



Australian Government  
Defence



# DEFENCE EXPORT CONTROLS

## Small-to-medium enterprises

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# Defence Export Controls

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Defence Export Controls (DEC) is the **Australian Government regulator** for the export or supply of defence-related technology, goods and services.

DEC's aim to **prevent harm** to Australia's security, defence and international relations through:



Policy and Reform



Assessments and permits



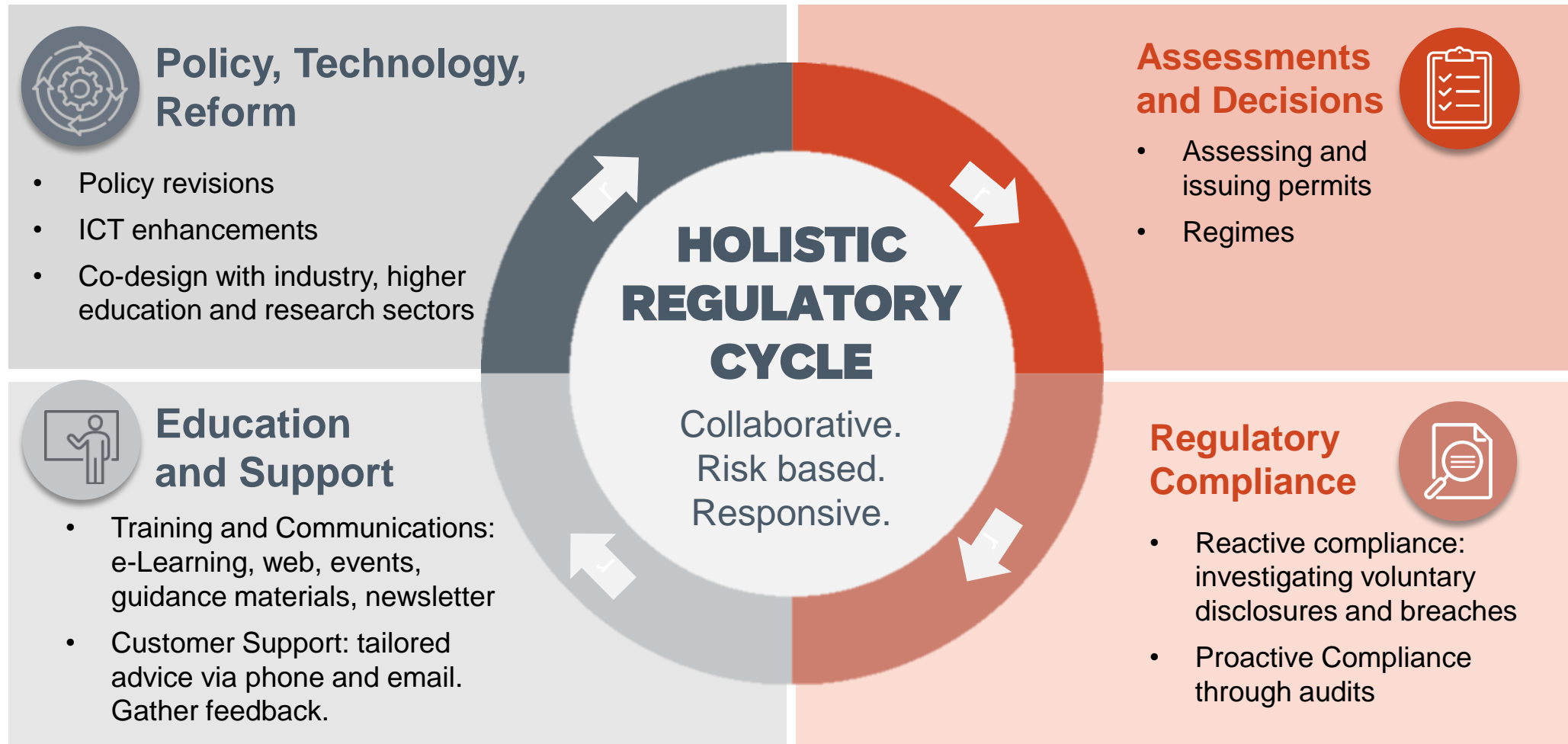
Education and Support



Regulatory Compliance Checks



# Regulatory Approach



# Assessment criteria

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- All permits are assessed on case by case basis.
- A permit may only be issued if the decision maker is satisfied the activity would not prejudice the security, defence or international relations of Australia.
- For most permit applications, this is assessed against 12 legislative criteria. These criteria broadly cover:
  - Sanctions
  - Human rights
  - National and regional security
  - Risk of diversion to weapons of mass destruction programmes, terrorist activities; and
  - Australia's international obligations and commitments.



# Submitting Applications Tips and Tricks

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- If information required to process a permit application is **not** provided or is **incomplete** submitting your application will be difficult and prevent progression through to submission.

## Three most common errors

1. Selecting the wrong application type
2. Application error special characters are not permitted
3. Attaching password protected documents



# Requests for Information

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- If information required to process a permit application is **not** provided or is **incomplete**, DEC will send an Request for Information (RFI) to the applicant.
- Permit applicants will want to avoid RFIs because they delay application **processing** times.

## Three most common RFIs

1. Consignee or end user details
2. Description of goods or technology
  - *Provide as much information as possible*
3. Absent or incorrect general details
  - *e.g. single or multiple shipments; vague descriptions of line items; quantity of items*



# Application Processing Times and Stages

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- Your application will progress through **four** stages of assessment.

## **Four stages of Assessment**

1. **Submitted** – with our QA team making sure all information needed to assess is within the application
2. **Under Assessment Stage 1** – with our Technical Assessment Team
3. **Under Assessment Stage 2** – with our Risk Assessment Team
4. **Final Stage** – With the Delegate for review



# Overview of the Licence-free Environment

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Under the licence-free environment many military and dual-use goods, technologies and services can be **transferred without permits** between AUKUS partners.

- On 1 September 2024, this licence-free environment was enabled by legislative changes implemented by Australia, the US and UK.
- As a result, a 'national exemption' for the US and UK is now available for the **Customs (PE) Regulations** (Section 13E) and **DTC Act** (Sections 10, 10A, 10B, 10C, 15).

- As at 1 November 2025, the changes facilitated over **\$230 million** in licence-free exports to the US and UK.
- Over **500 Australian businesses** have been approved for export licencing requirement exemptions with the US and UK
- DEC received nearly **1300 Notifications of Intent to Export** using the licence-free environment.





# Benefits of the Licence-free Environment



**Incentivises** scientific, technological and industrial cooperation and co-development between Aus / US / UK



**Reduced processing time** improves timely shipment of goods and reduces the cost of holding exports.



Enables **collaboration at speed and scale required** to respond to challenges in strategic circumstances



**Half the time** to complete pre-notifications vs permit application, with no amendments or renewals required.



**Fast tracks the delivery** of high-end capabilities to Australian Defence Force



**Streamlined export declaration through ABF.** One ID number vs multiple permit numbers over years.



# Feedback on Licence-free Environment

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“ The LFE has enabled us to conduct sustainment of multiple Government projects in a more efficient manner. This has led to capabilities being repaired and returned to the users on the ground with less overhead and time spent and will allow these users to have greater training capacity and operability moving forward. ”

*Thomas Wright, Criterion Solutions Pty Ltd, UAS Sustainment*

“ The LFE gets our product into our defence customers' hands faster and increases our productivity. Previously, our sold product would have to sit and wait on a permit application and determination process – over a month where ITAR is involved. This new LFE is great for our business and our defence-based customers. ”

*Stuart Aylen, Keysight Technologies Australia Pty Ltd*

“ The LFE has already facilitated positive engagement with US companies, with partnerships established to collaborate on opportunities that otherwise would have not been accessible to Acacia, due to ITAR restrictions. ”

*Bob Humphreys, CEO, Acacia Systems*



# How to maintain Compliance

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It is important to meet your obligations under Australia's defence export control laws:

- 1 **Attain permits from DEC when required**
- 2 **Keep records, both under permits and when relying on an exception**
- 3 **Adhere to the licence-free environment terms and conditions (if using)**
- 4 **Make a voluntary disclosure if non-compliance detected**

**Best-practice for maintaining compliance often involves clear policies around actions, processes, and behaviours that ensure alignment with legislative requirements**



# DEC is here to help

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- **Helpdesk** Call 1800 333 362 (1800 DEFENCE) 8.30-16.30 AEST
- **Webinars** monthly educational webinars
- **DEC Bulletin** receive our monthly newsletter
- **Website** [www.defence.gov.au/business-industry/exporting](http://www.defence.gov.au/business-industry/exporting)
- **eLearning** Navigating Australia's Defence Export Controls Framework
- **MADE AI** an AI Knowledge Assistant to support you **24 hours a day**



# Dealing with DEC as an SME

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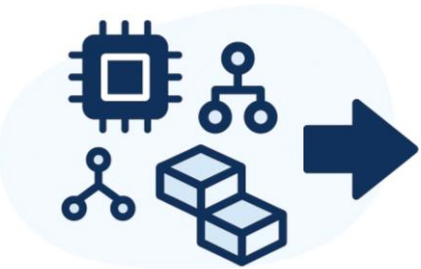


- **Get in early**



- **Compliance Capability**

- Establish compliance as a core business function
- Build processes from start to end of product life cycle



- **Classification of new technologies**

- Multiple lines and types of technology

# Dealing with DEC as an SME

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- **Resource Management**

- Doing more with less
- Cross training staff
- Use external consultants wisely
- Simple tracking tools

- **Training and Culture**

- Companywide knowledge
- Mandatory targeted training
  - Engineering, R&D
  - Sales HR & IT screening
- Be visible

## Advantage of SMEs

While we don't have big teams at our disposal, our small organisations all for agile implementation of new requirements.



Thank you

