

Minister for Business  
Richard Lochhead MSP  
T: 0300 244 4000  
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

Karen Adam MSP  
Convener, Equalities, Human Rights & Civil Justice  
Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

[ehrcj.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:ehrcj.committee@parliament.scot)

7 February 2025

Dear Karen

## **PUBLICATION OF GENDER EXPORT GAP RESEARCH REPORT**

I am writing to inform you of the publication today of the Gender Export Gap Research Report. The report is available to read here: [www.gov.scot/isbn/9781836912736](http://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781836912736) along with the Scottish Government's response to the report and its recommendations: [www.gov.scot/publications/gender-export-gap-report-response](http://www.gov.scot/publications/gender-export-gap-report-response)

Our international trade strategy, Scotland's Vision for Trade, recognises the barriers women face in accessing the full benefits of international trade. We engaged with a range of stakeholders to identify practical actions that the Scottish Government can take to increase the benefits of trade for women and the wider economy. Following a successful workshop with women-led businesses and other stakeholders in November 2023 we focused the scope of our work on better understanding and addressing the gender export gap. There is a known global gender export gap whereby businesses led by women are less likely to export than those led by men.

We commissioned Professor Norin Arshed, Dr Stephen Knox and Dr Carolina Marin Cadavid, from the Universities of Strathclyde and Stirling, to undertake research on this issue. The research aimed to better understand two things: what difference greater participation by women in exporting could make to the achievement of Scotland's wider trade and economic targets; and how the Scottish Government could encourage and support that participation by working with its partners and stakeholders.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



Accredited  
Until 2020



Drawing on quantitative and qualitative analysis, the research found that reducing the gender export gap in Scotland could lead to significant economic benefits, increasing total turnover by between **£2.1 billion** and **£6.3 billion** over one year and between **£3.4 billion** and **£10.3 billion** over two years. The research also looked at the barriers to exporting faced by women exporters and non-exporters; their opportunities to grow and internationalise; and the support required for the women to grow their businesses and export.

Based on the researcher's findings, the report provides a series of recommendations for the Scottish Government to take forward with its delivery partners and stakeholders. We will consider how best to implement those recommendations, in order to help address the gender export gap in Scotland. We will also engage with the UK Government on this. Initial work will focus on addressing the following recommendations:

- Raising awareness of exporting opportunities for women-led SMEs
- Better targeting women-led businesses for foundation training programmes and information on e-commerce
- Including more women in our programme of trade missions
- Increasing the international exposure of women's networks
- Collating gender-segregated data for exporting in Scotland
- Aligning our export and entrepreneurial policy priorities for women-led SMEs

Our progress in implementing the report's recommendations will be set out in our next Vision for Trade Annual report. In addressing these recommendations on the gender export gap we aim to align with the implementation of wider recommendations on women entrepreneurship from the Pathways: Women in Entrepreneurship Report.

I hope this information is helpful to the Committee. I am writing in similar terms to the Convener of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee.

Yours sincerely,

**Richard Lochhead**

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



Accredited  
Until 2020

