

Netherlands' message to the East: 'Now is the time to invest in partnerships'

Between two crises this year - Covid-19 and Brexit - 2020 does not look promising for global trade.

However, we've found that especially in these difficult and uncertain times, Oost NL, the East Netherlands development agency, wants to intensify connections with companies.

Not only in our region in the East Netherlands, but especially with our partner region East Anglia, which we have achieved by working with the New Anglia LEP, the honorary consul to the Netherlands, The Lively Crew and Agri Tech-E.

Over the last two years we have developed a cooperation and had the intension to work together on several events, such as trade missions and trade shows.

Sadly, the continued Covid-19 crisis prevented us from travelling

How strong can our trade ties be with Europe after Brexit? Here, Dutch development agency Oost NL sets out its plan

across the North Sea to meet with our English neighbours in person. However, we've maintained the connection digitally and, despite the occasional mishap regarding meeting times, we were able to create new opportunities to support the business communities on both sides and even do one-on-one matchmaking!

Marloes de Goeijen, advisor for new business UK at Oost, said: "We're convinced that investing in partnerships is especially important in uncertain times. Of course we've also dealt with

disheartening stories of companies that have been hit hard by the current situation - but in general Oost NL believes that also in these times we can create business opportunities."

"In 2021, we will look to attend the Local Flavours event.

"The East Anglian hospitality will then be reciprocated later in the spring, when we look forward to hosting a delegation of East Anglian agri-food companies in our region during a large East Netherlands event."

Importantly, Ms de Goeijen adds: "In the meantime, Oost NL



Marloes de Goeijen
Picture: ERIC@BRINKHORST.NL

is also there for British companies. In anticipation of a changing relationship - at least on paper - we offer a free and fully confidential soft landing

programme for UK companies who are looking to secure their position on the EU mainland. "We really want to reach out and promote this service."

Advertisement feature

'Make the best use of your people'

A free webinar hosted by **MHA Larking Gowen** aims to help small businesses get through the Covid crisis by giving access to the experts at MAD-HR.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect all businesses, accountancy firm MHA Larking Gowen is organising a series of free-to-attend webinars to help address key areas.

The first of the 30-minute Bitesize Insights sessions takes place on November 20, looking at the critical area of people management. "Smaller businesses may not have a dedicated HR department, but every business relies on its people," explains the webinar host, MHA Larking Gowen partner Becky Ames.



While MHA Larking Gowen has won Best Employer awards, the specialist insights will be provided by Charlotte Bate and Carole Burman of consultancy MAD-HR. "For some

businesses, HR was seen as a bolt-on to the day job," says Charlotte. "Now HR is the day job: you can't get on with that until you've made sure your people are doing OK, that they have a clear understanding of what they need to do and are able to do it. To get the job done, looking after your people becomes your first priority."

A particularly difficult aspect



The webinar will feature expert human resources insight from MAD-HR's Charlotte Bate (left) and Carole Burman (right)

Pictures: MAD HR

Inset: The event will be hosted by MHA Larking Gowen partner Becky Ames

Picture: MHA LARKING GOWEN/ SYLVAINIE POITAU



of people management during the pandemic is handling the furlough scheme - and any redundancies at the end of it. "With the extension of the furlough scheme, the headline was announced long before the real detail. This doesn't help as we're not pink-and-fluffy HR people: we like to give answers," says Charlotte.

"Nobody likes to talk about redundancies... but it's important to take a considered approach and not knee-jerk," she adds, stressing that it's important to handle

everything in a way that is both sensitive and legally sound.

"When you're a small business owner, you're inevitably a jack of all trades. What this crisis has demonstrated is that you have to adapt very fast and there are so many plates you have to keep spinning that sometimes people-management gets pushed down the list," concludes Charlotte. "But the pandemic's impact on the work force has shown how important it is to have a plan about how to make the best use

of your people resource to deliver business success."

MHA Larking Gowen's 30-minute Bitesize Insight human resources webinar takes place at 10.30am on November 20. It is open to all businesses and is completely free to attend - just go online and register at rebrand.ly/MADBitesize

For further information about MHA Larking Gowen, visit www.larking-gowen.co.uk