

Import Letters of Credit

Trade with confidence and minimise financial risk

An Import Letter of Credit is a commitment given by us to pay your supplier on your behalf using a credit facility that you have pre-agreed. Payment is only made if we receive specified documents about the transaction from your supplier.

Your needs

You have an overseas supplier which requires security of payment, and/or you want to ensure certain conditions have been met before making payment.

Our solution

An Import Letter of Credit puts you in control. It allows you to stipulate the documentation required, set shipment dates and specify any other conditions that need to be met before you make payment.

Benefits

- A secure method of settlement for both parties where the importer can stipulate the exact documentation that the exporter must provide in order to be paid
- The Letter of Credit replaces buyer risk with bank (Royal Bank of Scotland) risk, which may provide additional comfort to the seller and support the security of your supply chains
- The fact that your supplier now has greater certainty of payment means you may be able to negotiate improved payment terms and therefore boost your cashflow

Considerations

- An Import Letter of Credit requires you to have an approved credit facility in place with Royal Bank of Scotland. Security may be required
- It's important to remember that with Letters of Credit, banks take actions based on deal documentation, not the underlying goods themselves. This means that, provided documents are in order, we will pay into or debit from your account irrespective of any underlying contractual dispute

Is an Import Letter of Credit right for you?

You might consider an Import Letter of Credit if you:



Want to provide your buyer with a means of settlement that is well recognised and covered by protective guidelines issued by the International Chamber of Commerce



Are dealing with a new supplier or want to negotiate extended payment terms



Require specific documents in order to clear the goods through UK Customs or on-sell them to your customers

How it works

You make contact with your Relationship Manager (RM)

Your RM, usually with one of our specialist trade advisors, discusses your needs and agrees an appropriate solution with you



Credit facility

A credit facility is agreed with you and documented



Issuance

You complete an application form and Royal Bank of Scotland issues the Letter of Credit by SWIFT message via your supplier's bankers or one of our correspondent banks



Payment

Your supplier ships goods and presents documents to us via their bankers. We check documents, referring any discrepancies to you, and make payment – either immediately or on a deferred basis if terms are offered. Documents are released to you.

Working with you

We have a team of specialist trade advisors who will work with you and your Relationship Manager to understand your business and your plans for the future. Our wide range of trade products, along with the benefits and the costs, will be explained to you and we will work together to find the best solution for your business.

Your Challenges

- You have a new supplier and are unsure about their ability to provide the right specification of goods within the timescales needed by you or your customers
- You are buying goods from overseas to re-sell in the UK. Your customers will not pay you until say 60 days after delivery but your supplier is asking for payment in advance of shipment. This gives rise to a large cash flow requirement

Our Solution

- Using an Import Letter of Credit, you could require presentation of an inspection certificate issued by your agent and specify a latest date by which goods must be shipped.
- By offering your supplier an Import Letter of Credit they may agree to payment after shipment. It might be beneficial to your cash flow to negotiate a higher price but obtain deferred payment terms from the supplier, e.g. 90 days after shipment, allowing you time to collect monies from your customer

Product Specifications

- **Payment either at sight or at the end of specified term:** The buyer or their bank may pay at sight or accept to pay at the end of a specified term (acceptance)
- **Validity Period on Letter of Credit:** Letters of Credit always have a latest shipment date, a stated expiry date and place of expiry

Additional Information

- Risk fees
- Transactional fees
- Arrangement fee
- Security fees

Explanation

- Risk fees will be payable based upon our assessment of the risk profile of your company and any available security. This will be payable at issuance, acceptance and if the Letter of Credit is extended or increased
- Transactional fees will be payable for amendments, payment, correspondence etc. Postage and SWIFT charges will also be levied
- An arrangement fee for setting up and managing the facility may apply
- A security fee may be charged if any security is taken

Security may be required. Product fees may apply. Over 18s only. Subject to status, business use only.

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