

SITPRO

Annual Review

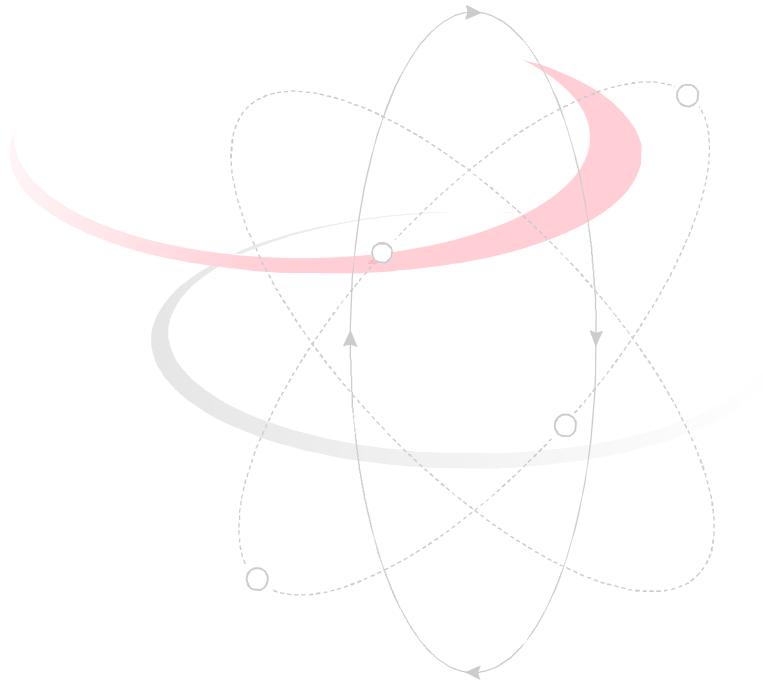
2004 - 2005



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Chairman's Statement

SITPRO's experiences during this year have reinforced our determination to promote the benefits of trade facilitation nationally and internationally. We have been presented with both encouraging support for the work that we are already undertaking and new challenges that will require our attention in the years to come.

The Department of Trade & Industry's review of SITPRO this year provided an opportunity to ask ourselves some hard questions about where our priorities lay. The result was a more focussed business plan that emphasised a set of core priorities that will form the bedrock of SITPRO's work over the coming months and years.

Central amongst these priorities is SITPRO's work towards securing a trade facilitation agreement at the WTO. A worldwide understanding of trade facilitation issues is the platform that will ensure that our efforts in the UK to make trading simpler remain effective, whether one is dealing with experienced trading partners or new business contacts in emerging economies.

One way to promote trade facilitation globally is to develop the best standards for businesses and governments to use. During the past year, SITPRO has been actively working, both to promote these standards internationally and to set an example by deploying them in the UK. The UNeDocs project has seen considerable progress over these twelve months, not least in the acceptance of the project into UN/CEFACT, and while SITPRO has been promoting this international project we have also realised the first national variation, UNeDocsUK, which is already being developed into functional solutions for UK traders.

The Single Window concept has progressed internationally and nationally this year, with the publication of a UN/CEFACT Recommendation and rapid progress in the UK project managed by

Business.gov. Similarly, the Interact methodology in the UK has been mirrored by the publication of a UN/CEFACT Guide to Benchmarking.

We still face challenges in these and other areas. Security still remains a major concern and the introduction of new controls still has the ability to undermine our work in other areas. It also continues to be important to monitor and influence European legislation as we move towards agreement on the Multi-Annual Strategic Plan. Additionally, SITPRO is appointing a new Board and Chief Executive this year and I would like to take the opportunity to thank David Wakeford and the old Board for their dedication and hard work.

These challenges will test us, we cannot meet them alone. One of the most positive aspects of the DTI's review was the way in which it highlighted the strong support for SITPRO amongst our stakeholders, within both government departments and the trading community. The partnerships that SITPRO has formed with its stakeholders are vital to the success of all our work. The members of our policy groups, representatives from HMRC, Defra and other government departments, our fellow trade facilitation agencies in Europe, the UN/CEFACT Forum and the developed countries who attend the Boksburg group are just some of the partners who make vital contributions to our work and there are many others working with us in other arenas. Without their support, the hard work of SITPRO's small staff and Board could not achieve the changes we seek.

This support is not only a recognition of SITPRO's work in past years, which we should celebrate, but also a trust that we will continue to justify the faith of our stakeholders in the coming years. It is a trust that we must meet by striving to secure the goals that we have set for the future.

NORMAN ROSE, Acting Chairman

Working Towards a WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

A World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement on Trade Facilitation was one of the “Singapore Issues” proposed as part of the Doha Development Round.

Negotiations on the subject began during the past year following the agreement of the “July 2004 Package”.

SITPRO has been working extensively to draw together support for an agreement on this subject, particularly from developing countries.

Achievements in 2004/2005

The work towards a WTO Trade Facilitation agreement has made substantial progress during the last year.

Following the negotiations in Cancún, it became important to carve out a place for Trade Facilitation outside the group of “Singapore Issues”. SITPRO continued to work extensively through the Boksburg Group, which had been set up during the previous year in conjunction with the Commonwealth Business Council (CBC) and the Department for International Development (DFID) to promote the issue amongst developing countries.

The success of the meetings in encouraging these countries to support an agreement was reflected in the announcement of the “July 2004 package”, when it was agreed that negotiations on trade facilitation could begin.

Since this decision, SITPRO has continued to work through the Boksburg group to discuss the proposals that will be required to ensure a successful agreement that meets the needs of the developing world. These discussions have been matched by a series of productive proposals to the WTO, many of which have originated from developing countries.

In addition to its work through the Boksburg Group, SITPRO has been actively promoting a WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement to developing and developed countries through a number of other groups including the Trade Facilitation Alliance, the International Trade Practices Group and EUROPRO. Notably, the work through EUROPRO resulted in a paper that was subsequently used by the European Commission (DG Trade) as a basis for its own submission to the WTO.

Cross-Project Links

Working in Europe

- SITPRO has used its influence in Europe, through EUROPRO to encourage strong support for a WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

UK International Trade Single Window

The UK International Trade Single Window (ITSW) project aims to create an electronic portal that allows traders to make all their submissions to government at once.

This cross-departmental initiative should bring trade facilitation benefits for both government and trade, which include: easier access to government departments; faster submissions and responses through the use of electronic messages; a reduction in errors caused by re-keying of data; and more effective implementation of security measures.

Achievements in 2004/2005

Considerable progress has been made on this project during the last year. As part of its efforts to promote the benefits to UK plc of a Single Window system, SITPRO commissioned a study to identify the specific business benefits that a Single Window system would offer and the threats that the UK might face if a Single Window was not built. This report was published in February and set out a convincing case for the immediate development of an UK ITSW.

Meanwhile, the implementation of these recommendations moved a step closer when, due in part to lobbying by SITPRO, the management of the national Single Window project, which had previously been led by HM Customs & Excise, was handed over to Business.gov. Business.gov is part of the Small Business Service and has a strong track record of creating technical

solutions that will join up government for the benefit of users. Its work is guided by a project board, which included representatives from HM Customs & Excise, Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Transport, Food Standards Agency, Department for Trade and Industry and SITPRO.

During the year, the project team created a business case for an UK ITSW based on the specific requirements of the UK trading environment, which included the findings of SITPRO's report and detailed information about the costs and resources required to run the project. This business case was completed in March with the recommendation that Business.gov should continue to manage the project and begin work on creating an International Trade Single Window for the UK.

Cross-Project Links

International e-Business Standards

- SITPRO hopes that the UNeDocsUK standards will be used in the creation of the Single Window and the e-Business and Standards Policy Group has been active in promoting a standards-based approach to the development of this portal.

Working with UN/CEFACT

- During the last year, UN/CEFACT published their Recommendations and Guidelines on Establishing a Single Window.

International e-Business Standards

SITPRO has been extensively involved in the development of international standards for many years. Most recently, this has included the development of the UNEDocs messaging standards.

SITPRO has also developed the first national extension of these standards, UNEDocsUK. This repository of internationally agreed standards brings together electronic and paper documents for international trade transactions.

Achievements in 2004/2005

The e-business team have had a successful year following on from the development version of UNEDocsUK, we have now launched UNEDocsUK version 1.0. This year saw the first live implementation of the standards through SITPRO's licensee Precision Software and HSBC's Export Services division, as well as public demonstrations from other licensees at major conferences.

In order to share and promote the project information and repository, a website was developed that provides background information and access to the freely available standards as well as information on becoming one of the approved users who have access to all of the current development work.

There was also very good news when the global UNEDocs project was officially accepted into UN/CEFACT (Centre for Trade Facilitation and electronic business) by the Forum Management Group (FMG) as an official project under the Trade Business Groups as a new Trade Business Group 2 'Digital Paper'. The group has already attracted interest, among others, from Australia, Bulgaria, Asia and IATA.



Following the 2nd bi-lateral meeting on e-commerce last year between DTI and the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy (MOCIE) and the formal signing of a memorandum of understanding between SITPRO and KTNET of Korea, SITPRO were asked to lead the Paperless Trading stream at the 4th meeting of ASEM (Asia Europe Meeting). The event that also presented streams in the areas of e-Health, e-Learning, e-Logistics and Spam proved to be very successful and was attended by over 500 people. During the event some of SITPRO's licensees spoke and demonstrated the use of UNEDocsUK in their licensed software products, sending and receiving export documentation.

The eBSPG (e-Business Standards Policy Group) saw its membership expand to over 20 members covering sectors such as pharmaceuticals and the tobacco industry as well as more government officials. The group, now chaired by Mr Tony Davies the Head of UK delegation to UN/CEFACT, has a much broader view and have been able to tackle issues more informed to a more generic outcome.

Through our membership of external groups we are able to influence the project in other areas in the UK to promote the use of the internationally agreed standards of UNEDocs. One of these successes this year for to get the agreement from the Office for Government Commerce to agree to look at the e-government procurement project to align with the UN/CEFACT Core Component Library and the UN Trade Data Element Directory ISO 7273. This would bring the UNEDocs, UNEDocsUK and the OGC models together so as to produce more compliant and integrated outputs. The WCO is also considering the UN Core Component Technical Specification and Core Component Library for use with their Data Model.

Cross-Project Links

Working with Defra

- In association with DEFRA and the Ports Procedures Policy Group, SITPRO aligned the Certificate of Veterinary Compliance Document (CVED).

Working with UN/CEFACT

- The new Trade Business Group on Digital Paper means that the UNEDocs project will be integrated with UN/CEFACT's wide range of trade facilitation projects.

UK International Trade Single Window

- The development of international standards is an important step towards achieving a Single Window for International Trade that will fit with the government's objective in the UK to achieve interoperability and to stop the duplication of data and work for traders and government alike for the benefit of UK PLC.

Benchmarking the Costs of Border Regulation

In order to quantify the cost of border regulations to traders, SITPRO has been developing a benchmarking methodology known as Interact.

The methodology uses a detailed survey to break down the costs, both financial and human, that companies face in order to comply with border regulations and can help uncover the hidden costs of trading internationally.

Achievements in 2004/2005

During the year, SITPRO and its external consultants continued to develop and improve the Interact methodology in the light of the responses to its development surveys.

In addition to testing the viability of the Interact methodology, the initial results from the development surveys highlighted additional areas of complexity within the trading process. With new legislation constantly being added to the regulatory burden on traders, this study emphasises the importance for companies of simplifying their internal procedures.

A new version of survey and completion notes have been created, which now form a robust tool that can be distributed to companies and interested organisations.

The potential benefits of benchmarking the costs of international trade were highlighted during the year by UN/CEFACT's Benchmarking Guide. It is hoped that projects like Interact and similar initiatives taking place in other countries can be used to identify potential improvements to the trading environment.

UN/CEFACT are keen to promote benchmarking as a tool to support other trade facilitation initiatives, particularly in relation to assisting developing countries to improve their trade procedures.

Cross-Project Links

Working with UN/CEFACT

- The Interact project was used as an example of benchmarking methodologies in the Benchmarking Guide published by the ITPWG.

Development of Security Policy

The changes in the international trading environment that continue to be put in place after the recent international terrorist attacks are posing significant challenges to the flow of goods across borders. SITPRO has been at the forefront of building the dialogue between the trade and government in an often confused and complex new security environment.

Achievements in 2004/2005

While security issues cut across most of our policy groups, the SITPRO Security Forum brings together the interested parties to discuss and deliberate on important and potentially sensitive issues in a relaxed and collaborative atmosphere. As such, it is unique and is held by both government and trade representatives as a useful mechanism to report on initiatives as well as exchange views and experiences.

There were three meetings of the SITPRO Security Forum during this year addressing the full range of security initiatives driven by the US, EU and the UK and international organisations like the World Customs Organisation covering both Customs and transport policy.

These meetings were well attended and delegates were drawn from the trade and government reflecting the importance of security issues and the burgeoning legislative activity in this area.

The strong support that this group receives is indicative of the desire amongst both authorities and traders to develop security measures which will not disrupt legitimate trade unduly.



Working with Defra

The Defra Import/Export Consultation Exchange (DICE) is the forum by which Defra consults and engages in regular debate with a wide spectrum of import/export trade interests.

DICE seeks a high degree of involvement with speedy agreed resolution to any issues brought to the forum. Simplifying and standardising trade regulation procedures where possible is the primary objective of these discussions.

Achievements in 2004/2005

The work being undertaken with Defra is making good progress thanks to SITPRO's input and the dedication and foresight of a few key individuals at Defra.

Two meetings of DICE were held in the year and a number of sub-groups were set up as a result of the meetings. These sub-groups will address the concerns of the trade in specific areas and report back to the larger group.

DICE is now being attended by a large number of Defra departments, the Food Standards Agency and the Association of Port Health Authorities. Increasingly DICE is being viewed by Defra as a valuable conduit to consult the trade on new issue areas.

Although DICE is still a relatively new group, a process has been established which, if sustained, will start to bring major benefits to both Defra and the trade community.

Cross-Project Links

International e-Business Standards

- During the year, the Certificate of Veterinary Compliance Document (CVED) became the latest UK document to be aligned to UN standards.

Working in Europe

SITPRO is very active on the European Trade Facilitation scene, as most UK trade procedures are governed by EU legislation.

SITPRO's involvement in European debate is assured through its leading role in EUROPRO (the federation of European PRO committees) where it provides the secretariat. SITPRO also coordinates its activities with other European Business Associations, most notably through the Trade Action Group and the Duquesne Group.

Achievements in 2004/2005

There are some very encouraging developments taking place within the Commission. Most notably, the Commission is pursuing a vision for a paperless trade and Customs environment. If successfully implemented it will allow all EU Customs administrations to work as one, eventually encompassing non-Customs regimes and serving as a European Single Window. This would reduce trade transaction costs substantially, eliminate much waste and add to UK and European competitiveness. Equally significant, the Commission has described itself as ambitious in seeing through a WTO trade facilitation agreement.

SITPRO's prominence in debate is recognised by the Commission who repeatedly invite the EUROPRO secretariat to participate as an expert at high level Customs seminars with representatives of the member states. SITPRO is using this influence to help safeguard the

Commission's Vision and encourage a progressive implementation.

Working with our UK stakeholders in business and government as well as with the EUROPRO membership, SITPRO has helped put forward very detailed views on such diverse issues as the Security Amendment, the Modernised Customs Code, Authorised Economic Operators, Risk Management, the Single Window, Data Elements, UN Aligned Documents and Web-portals. Letters and position papers have been widely circulated to aid a constructive debate in the Commission, the member states and within the business community.

In view of enlargement and the challenges at Europe's new borders, EUROPRO has also developed a strong relationship with SECIPRO and its members, hosting a joint meeting in London.

Cross-Project Links

Working Towards a WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement

- EUROPRO held a meeting in tandem with the annual UNECE Trade Facilitation Conference in Geneva to brief the Commission on views on the scope for a WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Working with UN/CEFACT

Within the UN family of committees, UN/CEFACT is the Forum that is developing and delivering the next generation of standards, both paper and electronic, for international trade documentation. The Forum comprises business practitioners at strategic and tactical levels, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) specialists and designers of software and other electronic solutions, and Government officials responsible for trade policies and operational procedures. Working together, these experts identify and promote best practices through Recommendations, standards and other trade facilitation measures that will provide simple, open and transparent global commerce.

Achievements in 2004/2005

Throughout the year SITPRO continued to support actively the work of UN/CEFACT. SITPRO contributes extensively to UN/CEFACT through the International Trade Procedures Working Group (ITPWG) and Trade Business Group 2 - Digital Paper Group and currently SITPRO holds the Chair of the ITPWG.

The outstanding success of the year was undoubtedly the publication of UN Recommendation 33 - Recommendations and Guidelines on establishing a Single Window. The first all new Recommendation from CEFACT for over five years, gives the detail on the way the public and private sectors, working in close co-operation, can implement a Single Window to enhance the efficient exchange of information between trade and government. In turn, this will improve trading performance for the business community and ensure effective appropriate controls of trade and related information flows by government authorities and agencies.

The introduction of trade facilitation measures such as the Single Window requires a measurement tool to evaluate the cost and benefits and chart the way forward for greater progress. Recognising this need the ITPWG published the Benchmarking Guide in March 2005. The Guide provides a methodology and

options for measuring trade procedures and practices to enhance competitiveness, reduce costs and improve official controls. The Group hope the Guide will find support, especially from Developing Countries, so that it can be further developed into a Recommendation, adding to the range of CEFACT trade facilitation tools and techniques.

Promoting trade facilitation and encouraging its adoption by both business and government is an important part of the ITPWG remit. During the year Members of the Group played a part in organising and delivering two Capacity Building Workshops, in Geneva in October 2004 and Kuala Lumpur in March 2005 (as part of the UN CEFACT Forum) aimed at identifying implementation strategies for both countries, especially in the developing world and companies, particularly the small and medium size sector that will probably generate the next wave of economic development and wealth creation. SITPRO was able to use both occasions to demonstrate the benefits of the aligned system of trade documentation, advocate the introduction of the Single Window and report progress between Asia and Europe, under the banner of ASEAL (Asia Europe Alliance for Paperless Trade), on the migration path to paperless trading and other e-solution initiatives.

Emanating from the Workshops and spurred on by further feedback from the delegates the ITPWG decided to develop a Simple Guide to Trade Facilitation Implementation and Practices (TFIG). The aim of the Guide is to assist governments, business and trade services providers in assessing their needs and priorities in trade facilitation implementation. The Guide will also help them in utilising and implementing existing international trade facilitation standards, recommendations and other instruments. The target audience for the Guide encompasses all countries and trade and industry sectors engaging in cross border trade. Specifically the Guide will be of value to developing countries, economies in transition, land-locked countries and island economies. The final two categories would find the Guide especially useful as it will tackle the problems and difficulties (for example transit, and transport services availability) encountered in the identified countries.

A permanent feature of the ITPWG work programme is the maintenance and revision of existing UN CEFAC Recommendations. Unfortunately the Group could not deliver the revision of Recommendation 12 (dealing with trade facilitation measures for maritime transport documents) due to unresolved issues regarding the use of Documentary Credits for the movement of goods by sea. The work is ongoing and the Group hope to reach an agreement with the banking sector in this contentious area. Despite this failure, the Group has been considering revisions of two other Recommendations. Firstly the Aligned Invoice Layout Key (Recommendation 6), in order to accommodate the rapid developments in e-Invoicing. Secondly, and with the invaluable help of the Dangerous Goods section of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Documentary Aspects of the Transport of Dangerous Goods (Recommendation 11), in order to update references to official modal requirements, specifically the multi-modal transport of consignments.

Cross-Project Links

UK International Trade Single Window

- The UN/CEFACT Single Window recommendation is one of the tools that will be used to define the development of the UK International Trade Single Window.

Benchmarking the Cost of Border Regulations

- The ITPWG's Benchmarking Guide highlighted the important role that the Interact methodology could play in the identification of trade facilitation opportunities.

International e-Business Standards

- The newest Trade Business Group (TBG2 - Digital Paper) means that SITPRO's work on the UNeDocs electronic standards will be incorporated into the wide range of trade facilitation projects taking place at UN/CEFACT.

Assisting Traders

SITPRO runs a free trade procedures Helpdesk to assist traders with their exporting problems. Additionally, SITPRO offers advice on more common problems through the wide selection of free briefings on its website.

These services are supported by a quarterly newsletter, SITPRO News, which updates traders on topical issues and SITPRO's current work programme.

Achievements in 2004/2005

The SITPRO helpdesk received over 120 queries a month by telephone and email. The queries covered a wide range of topics concerning documentation and procedures for the international movement of goods. These included Customs regulations in the UK and overseas; special certificates required for entry into overseas markets such as Certificates of Free Sale and Health certificates; the carriage of dangerous goods; export finance, in particular letters of credit; Incoterms 2000 and SITPRO international trade documents. Calls were referred to the helpdesk from a number of sources including UK Trade and Investment, the Road Haulage Association and various chambers of commerce. The helpdesk received 90 emails of appreciation for help given during this period. The majority of calls to the helpdesk were from SMEs with fewer than 50 employees or from small local subsidiaries of national and international firms.

This year's publications included a new Completion Guide for the Export Cargo Shipping Instruction, to complement the very popular Dangerous Goods Note and Standard Shipping Note guides.

New financial briefings on Methods of Payment and the Foreign Exchange Market were also released, reflecting the continued demand from traders for guidance on financial issues.

Finally, in association with Global Gateway2Trade, SITPRO published the Roadmap to Exporting Success, a guide to the issues that traders need to consider and the best resources available to them.



Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2005

	2005	2004
	£000	£000
INCOME - Operating Activities		
HMG Grant-in-aid	1,314	1,278
Income from activities	30	32
	1,344	1,310
TOTAL COSTS		
Staff costs	(524)	(560)
Depreciation	(9)	(10)
Other operating costs	(826)	(736)
	(1,359)	(1,306)
OPERATING DEFICIT - Operating Activities	(15)	4
Interest receivable	2	1
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	(3)
DEFICIT ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION	(13)	2
Corporation Tax	-	-
DEFICIT ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES AFTER TAXATION	(13)	2
RETAINED SURPLUS BROUGHT FORWARD	110	108
RETAINED SURPLUS CARRIED FORWARD	97	110

Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses

No gains or losses other than the deficit for the period, were recognised by SITPRO.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2005

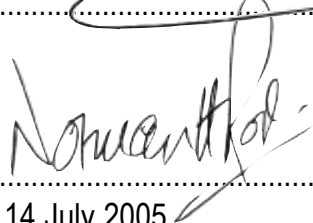
	2005		2004	
	£000	£000	£000	£000
TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS		11		17
CURRENT ASSETS:				
Debtors	51		69	
Cash at bank and in hand	157		65	
	208		134	
CREDITORS:				
Amounts falling due within one year	(122)		(41)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		86		93
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		97		110
ACCUMULATED FUNDS				
Income and Expenditure Account		97		110
MEMBER FUNDS		97		110

Statement by the Directors

The figures and financial information for the year 31 March 2005 do not constitute the statutory financial statements for that year. Those financial statements have been delivered to the Registrar and included the auditors' report which was unqualified and did not contain a statement either under section 237(2) of the Companies Act 1985 (accounting records or returns inadequate or accounts not agreeing with records and returns), or section 237(3) (failure to obtain necessary information and explanations).



.....Director



.....Director

Date - 14 July 2005

SITPRO's Board as at 31 March 2005

Acting Chairman

Norman Rose

Director General, Business Services Association
Chairman, Communications Strategy Group

Directors

Peter Raynor
Sandy Russell CB

Computer Consultant, Roundstone Developments
Formerly Deputy Chairman, HMC&E
Chairman, International Trade Practices Group
Chief Executive, Crown Agents
Director, Ad Valorem International Limited

Keith White
Peter Wilmott CMG

Advisors

Brian Atkinson
Colin Beaumont

Manager, Port of Felixstowe
Director General, BIFA

Ex-Officio Members

Matthew Conway
Kevin Franklin

Director, Market Access, DTI
Director, Customs & International Trade, HMRC

Company Secretary and Secretary to the Board

David Arathoon

Departures from the Board during the Year

Chairman

Lord Bhatia OBE

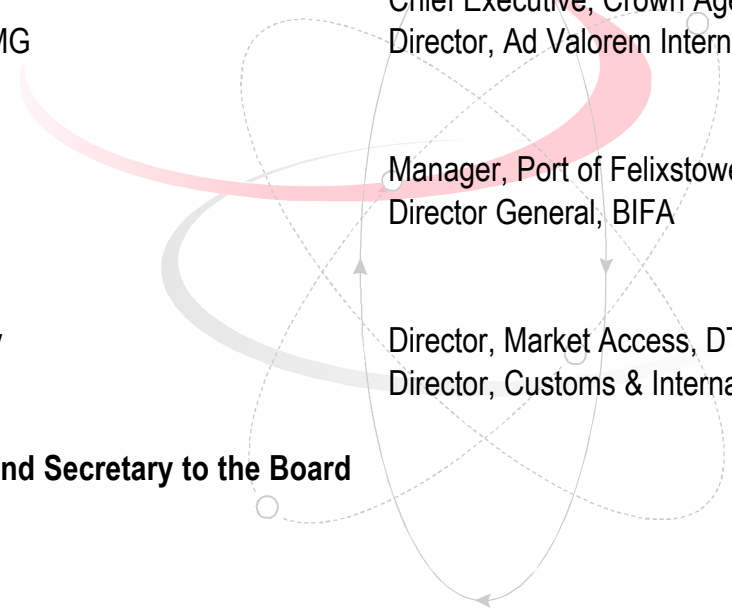
Directors

Françoise Joyce
Maria McCaffery

Chairman, International Security Forum

Ex-Officio Members

David Andrews
Bob Eagle CBE



SITPRO's Staff as at 31 March 2005

Chief Executive	David Wakeford MBE
Director, Trade Facilitation & e-Business	Gordon Cragge
Deputy Director, Trade Procedures	Andrew Grainger
Accountant	Sanjay Sharma
Assistant Director, e-Business & Technical Standards	Sue Bravery
Assistant Director, Communications & Promotion	Paul Hiscock
Assistant Director, International Trade Procedures	Aileen Prendergast
Assistant Director, Trade Procedures	Shondeep Banerji
PA to the Chief Executive	Nina Wilkins
Administration Assistant	Damilola Jossou

Departures from the Staff during the Year

Deputy Chief Executive	David Arathoon
Director, Electronic Business	Michèle Barker
Director, Trade Procedures	Michelle Walden
Deputy Director, Trade Procedures	Andy Walker
Assistant Director, Trade Procedures	Nick Kasper
Administration Assistant	Marie-Louise Konan

The Year Ahead (2005-2006)

With the DTI Review of SITPRO completed, we must look forward towards new opportunities for and challenges to trade facilitation that we must face in the coming year and beyond.

The work discussed in this Annual Review will continue in the form of seven key priorities agreed by the Board and the DTI:

- Supporting the World Trade Organisation trade facilitation negotiations
- Influencing reform of the Customs Code and e-Customs in the EU
- Assisting development of the International Trade Single Window
- Promoting UNeDocsUK nationally and, through the UN, UNeDocs as the internationally recognised and accepted electronic data standard for international trade
- Influencing the development of trade and security policy
- Promoting benchmarking of the cost of border regulation
- Strengthening links with HMG, including DEFRA and agencies, to improve non-Customs trade regimes.

In some of these areas the goal will be to continue the good work of the past year. Yet, for a few projects this will be a year when big changes take place.

The work towards a WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement reaches an important new milestone in December with the Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong. This meeting will determine whether the

Doha Development Round can be completed within the proposed timescale and SITPRO will be promoting trade facilitation as an issue that can offer gains to all the countries taking part.

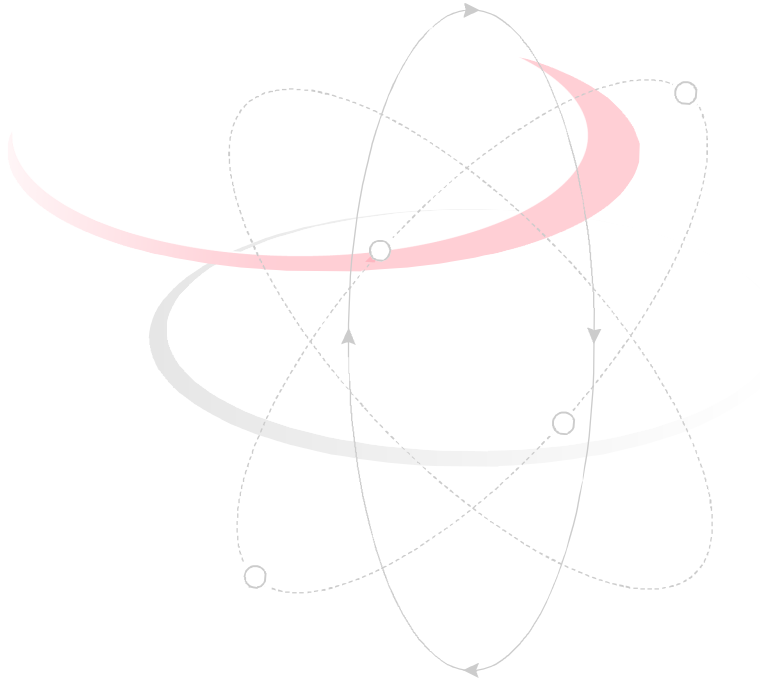
As the latest stage of concept definition work draws to an end for the Single Window project, we hope to enter an era of rapid progress as work begins to build an International Trade Single Window for the UK. This is not a project that will take place overnight, but we are closer to producing a working tool for traders than ever before.

On the European stage, we hope to see an agreement on the Multi-Annual Strategic Plan (MASP). The decisions reached within this framework will have huge repercussions for trade in the UK and SITPRO will be working to ensure that trade facilitation benefits of the MASP are not overwhelmed by the introduction of new controls.

Finally, this year will mark the conclusion of SITPRO's involvement with the Interact project to benchmark the costs of border regulations.

The changes in the year ahead are not restricted to individual projects. For SITPRO this will be a period of new beginnings as we welcome a new Chief Executive and appoint a new Board of Directors to guide our work.

Another exciting year lies ahead and SITPRO will be working to spread the benefits of trade facilitation across the UK and beyond.



SITPRO
Simplifying International Trade

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