

cc/BG

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SCOTTISH OFFICE  
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The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP  
Department of Trade and Industry  
1-19 Victoria Street  
LONDON  
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NBLM

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9 February 1988

Dear Kenneth,

PUBLICISING GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Thank you for your letter of 30 December <sup>at flap</sup> outlining your proposal to gain more publicity for the larger offers of financial assistance to industry. In general I welcome this idea.

The present arrangements for the very low key publication of our larger offers have, indeed, prevented us from taking sufficient credit for the way in which we are helping industry in the regions. The recent launch of the Enterprise Initiative provides us with an excellent opportunity to reconsider our policy on these matters and to start publicising regional selective assistance cases except when that would be contrary to the public interest or would harm the commercial interests of the firm concerned. Publicity will help also to allay fears that the new measures which we have introduced imply a cut in the assistance available to industry in the regions.

The only reservation I have is that we need to balance carefully our wish for publicity and the applicant's desire to withhold an announcement until his project is sufficiently advanced to protect his market position in relation to his competitors. The only change therefore that I would suggest to your proposals is that publicity should follow a company's acceptance of an offer of assistance, rather than at offer stage since it could be counterproductive to publicise an offer that is then rejected or that relates to a project which then does not proceed. We should consider the timing of our publicity in relation to this.

I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

Yours ever,  
Malcolm Rifkind

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