

# Guidance On Completing The Electronic PV/Ex Applications

## Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Purpose](#)
- [Who Should Apply For PV/Ex?](#)
- [PV Security Grading link to MOD Form 680 applications](#)
- [Exhibitions Clearance link to Export Licenses](#)
- [About the PV/Ex Procedures](#)
- [Instructions for the Completion of electronic PV/Ex applications](#)
- [Completing the electronic PV Security Grading Form](#)
- [Completing the electronic PV Exhibition Clearance Form](#)
- [Internal Co-ordination in Industry](#)

## Introduction

### Private Venture (PV) Security Grading and PV Exhibition Clearance Applications

1. This guidance provides general background information to the Private Venture (PV) Security Grading and PV Exhibition Clearance (PV/Ex) procedures and specific instructions for the correct completion of the electronic PV/Ex applications on SPIRE. It may be helpful to refer to this guidance when making applications.

## Purpose

2. The PV Security Grading process is the means used by the Government to assess the national security sensitivity of defence related equipment funded and developed by UK industry and allocate a national security classification accordingly.
3. The PV Exhibition Clearance process is the means used by the Government to assess the potential for exposure of security sensitive/classified material during exhibition, and to potentially identify the conditions or provisos that must be complied with to ensure that no classified material is inappropriately released in an open forum.

## Who Should Apply For PV/Ex?

4. In accordance with the obligations established in: the UK Government Security Policy Framework (SPF); the Reportable OFFICIAL and OFFICIAL SENSITIVE Security Condition for UK Contracts; and/or UK Export Licensing/Release of Military Information (MOD Form 680) conditions, UK Industry are required to obtain MOD Security Grading and Exhibition Clearances for their defence related PV products.

## PV Security Grading link to MOD Form 680 applications

5. The MOD Form 680 procedure is the means used by the Government to assess the release of security classified equipment and information to foreign entities. In accordance with MOD security requirements all companies must have an MOD Form 680 approval for the release to foreign entities of either equipment or information about equipment with a classification of OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE or above.
6. Given that the basis of the MOD Form 680 process is the security classification of material to be released, it is necessary to have obtained formal notification from the MOD on the security grading which for PV equipment can only be obtained from DBR-DefSy(S&T/Ind) under the PV Security Grading process.
7. The MOD Form 680 procedure is administered by Arms Control & Counter-Proliferation Policy (ACP), in the Ministry of Defence. MOD Form 680 applications can only be submitted electronically on SPIRE. Further guidance is available on SPIRE and at the following link [\[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-form-680-procedure-guidance \]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-form-680-procedure-guidance).

## Exhibitions Clearance link to Export Licenses

8. If your promotional activity abroad involves the export of controlled goods or technology, you will need to apply to the Export Control Organisation (ECO) of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) for an export licence. If you are in any doubt about whether or not your activities are licensable, then you should contact ECO at:

[eco.spire@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eco.spire@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

9. The Open General Export Licence: Export For Exhibition - Military Goods, condition and requirement states: "prior to exporting goods pursuant to this licence written approval to exhibit the goods from either the MOD Contracting Authority, or MOD Sponsor for goods relating to MOD equipment and programmes, or from Defence Security (Scientific & Technical/Industrial) (Def Sy (S&T/Ind)) for defence related Private Venture (PV) goods including, where appropriate details of 'en route support', at an exhibition in the country of destination for which the export is intended". Therefore, for PV licensable goods an Exhibition Clearance letter must be obtained under this electronic process on SPIRE prior to the export of goods utilising this open licence.

## About the PV/Ex Procedures

10. The PV/Ex procedures are administered by the Director of Business Resilience (DBR), Defence Security (DefSy), Scientific and Technical/Industrial team (DBR-DefSy(S&T/Ind)), in the Ministry of Defence.
11. PV/Ex applications can only be made electronically on SPIRE. However, in recognition of the fact that the maximum level of classification permitted to be uploaded onto SPIRE is OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE (RESTRICTED) and the potential requirement to submit material classified higher than this level for security grading, a process has been established by which the application can be instigated

electronically but enables the more highly classified supporting information to be submitted separately by a means appropriate to its security classification.

12. Any questions on the progress of an application should be directed to the relevant DBR-DefSy(S&T/Ind) desk officer. You can see who is dealing with your case on each application on SPIRE.

13. When an application is received, it may be necessary to circulate it to specialist advisers in the MOD, to ensure consistency with MOD equipment grading determinations, especially for those products that are derivatives or variants of equipment developed for the MOD.

14. When receiving your application we aim to process PV Security Grading applications within 40 working days and Exhibition Clearance applications within 20 working days. You should note that only in exceptional circumstances will we agree to shorter period of reply, however, if you need a response in a shorter timescale, please provide full details justifying the need; although there can be no guarantee that the deadline will be met.

15. PV Security Grading responses are valid indefinitely until either rescinded or the product graded changes.

16. Exhibition Clearances are similarly valid indefinitely until either rescinded or the material concerned changes; and unless specifically stated are applicable for any future exhibitions worldwide.

17. The PV/Ex determinations are made upon the information provided in the application and there is no appeals process. However, if further information in support of the application becomes available, or circumstances change that potentially alter the basis of the original determinations, a further application can be made.

## Instructions for the Completion of electronic PV/Ex applications

### General

18. There is a requirement to keep the information on the form to OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE or below.

19. We will handle your completed form as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE-COMMERCIAL to safeguard the information it contains and its potential Intellectual Property. Further information on the security classifications is published in Industry Security Notice number 01-2014, see following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/368714/ISN\\_2014-05\\_Clarification\\_of\\_GSC.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/368714/ISN_2014-05_Clarification_of_GSC.pdf) .

20. If you need to provide material classified above OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE in support of your application, you must annotate the SPIRE application accordingly and send it to us by the appropriate means (consult your company security controller for details).

21. The existing SPIRE Applicant Record (SAR) security model will be used, therefore, it will be mandatory for an applicant to have registered their organisation on SPIRE prior to creating a PV/Ex application.

22. In accordance with the general arrangements for SPIRE, every application will be associated with the team for the applicant organisation rather than an individual

user. This ensures that there is no one point of contact as all contact is with one or more roles within the team. The company's SAR administrator will be able to add or remove members from a role, thereby changing the recipients of any notifications sent by DefSy to the organisation. Applicants will only have visibility of applications for organisations they are a member of, they shall not be able to view applications for any other organisations.

23. In any subsequent MOD Form 680 or Export Licence Application, you should quote the unique PV/Ex reference number which will be generated by SPIRE when you apply. This PV/Ex reference number should also be used in any other related correspondence and when any enquiries are being made about a particular application to MOD.

## Completing the electronic PV Security Grading Form

24. An applicant will be requested to provide the following information on a PV application:

- Applicant reference
- Company name
- Company address
- Reference numbers of previous relevant gradings and an explanation of changes
- Venture name
- Technical description
- Date grading required by
- The Reason for the Date the grading is required by
- Whether the venture is a derivative or variant of an MOD funded project and an explanation of changes
- Description of any security advice received from other departments within MOD
- Other evidence or examples that may assist with assessment
- Technical documentation

25. Not all of this information will be mandatory and, depending on the security implications or file format/size restrictions, documentation may be sent by post. The applicant will be requested to provide this information on a number of application screens. These screens, and the information requested on each screen, are outlined below.

26. An applicant will start a PV application by selecting the 'PV/Ex Applications' left-hand side link from their workbasket. This will take them to the PV/Ex search screen. From this screen they will select the 'Create PV Application' left-hand side link.

27. On starting a PV application, the applicant will first be requested to select the organisation the application is for. The applicant will only be able to select from organisations which have been registered on SPIRE and to which the applicant has been granted the relevant access.

28. Once an organisation has been selected, clicking the 'Prepare Application' button will allow the applicant to prepare the rest of the application.

Reference numbers of previous relevant gradings and an explanation of changes

29. Enter the DefSy reference number for the relevant PV grading application. This will be the unique SPIRE generated reference number for applications previously raised on the SPIRE system or the 4 digit PV reference number for those applications raised prior to the introduction of the electronic PV/Ex processes.

30. You should also include an explanation of what the differences are between this application and the application provided, to assist in the grading process and to ensure the attention is focused on these areas of potential capability enhancement.

#### Venture name

31. Enter the name you would refer to the equipment or the venture by. To reduce the potential for confusion, for PV products that are variants or derivatives, you should attempt to utilise a different name to that used for the equipment in-Service with UK Armed Forces or add further identifiers to easily reference the variant (e.g. Challenger 2 E, etc.).

#### Technical description

32. Please enter a brief technical description of the venture. (If you wish to provide documentation that defines the detailed product specification, please include identification of this here and upload your documentation in the 'Documents' section of the application form.).

#### Date grading required by

33. If your grading is required by a specific date please enter this date here. Please note that this does not guarantee that it will be possible to process your grading application within this timeframe.

#### Reason for the date the grading is required by

34. Please provide justification as to why a grading is required by the specified date. This will assist in the prioritisation of cases.

#### Whether the venture is a derivative or variant of an MOD funded project and an explanation of changes

- **Variants** are standard defence equipment under development or in production, e.g. aircraft, military vehicles or ships, etc. with non-standard equipment or fitments, offered to meet special customer requirements or to avoid security or commercial difficulties associated with the sale of an item in-Service with UK Armed Forces.
- **Derivatives** are equipment for military or civil use that is not based on standard Service designs but is dependent upon expertise or technology acquired in the course of defence contracts.

35. Based on the above definitions, if the venture is considered a variant or derivative of a MOD funded project, please provide details of what changes have been made under PV funding. If you wish to provide documentation that describes the changes please specify this here and upload your documentation in the 'Documents' section of the application form.

### Description of any security advice received from other departments within MOD

36. Please provide details of any security advice you may have received from other MOD departments and their contact details. If available, please specify this here and upload your documentation in the 'Documents' section of the application form.

### Other evidence or examples that may assist with assessment

37. Please provide evidence of examples of what might be going on elsewhere in the world, including other products delivering broadly similar capability offered by alternative suppliers, that you feel may assist with our assessment.

### Technical documentation

38. The documents page will allow the upload of supporting documentation for the application.

39. Please note: The highest classification of material permitted to be uploaded onto the SPIRE system is 'OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE' (RESTRICTED). Therefore, if you have any reason to suspect this material may be classified higher, or if for whatever reason you are unable to upload the material onto SPIRE (e.g. quantity, file size restrictions, etc.), you should follow alternative arrangements for submission of supporting material by means appropriate to that classification.

40. Applicants are to recognise the MOD IT systems are strictly limited by the file formats and types they are permitted to access. Therefore, you are to recognise that if you intend to upload material that is not a standard Microsoft Office package format (e.g. ".doc", ".xls", ".ppt", etc.); or is not a standard open format (i.e. ".wmv", ".pdf" and ".jpg"), then MOD may be unable to review this material and may need to subsequently request you to provide the material in a different format/manner.

41. Furthermore, due to SPIRE and MOD IT systems operating restrictions, you will not be allowed to upload executable files (e.g. ".exe", self extracting zip file, etc.).

42. The maximum document size permitted for upload onto SPIRE is 50MB.

43. Documentation may be sent by post if there is reason to suspect the material may be classified higher than OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE (RESTRICTED) or the volume of material exceeds the size restrictions placed on SPIRE. It will be mandatory to provide supporting documentation by either uploading it to the application directly or by advising on the application that it has been by post.

44. If supporting documentation is to be sent by post then the applicant is still expected to raise the application on SPIRE. They will be advised to include the automatically generated PV/Ex reference number (provided on submitting the application), onto the postal document to help identify it when it is received and enable the application to continue to be recorded and managed within the SPIRE system.

### Submit Page

45. The submit page of the application form will require the applicant to:

- Declare that the information provided in the application is not believed to be classified higher than OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE (RESTRICTED).
- Declare that it is an accurate and true representation of the facts.

- Accept that it may need to be shared with other relevant HMG subject matter experts, albeit recognising that we will treat it in accordance with its potential commercial and proprietary sensitivity.

46. If the application contains any errors, the applicant will be advised of this by a warning banner on the submit screen. Attempts to submit an application with errors will not be allowed.

47. After submitting their application the applicant will be shown a screen confirming their submission and providing them with the PV/Ex reference number for their application.

## Completing the electronic PV Exhibition Clearance Form

48. An applicant will be requested to provide the following information on an Ex application:

- Applicant reference
- Company name
- Company address
- Reference numbers of previous relevant approvals and an explanation of changes
- Exhibition details.
- Date of first exhibition
- Date clearance required by
- Documentation (e.g. publicity material, photographs, films/videos)

49. Not all of this information will be mandatory and, depending on the security implications or file format/size restrictions, documentation may be sent by post. The applicant will be requested to provide this information on a number of application screens. These screens, and the information requested on each screen, are outlined below.

50. An applicant will start an Ex application by selecting the 'PV/Ex Applications' left-hand side link from their workbasket. This will take them to the PV/Ex search screen. From this screen they will select the 'Create Ex Application' left-hand side link.

51. On starting an Ex application, the applicant will first be requested to select the organisation the application is for. The applicant will only be able to select from organisations which have been registered on SPIRE and to which the applicant has been granted the relevant access.

52. Once an organisation has been selected, clicking the 'Prepare Application' button will allow the applicant to prepare the rest of the application.

### Reference numbers of previous relevant approvals and an explanation of changes

53. Enter the reference number for the relevant Ex application. This will be the unique SPIRE generated reference number for applications previously raised on the SPIRE system or the DefSy reference number for those applications raised prior to the introduction of the electronic PV/Ex process (e.g. D/DefSy/(S&T/Ind)/06/01/01/01, etc.).

54. You should also include an explanation of what the differences are between this application and the application provided, to assist in the Exhibition Clearance process and to ensure the attention is focused on these areas of change.

#### Exhibition details

55. Exhibition Material Title/Theme. Enter a brief title or theme for the material that you wish to exhibit.

56. Exhibition Item Name. Identify the name of item to be exhibited. (Only enter 1 item per row). For each exhibition item you will then be requested to identify the type of material by selecting one of the following:

- Equipment
- Model
- Datasheet
- Brochure
- Video
- Other (If 'Other' is selected you will be asked to provide further information.)

#### Date of first exhibition

57. Identify the date of your intended first exhibition of the identified material (if known). This does not guarantee that it will be possible to process your clearance application within this timeframe.

#### Date clearance required by

58. If your clearance is required by a specific date please enter this date here. Please note that this does not guarantee that it will be possible to process your clearance application within this timeframe.

#### Reason for the date the clearance is required by

59. Please provide justification as to why an exhibition clearance is required by the specified date. This will assist in the prioritisation of cases.

#### Technical documentation

60. The documents page will allow the upload of supporting documentation for the application.

61. Please note: The highest classification of material permitted to be uploaded onto the SPIRE system is 'OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE' (RESTRICTED). Therefore, if you have any reason to suspect this material may be classified higher, or if for whatever reason you are unable to upload the material onto SPIRE (e.g. quantity, file size restrictions, etc.), you should follow alternative arrangements for submission of supporting material by means appropriate to that classification.

62. Applicants are to recognise the MOD IT systems are strictly limited by the file formats and types they are permitted to access. Therefore, you are to recognise that if you intend to upload material that is not a standard Microsoft Office package format (e.g. ".doc", ".xls", ".ppt", etc.); or is not a standard open format (i.e. ".wmv", ".pdf" and ".jpg"), then MOD may be unable to review this material and may need to subsequently request you to provide the material in a different format/manner.



63. Furthermore, due to SPIRE and MOD IT systems operating restrictions, you will not be allowed to upload executable files (e.g. “.exe”, self extracting zip file, etc.).

64. The maximum document size permitted for upload onto SPIRE is 50MB.

65. Documentation may be sent by post if there is reason to suspect the material may be classified higher than OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE (RESTRICTED) or the volume of material exceeds the size restrictions placed on SPIRE. It will be mandatory to provide supporting documentation by either uploading it to the application directly or by advising on the application that it has been by post.

66. If supporting documentation is to be sent by post then the applicant is still expected to raise the application on SPIRE. They will be advised to include the automatically generated PV/Ex reference number (provided on submitting the application), onto the postal document to help identify it when it is received and enable the application to continue to be recorded and managed within the SPIRE system.

### Submit Page

67. The submit page of the application form will require the applicant to:

- Declare that the information provided in the application is not believed to be classified higher than OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE (RESTRICTED).
- Declare that it is an accurate and true representation of the facts.
- Accept that it may need to be shared with other relevant HMG subject matter experts, albeit recognising that we will treat it in accordance with its potential commercial and proprietary sensitivity.

68. If the application contains any errors, the applicant will be advised of this by a warning banner on the submit screen. Attempts to submit an application with errors will not be allowed.

69. After submitting their application the applicant will be shown a screen confirming their submission and providing them with the PV/Ex reference number for their application.

## **Internal Co-ordination in Industry**

70. Please ensure that your company Security Controller and Export Controller are informed of your application.