

UK defence group to join Bridex 2009

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THE UK Trade and Investment Defence and Security Organisation (UKTI DSO) has joined the growing list of participants in Brunei's second defence exhibition next year, Bridex 2009.

Dave Morgan of first defence cooperation UKTI DSO lauded Brunei's effort as a defence player entering a "crowded marketplace".

"There are all sorts of defence exhibitions regionally and worldwide. Attracting the right number of senior people has always been difficult," Morgan said.

Next week, neighbouring Malaysia's 11th Defence Services Asia Exhibition And Conference will take off from April 21 to 24.

It will be graced by Brunei's senior defence delegation as well as various ministers from the region, Morgan said.

"Companies involved in an exhibition justify their presence on the basis of how many senior delegations they have seen," he said, adding that the delegation factor is used by a lot of companies to gauge their success in an exhibition, however, it is not the only aspect that contributes to the success of such event.

He said companies "pitch" their targeted delegation to see who they can influence to buy their products.

"They might say Colonel ranks and above, but it may well be the ones they are seeing may not be the ones making the decisions, is it this high powered delegation or the junior captain who advises the minister? There are different ways of looking at (it)," he added.

UKTI DSO also participated in Brunei's first defence show alongside other companies from the UK.

"They had a good time, met the right people, they are hoping to come back again," he said.

The bigger venue for Bridex 2009 at The Empire Hotel and Country Club, he said, is an improvement in facilitating the international delegations.

At the moment, UKTI DSO is working closely with the Royal Brunei Technical Services (RBTS), the main organiser of Bridex 2009 in formulating partnerships with companies in all of the UK government organisations to help develop personnel and services.

"We want to have a role in creating local opportunities and development. The key factor is jobs for Bruneians," he said.

Morgan has seen increased plans for future collaboration in the last year and foresees more significant developments by Bridex 2009 next year.

The Bridex 2009, organised by the Royal Brunei Technical Services with the support of the Ministry of Defence, hopes to attract major global defence players keen to participate in Brunei's second defence exhibition targeting to gather 250 exhibitors from 30 countries.

Among major companies which have shown interest are ST Engineering, Harris Corporation, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman and Thales.

Among confirmed participants is Britain's BAE Systems, a world's leading land, sea and air defence company.

The venue, The Empire Hotel & Country Club, has about 15,000 sq metres of exhibition area, both indoors as well as outdoors, the Royal Brunei Technical Services (RBTS) said yesterday.

The defence exhibition will be the first of its kind regionally, to have it integratedly focused on air, land and marine defence and homeland security in the Asia Pacific Region.

Source: The Brunei Times