



# Research impact

---

## Helping UK exporters

Research by the Globalisation and Economic Policy Centre (GEP) has helped shape the UK's export policies by providing a better understanding of why firms choose to export and the barriers they face.

Research in international economics once concentrated on countries and industries. In recent years, thanks to larger and more detailed datasets, the focus has shifted to firms and products. GEP has been at the forefront of the move to a more "granular" approach.

"We were among the first researchers to use micro-data to shed new light on export decisions and their consequences," says Richard Kneller, who joined GEP as a Research Fellow in 2001 and is now a Professor of Economics, "and we were the very first to use UK data."

The centre's groundbreaking research in this field has produced a number of highly significant insights about UK exporters, including strong evidence that exporting improves a firm's financial health. Key differences between firms that successfully start to export and firms that do not – for instance, an ability to deal with language barriers or identify customers – have also

been identified. The overall result is a much deeper understanding of the characteristics that allow a firm to benefit from exporting.

UK Trade and Investment and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills have used the findings to improve the effectiveness of firm-specific policies to boost export performance. They also drew on GEP's evidence base to inform the design of a new trade promotion scheme, Gateways to Global Growth, which was launched in 2009.

"Our work has provided a knowledge base that has allowed government policy in this area to be evidence-led," says Professor Kneller, who testified as an expert witness before the House of Commons Select Committee on SMEs and Exporting in 2012. "The ultimate beneficiaries are the thousands of firms that have been given help to start exporting."

**UKTI data shows that by September 2012 some 3,400 firms had participated in Gateways to Global Growth. Of these, 67% improved their business performance and 80% increased productivity and competitiveness. UKTI estimates the scheme helped generate £539m in profit for supported firms in the 2011/2012 financial year.**

---



## Richard Kneller

Professor of Economics

“The search for new sources of economic growth is never-ending, and academics are every bit as keen as politicians, businesses and investors to find the answers – maybe even more so. You might think the solutions have become harder to identify amid the financial turmoil of recent years, and you would be right – but that just makes the challenge all the more interesting.

My research focuses on how firms behave, how their decisions influence performance and how government policy affects productivity. I’m also interested in entrepreneurship’s role in economic recovery and the question of whether an entrepreneur is invariably an Apprentice-type figure or usually someone altogether more run-of-the-mill.”

**[richard.kneller@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:richard.kneller@nottingham.ac.uk)**

### World-leading research

The research carried out at the School of Economics is regularly acknowledged as among the most significant of its kind in the world. It is also among the most influential.

Research can help boost economic competitiveness, improve the effectiveness of public services and policy and enhance quality of life. We have made important contributions in all of these areas through the work of our research centres.

- Centre for Decision Research and Experimental Economics
- Centre for Finance, Credit and Macroeconomics
- Centre for Research in Economic Development and International Trade
- Nottingham Centre for Research on Globalisation and Economic Policy
- Granger Centre for Time Series Econometrics
- Network for Integrated Behavioural Science
- Nottingham Interdisciplinary Centre for Economic and Political Research