**How to ask your MP to support SMI’s campaign to reinstate or replace TAP grants**

1) Find your local MP(s) and council leaders: Your local MP(s) can be found by using the following website and entering your postcode: <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

Write to your local MP and ask them to support the UK maritime sector:

* Email addresses for MPs can be found on the Contact section of their page on the Parliament website, which the link above will take you directly to.

The following template letter has been designed to send to your MP. The sections highlighted in yellow should be changed depending on the name of your organisation and the constituency in which you are based.

*Subject:****Please support the UK maritime sector’s call to reverse cut to DIT SME export grants***

*Dear [INSERT FULL NAME OF MP]*

*As a maritime business based in [INSERT NAME OF CONSTITUENCY], I am writing to ask for your help in convincing government to reverse cuts to the Department for International Trade’s Tradeshow Access Programme.*

*We are very concerned to learn that the Department for International Trade has decided to cancel the Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP).*

*The TAP scheme enables businesses exporting or thinking about exporting from the UK to attend selected overseas trade shows and conferences, and to secure grants to offset some of the costs of doing so. For our business the scheme has been invaluable in helping us get to the key trade shows across the world and to win business.*

*[Insert any relevant examples of where you have used TAP and any business wins]*

*Our trade body, the Society of Maritime Industries (SMI) believes that the government’s decision to cancel the TAP is a seriously detrimental step for British exporters, especially SMEs. For us, this change comes at the worst possible time, when we are attempting to recover from the pandemic and rise to the challenge of Global Britain.*

*Currently, there is no detail on what if any scheme will replace TAP. Even if there is an eventual successor programme, there is no support for SMEs preparing to attend trade shows this Autumn. Whilst the sums involved may only be in the region of £1,500 per business, for an SME like ours, this can often make all the difference.*

*[If planning on attending Autumn shows, use example]*

*Our trade body, SMI has written with Maritime UK to the Exports Minister, Graham Stuart MP, requesting a meeting to discuss the decision. We would be grateful if you were able to contact the Minister to show your support. Maritime UK would be happy to draft a letter to support this.*

*In addition, we would appreciate if you were able to table a written parliamentary question:*

* *To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what support her department is providing for UK maritime businesses to attend overseas trade shows.*
* *To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her department has held regarding a) the cancellation of the Tradeshow Access Programme and b) a replacement scheme for the Tradeshow Access Programme.*
* *To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions her department held with relevant stakeholders ahead of the cancellation of the Tradeshow Access Programme.*

*I would be grateful if you could let me know if you are willing to participate in any of these activities.*

*We look forward to your response and hope that together we can help exporters in [constituency] realise their potential.*

*Kind regards,*

*[INSERT CONTACT NAME, NAME OF YOUR ORGANISATION AND POSTCODE]*

2)  Inform Maritime UK about any interaction you have with any MP (info@maritimeuk.org).