the opportunities presented by international markets. Not only do these visits give participants first-hand experience of the potential a particular overseas market has to offer, but they also enable companies to establish key contacts in these areas.

"In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever for Scottish companies to look for new opportunities, particularly in areas such as China, India and the Middle East, which are expected to recover fastest from the global downturn.

These markets, together with traditional export markets such as the US and Europe, offer real potential for growth-minded Scottish companies, so I would encourage these companies to get involved in the new programme of trade missions over the next year."

**ENDS**

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