



Project Orange wins new business in India

Fast facts

Company: Project Orange

Industry: Architecture & Interior Design

Target Market: India

UKTI Services: OMIS, MVS, Gateway to Global Growth and ECR

www.projectorange.com



London-based Architect and Interior Design company, Project Orange, has won two new major contracts in India worth £250,000 through UK Trade & Investment's (UKTI) Overseas Market Introductory Service (OMIS). The work will look to design a wave of boutique hotels in some of India's fast growing cities.

Project Orange was founded in 1997 by partners and Cambridge University graduates, James Soane and Christopher Ash. Based in the centre of London, this small firm has worked on small and large international building projects, from Richard Branson's hotels in Morocco, to its current project designing £40 million worth of private accommodation and affordable homes in East London.

British architecture and interior design is known for its experimental, versatile and futuristic techniques and technologies, often producing results that challenge every architectural orthodoxy. It is this creativity and discipline which gives its worldwide export demand. Project Orange marries the practice of architecture and interior design in equal measure on buildings such

as homes, hotels and offices. Their work has been recognised in multiple awards by RIBA and the Building Design Interior Architect of the Year Awards, to name just a few.

The journey to India

The small firm made up of 14 staff was looking to expand their foothold into India further, having worked with contacts such as The Park Hotels for over ten years. The market potential for architecture and interior design in India is evidently huge, and continues to boom as its cities industrialise with the need for functional and beautiful buildings.

To put this market potential into context for British exporters, Indian urbanisation is expected to increase the number of 1 million plus populated cities to 68 by 2030, demonstrating the speed of rural to urban migration. McKinsey estimates it needs an investment of USD 1.2 trillion to meet its urban infrastructure requirements.

The design firm has been working with the UKTI London International Trade Team since 2012 on the Gateway to Global Growth Programme for established exporters, and the Export Communication Review Service.

They commissioned an OMIS towards the end of 2012 to find new contacts in the hotelier industry.

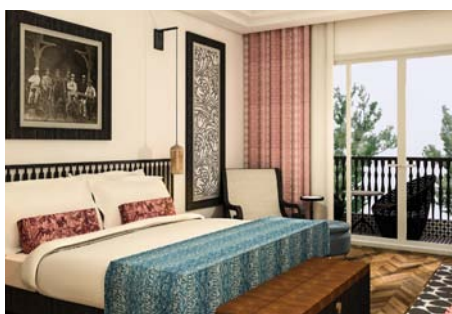
During a delegation visit with the Prime Minister to India in early 2013, UKTI's India post introduced Project Orange to ITC through the OMIS programme – a major multi-national firm from India with a hotel portfolio. Through a succession of meetings, they discussed the opportunity to assist in the reconstruction of a heritage hotel in Srinagar, dating from 1880, working alongside Delhi architects PSDA.

Project Orange has exported to eight countries and expects over the coming years to grow steadily into new markets.

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James Soane, Director and Co-Founder
Project Orange, London

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As much of the building was in dis-repair and stripped out of its original architecture, James and his team were given a two-month design period to develop and present the interior reconstruction of the hotel. This included everything from the bedroom suites to the restaurants – working with a narrative they had researched upon.

James Soane, Director and Co-Founder of Project Orange said, “We met with really good contacts through UKTI’s OMIS. We were introduced to developers and hoteliers in Mumbai and Delhi. There was a clear desire for British expertise and creativity”.

“As we are architects and interior designers, we bring an understanding of hotel and residential refurbishments through designs. We look to do everything from brick work to cushions. The new project in Srinagar is an exciting opportunity to bring a building with its outstanding heritage back into use.”

Through taking up this initial project, ITC subsequently offered another opportunity to consult and design the interiors of Myfortune hotel in Guntur. This will be a new build hotel for business and luxury

stays in one of India’s second-tier cities, which is accelerating in growth.

James added, “We were really pleased to be able to access major companies like ITC. Through these contacts, we went on to discuss an opportunity to help design a new build project which is an 18 month commissioned job. Although we are a small company, there was great understanding of what we had to offer. Our ability to be flexible and to give our attention to bespoke projects was well-matched, as were the possibilities it gave us to work in a hugely influential export market with an interest in design”.

“UKTI has been very helpful in helping us find new contacts in the Indian market, one of the fastest growing in the world. It is a huge market in its own right with multi-markets within it, and we were offered great advice in strategising points of entry which weren’t saturated. We are hopeful this is the beginning for exporting our services to India as we build our reputation in this market.”

James’s top tips for exports in the design and creative industries:

1. Have a clear business plan – There are lots of big opportunities for UK businesses overseas. Make sure you have a clear business plan before you start to ensure it is right for the business. Exporting is a big commitment for a business.

2. Scale and streamline – Try to make the business flexible and as streamlined as possible to take on new work internationally. Being able to offer bespoke services and investing time can reap dividends for you.

3. Ask questions about everything – Business culture can differ widely. In India, it is good to ask questions about everything to clarify what will be delivered in order to maintain quality control.

Helping you to do business abroad

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