

Thursday 7 February 2019

## THREE COMPANIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND WIN PLACES ON LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S FASTEST-GROWING INTERNATIONAL SALES STARS

Published this weekend, the 10<sup>th</sup> annual **Sunday Times HSBC International Track 200** league table ranks Britain's mid-market private companies with the fastest-growing international sales.

The three companies headquartered in **Northern Ireland** have all featured on the league table before. These Northern Irish stars have grown their international sales by an average of 48% a year over the last two years to a total of £149m. Together they employ more than 1,000 people.

Northern Ireland's top-ranked company is Newry-based construction contractor **mac-group** (No.92), which has capitalised on the influx of American companies to Ireland, helping upgrade the Dublin offices of Oracle and Hewlett Packard. Repeat business south of the border helped it grow its international sales, which represent all of its turnover, by 61% a year to £94.7m in 2017.

Also featuring is Lisburn-based **Decora**, which manufactures more than 30,000 blinds per week with a growing export market in the EU boosting overseas sales to £6.5m, on total sales of £69.6m, in 2017. Cookstown's **CDE Global** makes industrial processing machinery, and its plant in Qatar – which washes 1,200 tonnes of dune sand per hour – helped exports hit £47.4m, on total sales of £61.9m, in 2017.

The companies in Northern Ireland appear alongside well-known British brands, including **BrewDog**, now valued at over £1bn; and **Charlotte Tilbury Beauty**, founded by the Hollywood make-up artist. Others are connected to star names, such as **Bulk Powders**, which counts boxing champion Anthony Joshua among its athlete ambassadors. This year is the 10th anniversary of International Track. Alumni stars include **Aston Martin**, **Specsavers**, **Fever-Tree**, and **Lush** – which featured on the first league table in 2010 with exports of £151m, and which have now hit £300m.

The league table programme is sponsored by **HSBC**, **DHL Express** and **Oracle NetSuite**, and compiled by **Fast Track**, the Oxford-based research and networking events firm.

Amanda Murphy, Head of Commercial Banking, HSBC UK, commented:

*"We at HSBC UK are delighted to back The Sunday Times International Track 200 again this year. All the businesses it showcases have truly inspiring stories to tell about creativity, resilience and ambition to succeed. The three companies in Northern Ireland are the kinds of enterprises we are thrilled to support and that provide the backbone of our economy, today and tomorrow."*

### Private companies in Northern Ireland with the fastest-growing int'l sales – ordered by rank

| Rank [2018 rank] | Company Activity                             | HQ location | Annual int'l sales growth over 2 yrs | Int'l sales (£m) | Total sales (£m) | Staff | Year end | Comment   |
|------------------|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------|----------|---|
| 92 [65]          | <b>mac-group</b><br>Construction and fit-out | Newry       | 61%                                  | 94.7             | 94.7             | 83    | Dec 17   | Works for global firms seeking modern offices in Dublin |

| Rank<br>[2018<br>rank] | Company<br>Activity   | HQ location | Annual<br>int'l sales<br>growth<br>over 2<br>yrs | Int'l<br>sales<br>(£m) | Total<br>sales<br>(£m) | Staff | Year<br>end | Comment  |
|------------------------|---|-------------|--|------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------------|--|
| 151<br>[140]           | <b>Decora</b><br><i>Blind manufacturer</i>                    | Lisburn     | 45%  | 6.5                    | 69.6                   | 771   | Dec 17      | Exports blinds to the EU, with key markets including Ireland and the Netherlands |
| 169<br>[130]           | <b>CDE Global</b><br><i>Processing equipment manufacturer</i> | Cookstown   | 38%  | 47.4                   | 61.9                   | 236   | Dec 17      | Its industrial processing machinery is used in 70 countries                      |

## The national picture

The average international sales growth for the 200 companies was 69% a year, to a total of £14.1bn on combined total sales of £30.9bn. Together they employ 140,000 staff, having added 38,000 employees to their combined workforce over the period.

London is the most popular location for company headquarters with 68, followed by the southeast (42), the Midlands (16), and northwest (21). There are 20 companies in the northeast, including Yorkshire. Of the remainder, 13 companies are based in the southwest, six in the East, six in Scotland, five in Wales and three in Northern Ireland.

The full league table is published as a ten-page supplement with the business section of **The Sunday Times** on 10 February, both in print and in the digital edition, and on [www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk).

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PLEASE CREDIT IN FULL: "THE SUNDAY TIMES HSBC INTERNATIONAL TRACK 200"

**For further information please contact:**

Lindsay Uppadine, senior research manager, Fast Track: 01865 297009; [lindsay.uppadine@fasttrack.co.uk](mailto:lindsay.uppadine@fasttrack.co.uk)

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## Notes for editors

**Fast Track** has published league tables of the UK's top-performing private companies with **The Sunday Times** for the past 22 years. The company was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who also holds an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford University.

## League table criteria

Companies had to be registered in the UK and be independent, unquoted and ultimate holding companies. They are ranked according to the compound annual growth (CAGR) in their international sales over the latest two financial years.

Total sales had to be at least £25m and international sales at least £1m in the latest financial year. Companies with sales of less than £25m are covered by our sister SME Export Track 100 league table.

The research was carried out by Fast Track principally between August and December 2018. Data on international sales can be limited. Companies filing abbreviated accounts are not required to disclose any geographical breakdown of sales,

while firms that file full accounts can choose to not disclose a geographical breakdown of sales if it is prejudicial to their interests.

See website for full qualification criteria: [www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk)

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