



EU Transition SOMERSET

Charting new territory

An eBook by



**INTERNATIONAL
TRADE MATTERS**

funded and supported by



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



**heart of the
south west**
local enterprise partnership

Background & rationale

Set against the crisis of COVID-19, pressure remained for companies to prepare for Brexit.

As December 2020 moved towards the New Year, there was no clarity on whether there would be a deal, or no deal at all.

Companies were not sure what they needed to do - or indeed whether they needed to do anything.

There was a plethora of information providers from the Department for International Trade (DIT) to Accredited Chambers, Trade Associations and Membership Organisations right through to independent international trade advisers and trainers. All delivering the same message to '*prepare for Brexit*'. However, British businesses were very confused as to exactly what actions they should be taking. The media were having a field day. There was rumour, conjecture and confusion. Whilst some companies that had experience in exporting and importing to and from the rest of the world were mostly prepared for a deal OR a no deal scenario, others that had been purely buying and selling within Europe had no experience in the science of international trade. They had not yet realised that their supply chains, imports or exports could suffer through their lack of knowledge on export and import procedures and compliance.

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) was agreed on the 24th of December 2020.

International Trade Matters Ltd was asked to conduct a series of clinics across Somerset in order to understand the aims, ambitions and challenges of companies that wished to continue, or start, trading in Europe; assessing the needs of each company to provide practical and relevant support in building capacity within the county of Somerset.

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Engagement

Onwards



Introduction

This ebook considers the position of businesses involved in International Trade across Somerset, as a result of leaving the EU, effective as of the 1st January 2021.

Somerset County Council sought to procure a specialist agent to deliver export and international trade services to support Somerset businesses during and after the Brexit transition period as the UK leaves the European Union.

As an accredited International Trade Trainer for the British Chambers of Commerce, International Trade Matters Ltd has delivered training and support across myriad sectors, offering expert advice on customs compliance and navigating the often complex issues following the UK's exit from the European Single Market and Customs Union.

The clinics afforded us the platform from which to address and examine the challenges businesses are confronting from a range of industries throughout Somerset, and this ebook covers the need-to-know answers for their continuing trade with the EU since departure.



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International Trade Matters

working in partnership

Many businesses face an array of challenges as a direct result of leaving the European Union. These include supply of goods to EU customers, the movement of goods across and through the EU, providing robust financial forecasting and fielding customer service queries.

Businesses also face increased tariffs and VAT obstacles with carriers, which causes concern for the supply chain and the impact this will have on their customers.

Many are looking to change how they operate in Europe over the coming years to ensure they meet customer demands whilst recovering, building or maintaining profitable operations.

In response to these issues and the variety of hurdles businesses are facing, we have broken down the common themes which will be addressed in the following sections.

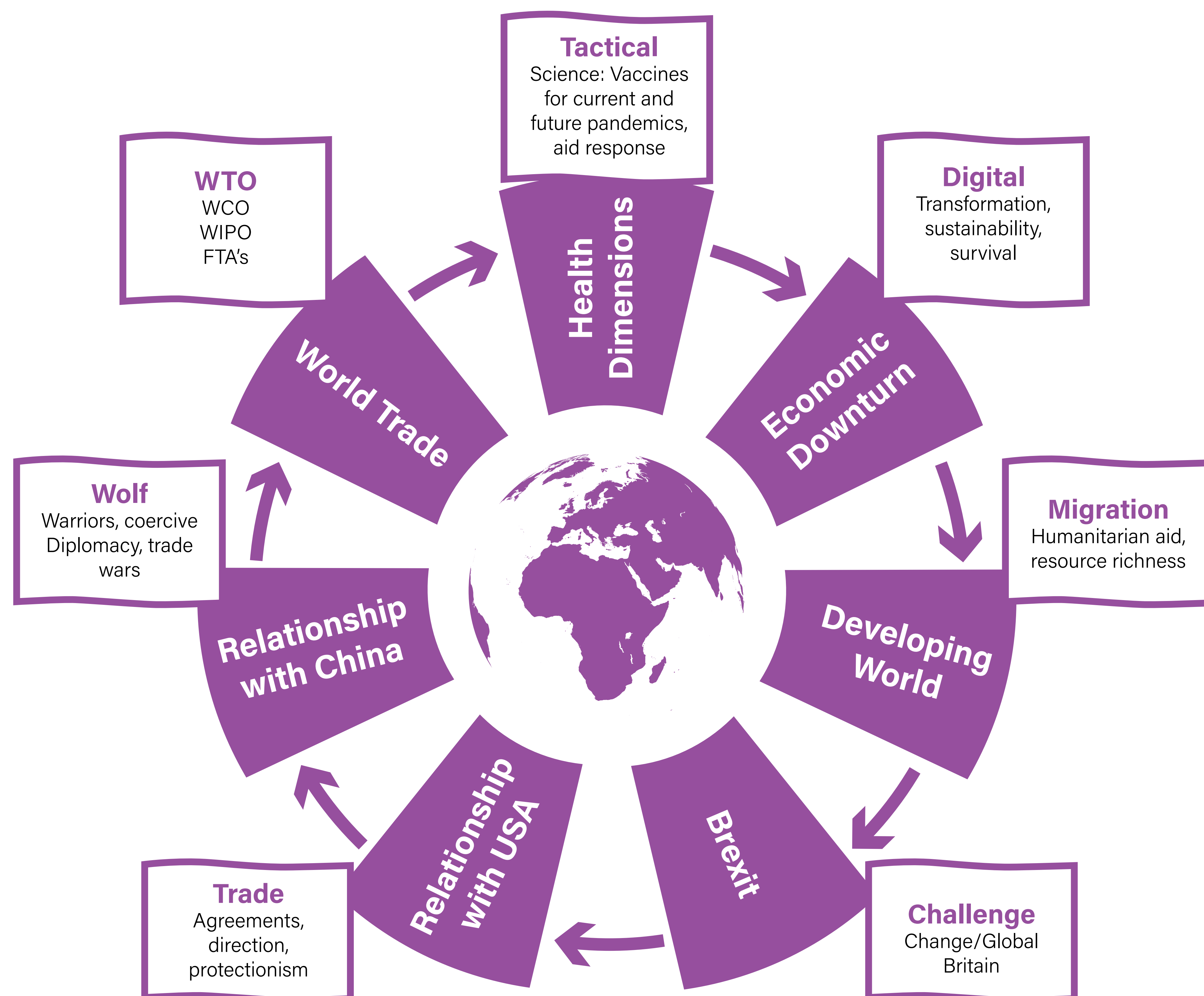
Juggling priorities

At the start of 2020, one of the biggest economic concerns was how UK industries would adapt to Brexit. Given the events of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed buying trends and businesses understandably, had to reassess their priorities.



Global context: Jan 2021

a geo-political overview



Recognition of global context is essential for importers and exporters.

Knowing the countries to avoid, perhaps because of sanctions or quotas must be taken into account when deciding on new overseas markets. There could be challenges with Trade Wars that affect supply chain resilience, delivery times and tariffs. At the time of writing the global COVID-19 pandemic is causing severe disruption in working practices and resource that directly affects the economic health of nations. On top of these factors, the challenges of climate change should encourage the development of new products and services. As the UK becomes a Global Britain, companies are constantly embracing innovative technology. Equally, the establishments of Free Trade Agreements open doors for most sectors.

Understanding the context of world trading should allow international traders to identify opportunities and avoid barriers

Somerset

core industries

"Compared to the UK and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area, Somerset has particular concentrations of employment and economic value in the aerospace and food and drink manufacturing sectors. Aerospace contributed 314m to Somerset's GVA in 2014; 3.3% of the total, compared to just 0.6% nationally and 1.4% across the LEP. Food and drink manufacturing is worth £368m to the Somerset economy, accounting for 3.8% of total GVA compared to 1.5% nationally and 2% across the LEP."

Somerset Economic Assessment 2016

Designing to help

Clinic appointments were designed for SME's within the county of Somerset, many of these could be part of the supply chain for the larger enterprises. The majority of clinic attendees were micro companies, which is strongly indicative of the aspirations of smaller companies to engage in international trade and that Somerset is encouraging innovation and growth.



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Getting the word out



**EU Transition
& International Trade Support**

Fully-funded **1:1 clinics**

1-hour ONLINE
session with a
global trade expert

ONE-TO-ONE
guidance specific to
YOUR business

Take-away
importing/exporting
action plan

Discuss the following and more:

Import/Export Documentation • Incoterms® 2020 • Supply Chain Resilience • Accessing New Markets • Rules of Origin

for Somerset businesses

Book your session today!
somersetclinics@internationaltradematters.com

*** February-March 2021 ***

heart of the south west
local enterprise partnership

European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

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- ☑ **Digital flyer**
- ☑ **Targeted social media campaigns**
- ☑ **Email marketing**
- ☑ **Web resources**

78 posts

December
January
February
March



targeted
reach

9,855

25,265

37,400

International Trade Matters Ltd @IntTradeMatters · Feb 4
#fullyfunded 1hr clinic for #Somerset based businesses. A great opportunity to ask our specialists vital import/export questions specific to your business. internationaltradematters.com/about/events/e...
@SomersetCouncil @TauntonHour @FromeChamber @TauntonChamber @SWTBusiness @HeartofSWLEP @SWTCouncil

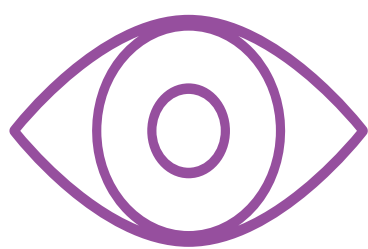


International Trade Matters Ltd @IntTradeMatters · Feb 12
If you're a Somerset business that's struggling with #Brexit & the EU Transition, come & book a fully funded 1hr clinic. You'll have a 1-2-1 with an experienced #InternationalTrade Specialist & come away with an action plan + peace of mind. Booking: internationaltradematters.com



International Trade Matters Ltd @IntTradeMatters · Mar 25
Best be quick! If you are a #Somerset based business you can take advantage of a fully funded 1hr online session with our international trade experts.

Limited spaces left so book your slot today!
internationaltradematters.com/about/events/e...

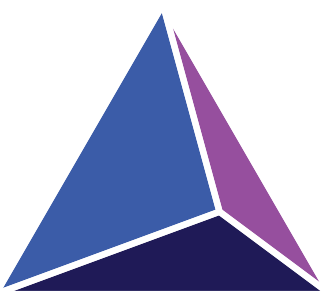


video views

9,905

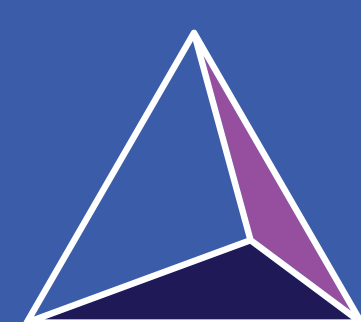
Reaching
#Somerset
Businesses

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Listening to the response



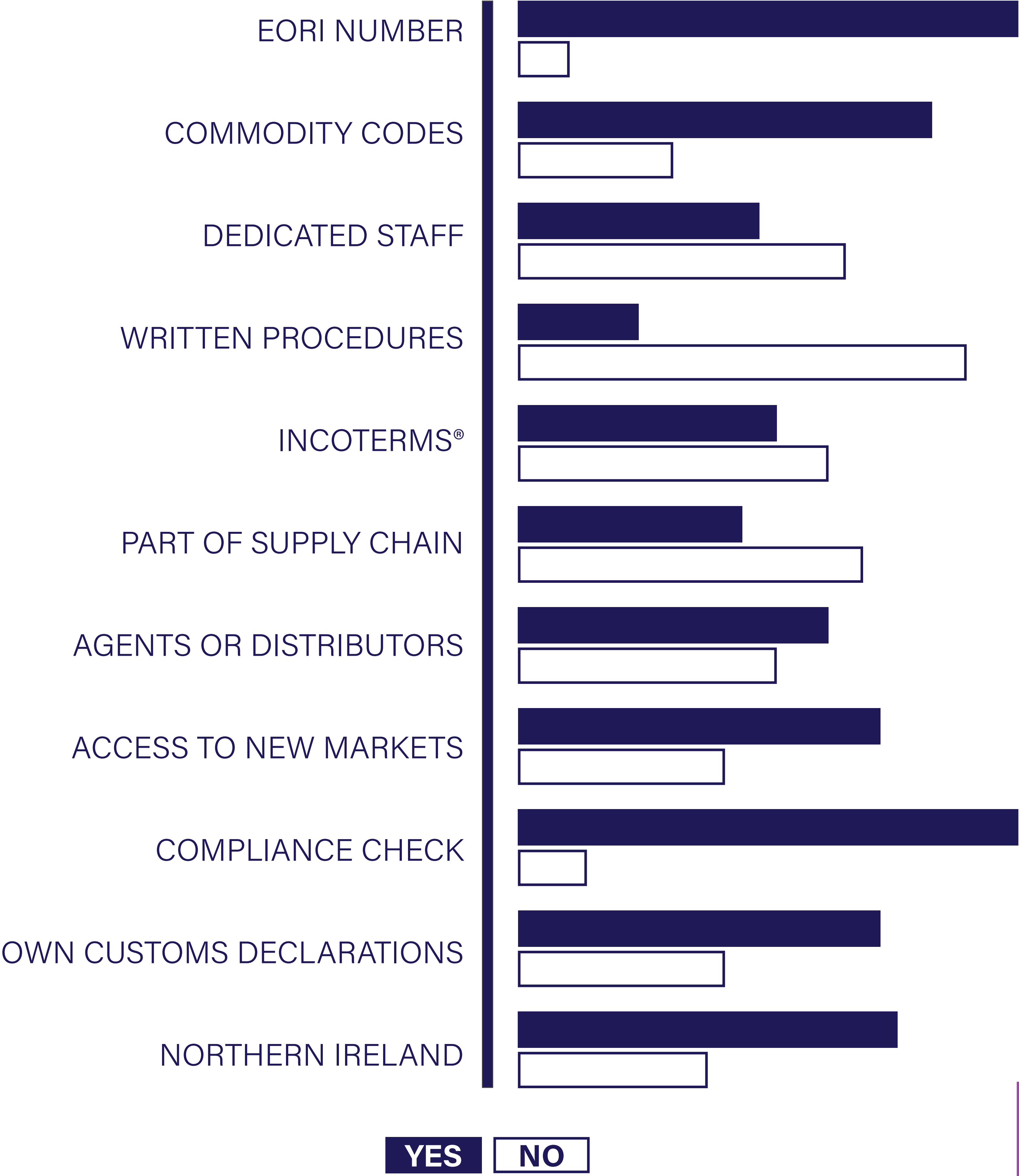
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The call of local businesses

-analysing the data

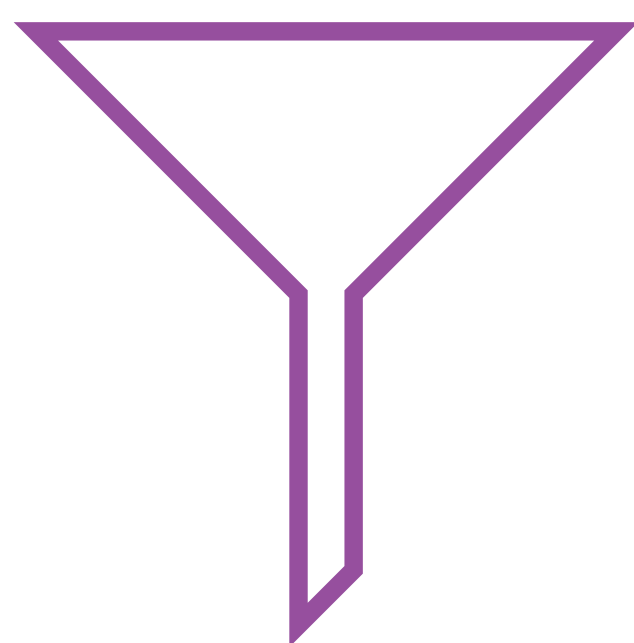
The questionnaire gathered information on aspects of Brexit preparedness in order to provide clear guidance to companies. Here's what they said:

"Have you prepared, or do you currently engage in/ trade with the following...?"





Shipping & Freight
Forwarders



Classification of
Products



Rules of Origin



Supply Chain Disruptions



Compliance



Trading with
Northern Ireland

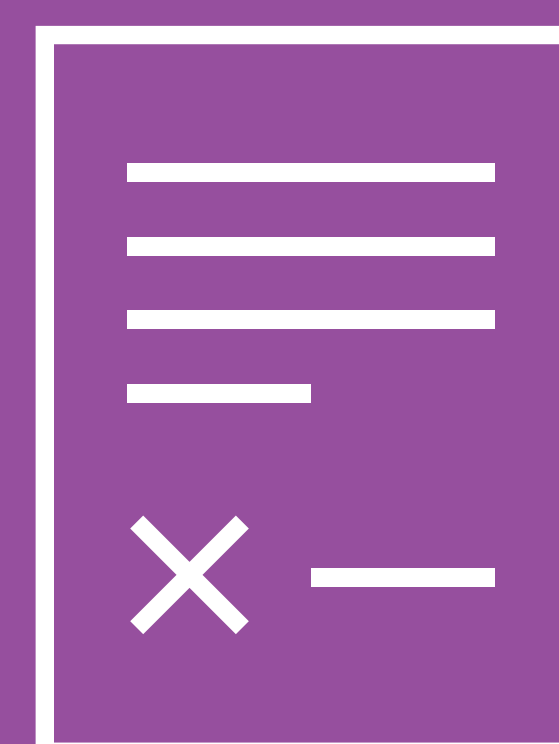
Common themes of enquiry



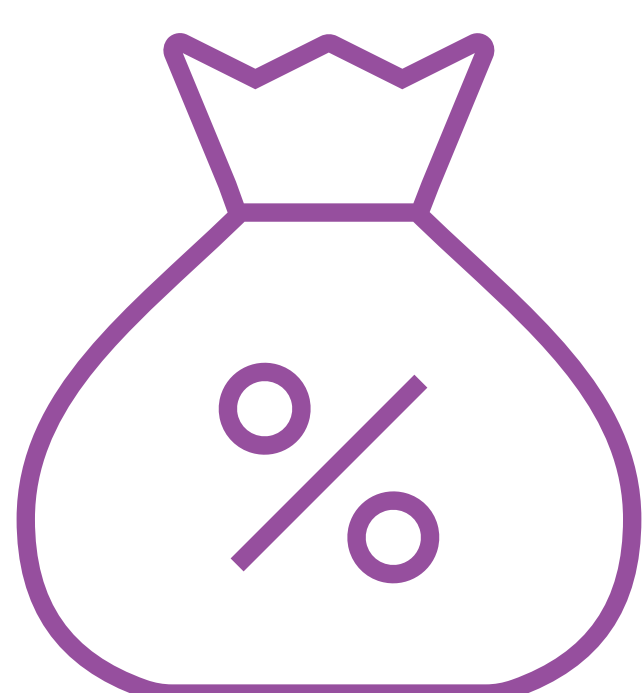
Procedures to meet new
legislative requirements

HS 8004 003 77

Commodity Codes



Contracts



VAT Implications



Trained Personnel



Incoterms®

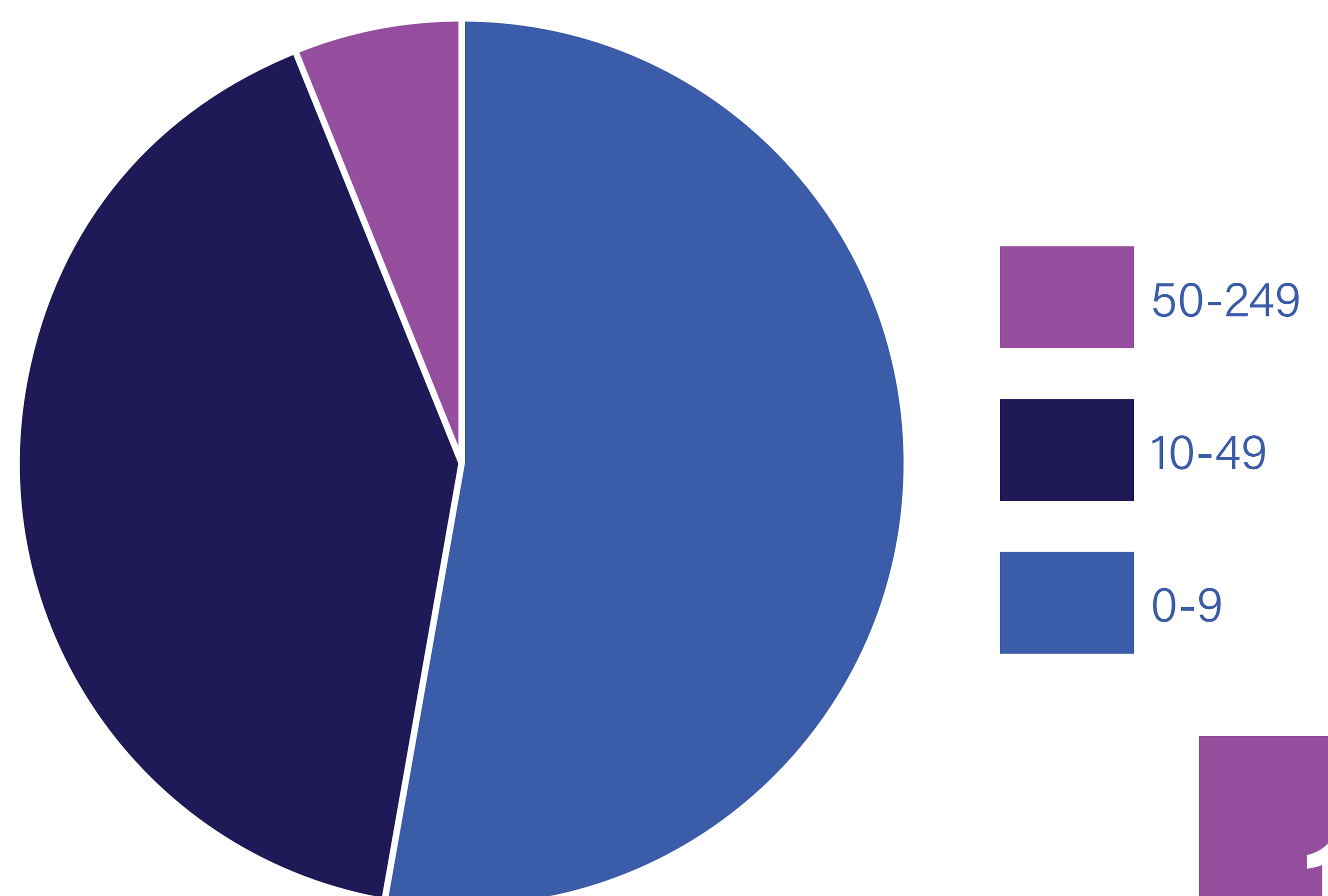
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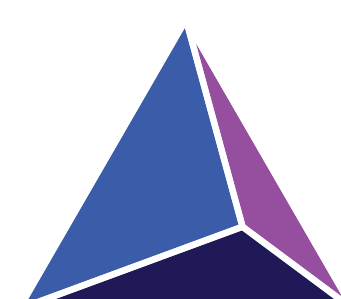
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number of employees



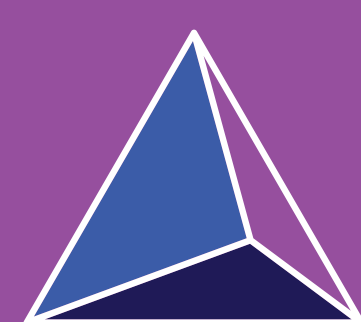
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Challenges and solutions...

Despite sharing a common reason for engaging with the transition clinics, every business presented its own unique set of challenges that have arisen from Brexit. The following pages will detail a few of the scenarios and the types of solution provided by the International Trade Matters Specialist.



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Specialised apparel and gifts distributor / Consumer Goods / 10-49 employees

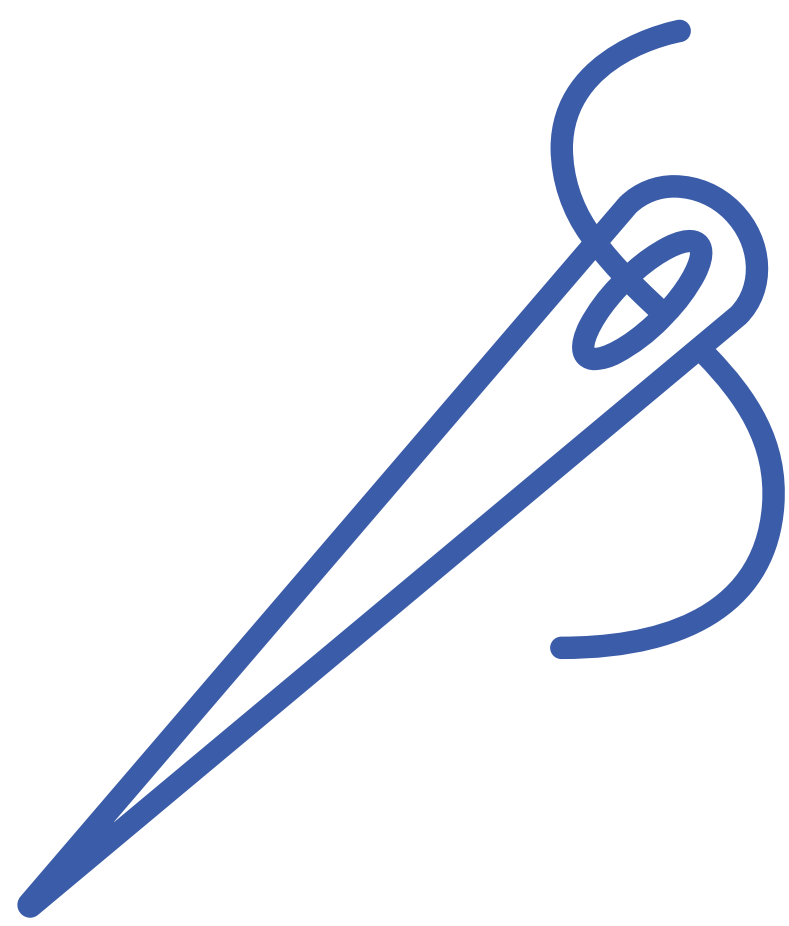
Challenge:

Unfortunately due to the particular set up of this company and its parent company/supplier, this company has been unable to continue trading within the EU.

Solutions & Next Steps:

The company created a service partner in the EU to enable their customers to continue to buy the products. The company have pivoted their business, creating a new product line whilst also turning their focus onto the UK market.

Lindy provided them with advice on articulating a business plan to attract inward investment, identifying investment opportunities and cash flow management whilst they market a new product line.



Weaver of specialist fabrics / Manufacturing / 10-49 employees

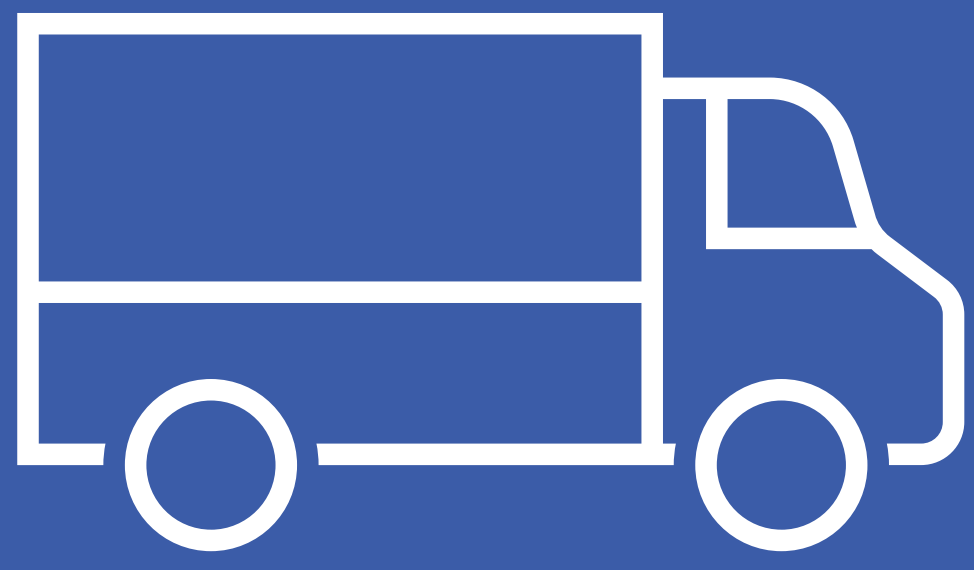
Challenge:

The company regularly ships parcels to the EU and experienced delays and unexpected costs. Customers were rejecting shipments due to unexpected costs and administrative processes. They had real concerns about losing their EU business as a result.

Solutions & Next Steps:

Frances explained the processes and rules around payment and charging of VAT and duty for export customers. Different options for shipping under specific Incoterm rules were explored and the business is now able to renegotiate shipping arrangements and look for new shippers. They were also facing challenges with imports so information was provided on Postponed VAT Accounting.

Customers were rejecting shipments due to unexpected costs and administrative processes



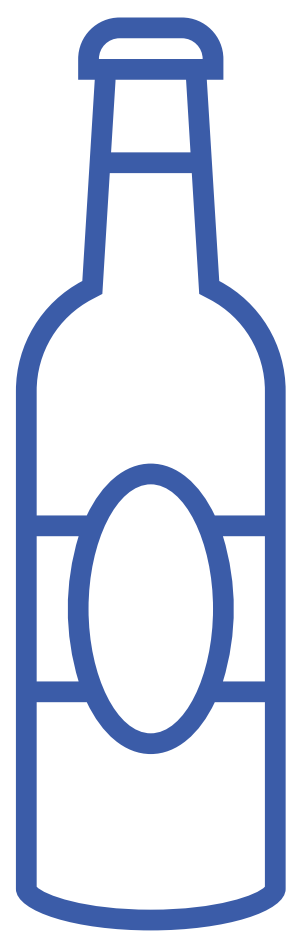
Distributor of a unique range of products for use on machinery and vehicles / Wholesale / 0-9 employees

Challenge:

A company with a great product who do not have the resources or knowledge to take advantage of modern marketing technology and social media.

Solutions & Next Steps:

Lindy signposted them to local agencies to seek further advice and support in marketing. Since, the company have increased their presence on LinkedIn, taking a different approach to marketing their products which has started to generate greater engagement from their re-focused efforts.



Producer of cider exporting to the EU / Food & Drink / 10-49 employees

Challenge:

Previous exporting had been centred around a customer in the EU so the end of the transition period brought considerable changes to this business. Little preparation has been possible because of changing information on labelling requirements and the late finalisation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Solutions & Next Steps:

Frances explained export processes in general terms including practicalities such as product classification, export declarations, the importance of correct use of Incoterms®, the need to understand product labelling and obtain and retain export documentation. The company was directed to further training and support to assist them in the considerable process changes they are now facing.

Little preparation has been possible because of changing information on labelling requirements



Testing and research service / Other / 10-49 employees

Challenge:

The company potentially needs to import and export commercial samples to and from the EU (<2% of annual sales), as well as supply other more generic research services that do not involve product samples (i.e., concept testing & surveying).

All commercial samples are blinded, in white-label containers to remove marketing bias. The products contain a 'COMMERCIAL SAMPLE' label and are marked as 'NIL VALUE.'

Solutions & Next Steps:

Mike confirmed the processes and procedures required for shipment and signposted to gov.uk to ascertain classification of products and rules of origin. They required written procedures, invoice reviews and international distributors' agreements reviewed with a possible power of attorney issued for customs procedures.



Importer and seller of specialist products for consumer use / Retail / 0-9 employees.

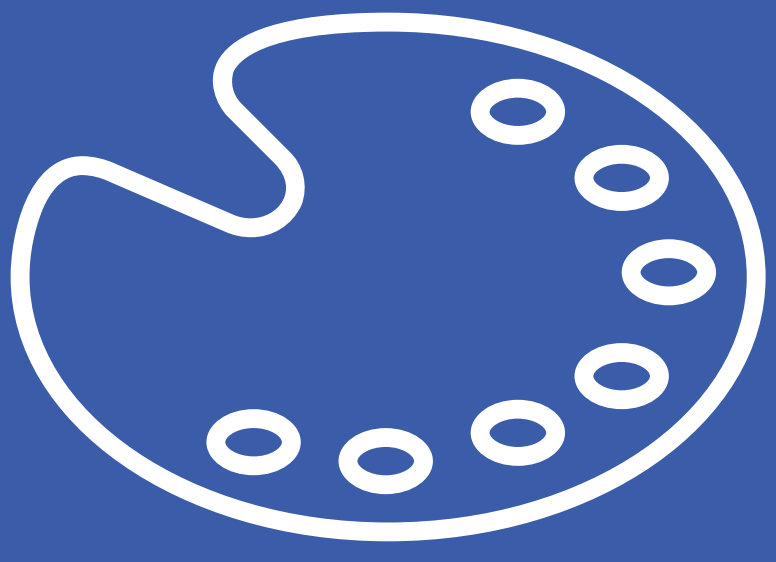
Challenge:

A small businesses providing a high-quality service to advise and supply imported specialist products for personal use with existing customers in the UK, EU and US. Post-Brexit shipments to the EU have seen considerable delays and difficulties with charges to consumer recipients. The company has been forced to look at new shippers and found themselves replacing goods lost in transit early in 2021. This may lead to a new focus on non-EU markets, or consideration of stock holding in the EU, and has led to considerable increases in administration time since the start of 2021.

Solutions & Next Steps:

Frances explained the processes and rules around payment and charging of VAT and duty for export customers. Import VAT in destination countries was a particular challenge for consumer customers. Advice was also provided on shipping options and information provided to enable the company to explore the viability of placing stock in the EU to ease some of the challenges.

The company has been forced to look at new shippers and found themselves replacing goods lost in transit early in 2021.



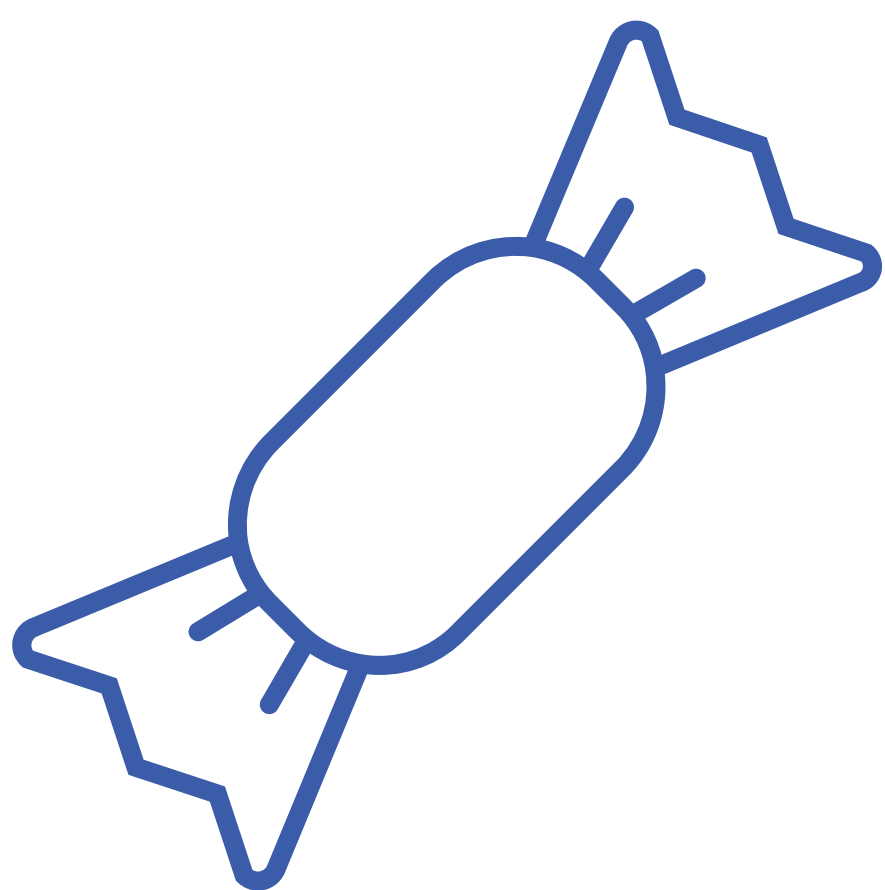
Online independent specialist craft retailers / Retail / 0-9 employees

Challenge:

A company impacted heavily by COVID19 causing all trading to cease for a period of time.

Solutions & Next Steps:

Lindy gave this company the confidence and reassurance to restart the business, reducing fears and highlighting action steps to sell B2C within the EU.



Manufacturer of confectionery products / Food & Drink / 0-9 employees

Challenge:

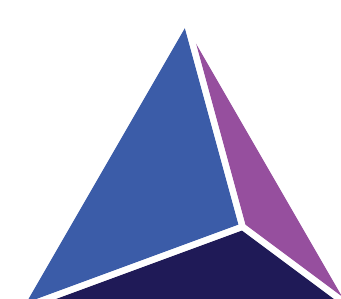
As a company that is new to international trade, they needed to identify steps to design and create an export action plan. The business needs to become familiar with export requirements for the food and drink industry. Sugar confections include sweet, sugar-based foods, which are usually eaten as snack food. This includes sugar candies, chocolates, candied fruits and nuts, chewing gum, and sometimes ice cream which are subject to regulations.

Solutions & Next Steps:

Mike explained the need to register for an EORI number with Gov.UK. As a confectionery business, they require an export health certificate and special labelling. Mike advised the importance of the country of origin ruling as evidencing origin is essential. Ascertaining the manufacturing procedure to evidence origin alongside establishing the classification of products against the UK global tariff formed significant discussion with the client.

Advice was also given that when the business starts to export, the Incoterms® rules will need to be established between seller and buyer. Finally, when starting to export, the business will need to appoint freight forwarders/customs agents to handle shipments. These appointed representatives will require letters of authority to act for - and on behalf of - the business.

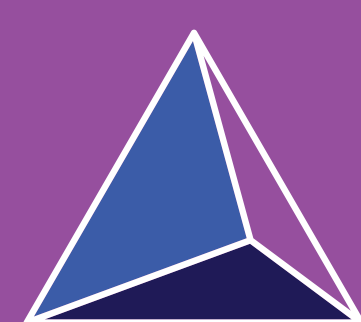
As a company that is new to international trade, they needed to identify steps to design and create an export action plan.



Impact

your responses

*"Incredible. All my pain was taken away
in one Zoom call!"*



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"...thanks again for your help and advice, much appreciated."

"Definitely beneficial and removed some of my anxieties!"

"Lots to follow-up on now."

"I believe everything was answered and discussed and it's allowed me to continue on with the path of re-launch in due course."

"Thank you for the notes from our discussion and links"

"It was great to speak with someone who understood our needs and focused in very quickly to the scale and way we have/need to work."

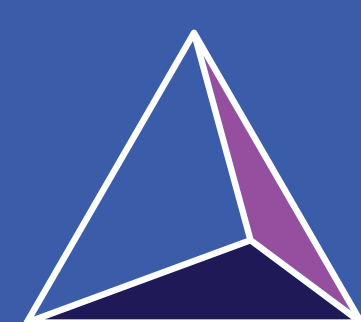
"Very helpful. Specifically with regard to record keeping. I have subsequently been in touch with Mike for further assistance."



Key findings

the learning

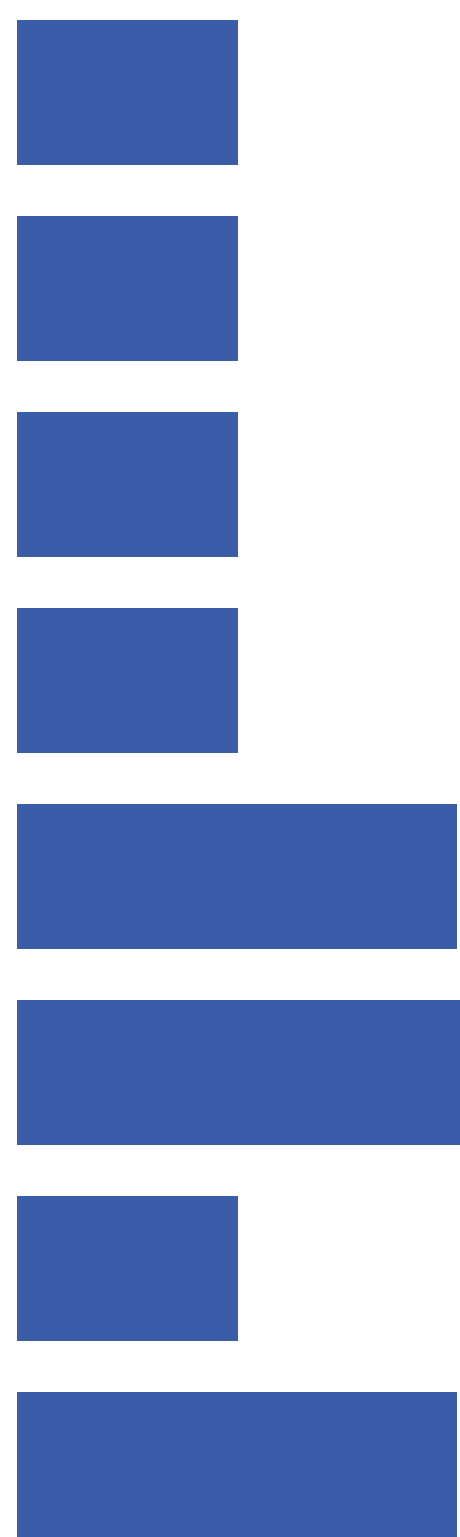
While there was/is a lot of excellent information available through the DIT and Chambers of Commerce the companies we saw wanted to talk to someone in a frank and open discussion about their fears, as well as their aspirations.



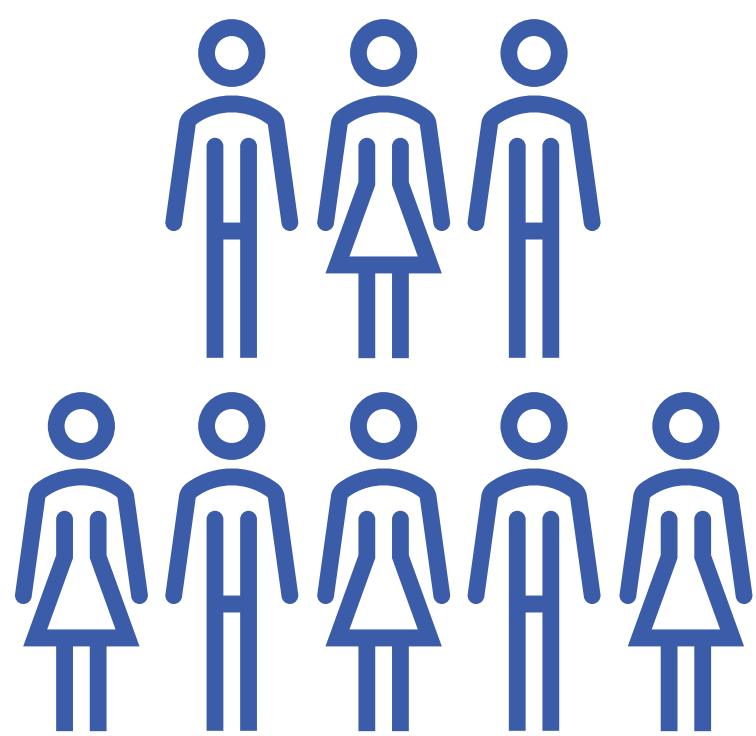
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Manufacturing

focus on sector



10-49

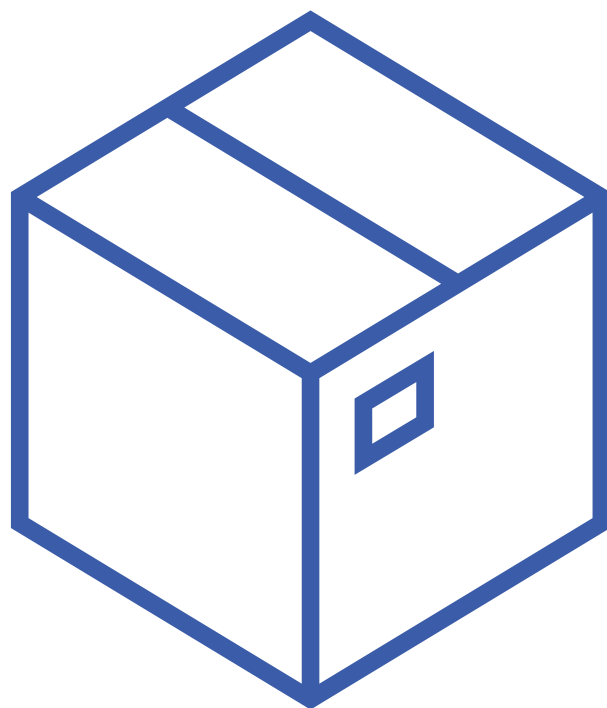


Highest
number of
dedicated
international
trade staff



EORI

Best rate
of EORI
allocations



Strong understanding
of commodity codes
(aligned with food & drink sector)

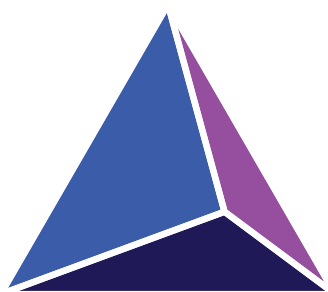
Most advanced
knowledge of agents
and distributors



Actively
looking at
new markets



Manufacturers clearly recognise that they are in a supply chain dependent on a wide variety of economic and regulatory factors



Food & drink

focus on sector



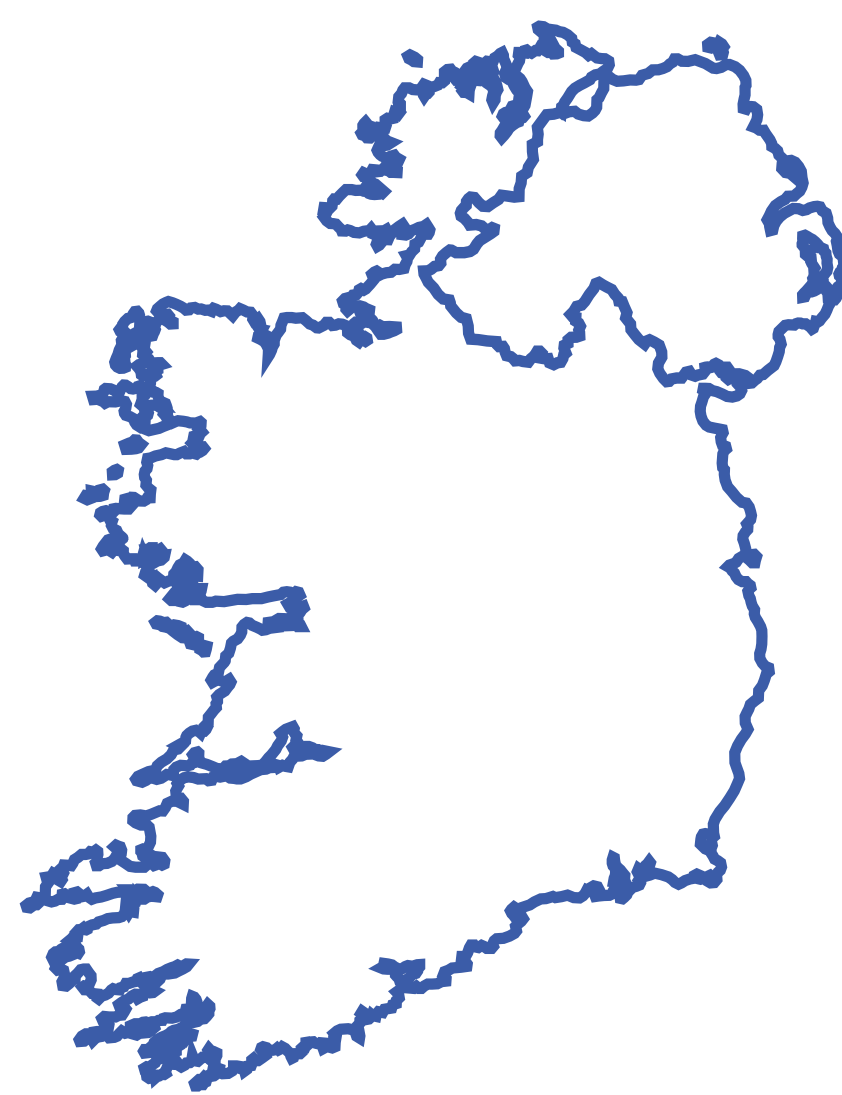
**Smaller businesses
(0-9 employees) most
active in new market
development**

Most common theme of
discussion:

**COMPLIANCE
& CUSTOMS
DECLARATIONS**



*Food & Drink and
Retail were joint
leading sectors
already selling to
Northern Ireland*



Retail

focus on sector

**Greatest
interest overall
in compliance
& customs**



**Best
prepared
with written
procedures**

Observations

across the board



Existing knowledge and preparation

Positives:

Companies had taken action to get their EORI numbers and identify Commodity Codes – these are some of the more straightforward activities and formed the base starting point for many of the clinic appointments



**EORI
Numbers
Commodity
Codes**

**Dedicated
Staff**

**Written
procedures**

Incoterms



Negatives:

Some companies had no dedicated staff or written procedures. There was also limited appreciation of the importance of Incoterms®. This was of concern because these 3 topics are fundamental to compliance, risk, cost and obligations for getting goods to, or receiving goods from, another country. Clinic attendees often presented gaps in the understanding of what they needed to put in place.

**51% already
work with
Agents or
Distributors**

**62% were
already selling
into Northern
Ireland**

Trading activities

Looking at current trading activities as the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) came into effect, it was clear that each of these factors would necessitate changes in processes and communications for Somerset companies.

**Only 37%
considered that
they were part of a
supply chain**

60%
were looking to
access new markets

82%
recognised that they needed
to learn about compliance

60%
wanted to complete
their own customs
declarations

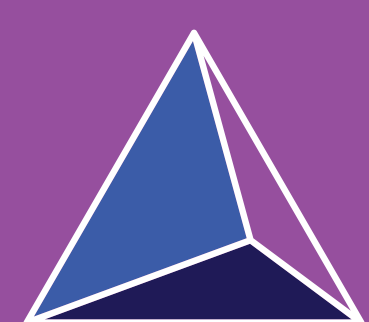
*It was really good
to note the level of
ambition of Somerset
businesses. Reality
on the breadth of
things they would
need to learn was
becoming apparent.*

International planning

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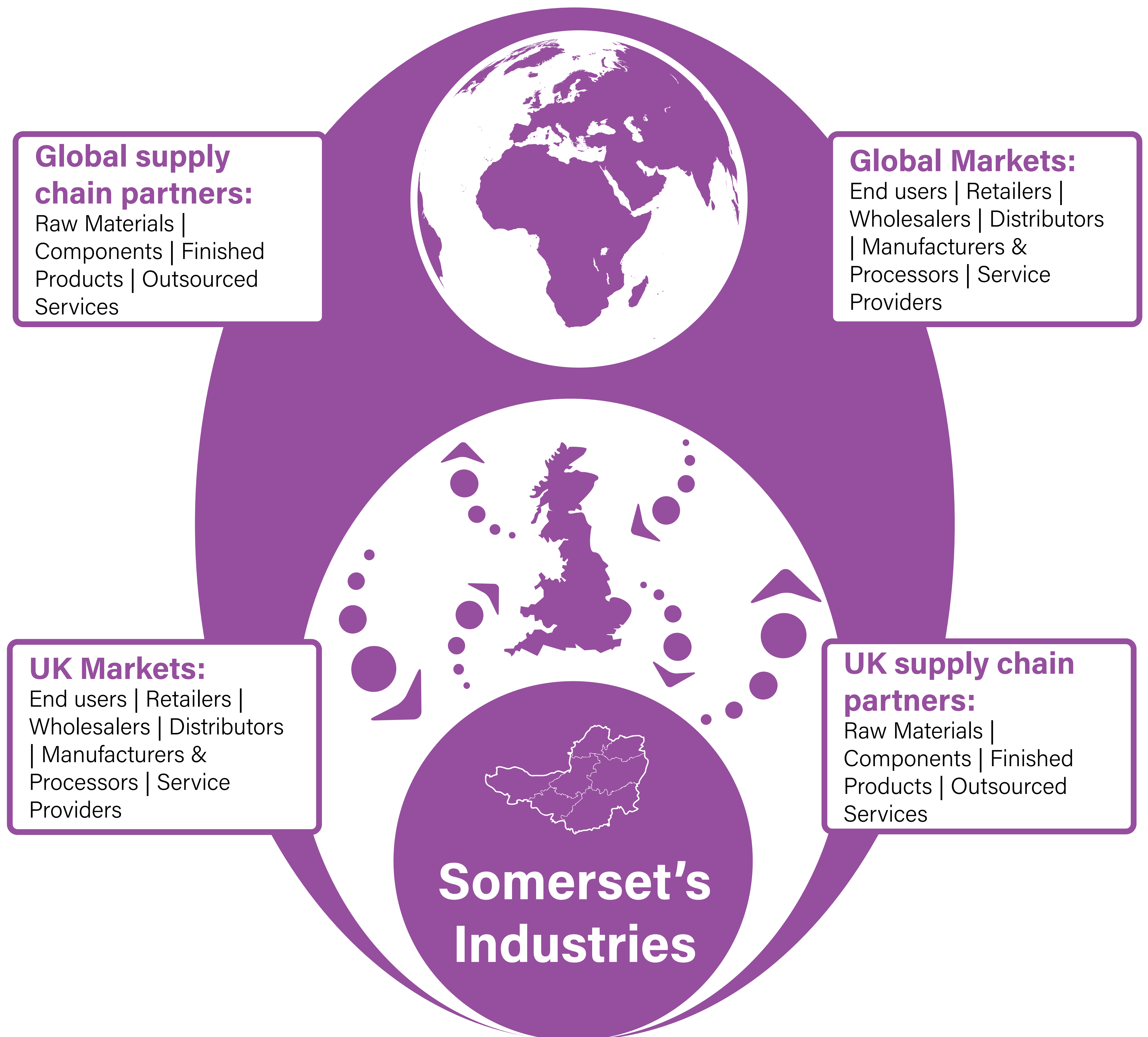
Outcomes and moving forward



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Global integration

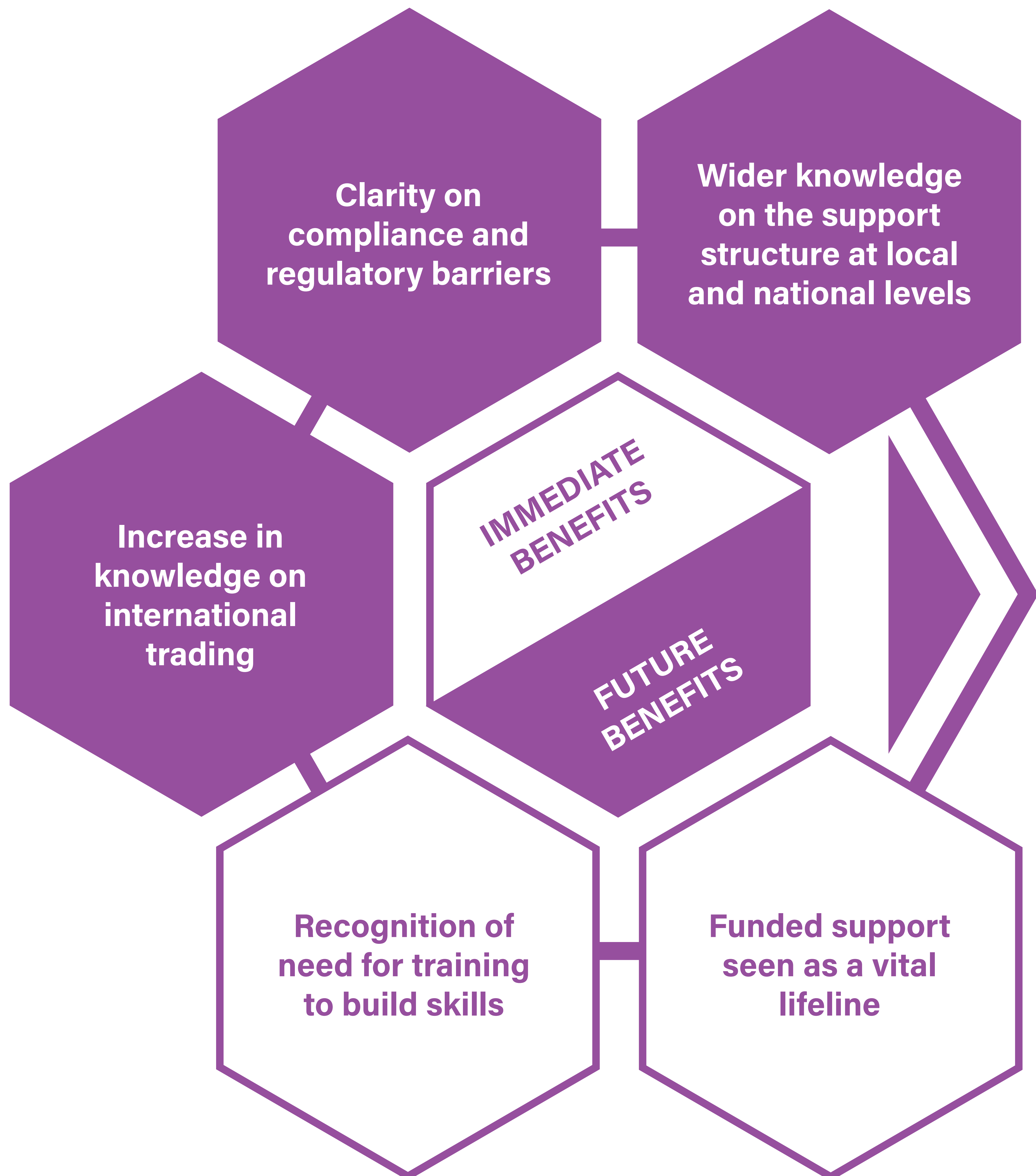
Somerset is by no means isolated. It is connected through trade across the world. Whether or not companies import or export, the significance of its global links are important to the economic health of the county and country. Sector strength and investment brings innovation across sectors, bringing prospects for companies based in the county. The flow of trade both inward and outward creates opportunity for growth.



Acknowledging influence and interdependence on national and international markets:

Somerset's industries support (and are supported by) a huge network of direct and indirect businesses from Indonesia and China, USA and Australia to Europe, Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. Within each flow of goods is a unique chain of real people dependent on established trading procedures and access to markets.

What was achieved



Somerset 2021 & Beyond

Regardless of industry, it is clear from our discussions that a multi-agency, collaborative approach from training & service providers, Chamber, DIT, funding sources and local government is required to deliver a climate of business resilience in Somerset now, and for the future.

Recommendations

top tips for businesses



1

Investigate and understand Incoterms® 2020

Issued by the International Chamber of Commerce these set out the risk, obligations and cost included within international contracts of sale. [Incoterms® 2020 - ICC United Kingdom \(iccwbo.uk\)](#)

2

Create an Export Quotation Template

Determine a full list of fields that include (but are not limited to) Incoterms® 2020, HS code, Standards, Packing and Labelling, Cost, Terms of Payment and Currency. This can be established within an ERP system or created manually.

3

Establish who will provide your export declarations

Options include using a Chamber of Commerce, your Freight Forwarder or yourself. The declarations provide proof of export to HMRC and comprise one of the documents needed to accompany goods being sent to the EU.

4

Identify the commodity code for your goods

This will allow you to determine the tariff costs of entry to the UK or other markets. Trade Tariff: look up commodity codes, duty and VAT rates - [GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Access2Markets ([europa.eu](#))

5

Understand the critical elements of a Commercial Invoice

This is fundamental to acceptance of the export and import declarations by Customs. [What should you include on a commercial invoice for customs compliance? \(internationaltradematters.com\)](#)

top tips for businesses

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6

Look at Funding options

Currently HMRC are offering funding up to £2,000 for companies and/or individuals to help with training or professional advice. [Apply for a grant to help small and medium-sized businesses new to importing or exporting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

7

Sign up for gov.uk updates

It is important that you receive and understand the most relevant and up to date information. Sign up to receive updates as they are issued.

[Notices to exporters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Import goods into the UK: step by step - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

8

Recognise that there is support for international traders

As well as DIT, Chambers of Commerce and Institute of Export there is a number of independent advisors, like International Trade Matters who provide training support, project delivery and advice.

9

Check future growth aspirations against global context

Understanding the global trading environment and your company's place in it will assist in identifying opportunities for growth.

10

Use PESTEL, SWOT and Sensemaking

Tools to assess potential opportunities in overseas markets. Matching capability, capacity and competence to the customers expectation of quality, cost and delivery is key to success both in the UK and overseas. It is really important to assess the potential of a market against the ability to service and manage demand.

top tips for businesses

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Conclusions

a global debrief



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Somerset is predominantly a county of many strengths, with companies providing manufacturing and/or services. The clinics were provided for the first three months of 2021 following the adoption of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the UK and the EU.

This period has been called Transition

The clinics were designed to provide advice and support on trading with the EU. They were delivered on a one-to-one basis, meaning that companies were provided with specific advice for specific concerns. These concerns covered the main international trading concepts of compliance, Incoterms, duty and VAT. Some companies were more prepared than others, meaning that they were more likely to ask the right questions to which we could respond succinctly. Others, were confused and had not appreciated the amount of change that the TCA brought. We provided clarity when needed and, at times, encouragement when there was despair.

Sessions often started with a 'small' question. Our Specialists, equipped with experience, qualifications and knowledge were able to understand the participants unique sets of circumstances and provide significant support and advice appropriate to the sector, the product and market.

Furthermore, using our collective resources, we signposted to the Department for International Trade and/or the Chamber of Commerce when appropriate. We also provided information on the funded support available for training on customs procedures.

Attendees were, in the main, Directors and Managers. They represented a range of sectors from retail to automotive, electronic & machinery to agriculture. This reflected the need for accurate and relevant information so that companies could adapt to the new trading arrangement with the EU.

The majority wanted - or needed - to know about Tariffs, Commodity Codes and Incoterms® for their products and/or shipments reflecting the fact that companies in Somerset value the EU as a valid and profitable market worthy of retention. The EU was seen as an integral market for their growth aspirations. Regulations and Standards were also an issue and we were able to advise on the new UKCA mark, on GDPR regulations and on notice to BCP's (Border Control Posts) for those exporting animal or animal products.

In conclusion, clinic attendees left the sessions with knowledge of the steps that they needed to take to retain their EU customers and remain compliant to HMRC requirements. There was an appetite to embrace the learning so that they can continue to consolidate and increase their EU market share.

Looking back, the companies we met have made the first steps on their journey to be part of a new Global Britain.

They have been equipped with the knowledge they needed as a foundation to international trade procedures and requirements, a foundation that will be developed through training and continued support from the Department for International Trade (DIT) and local providers such as International Trade Matters. Even recognising what they do not know is a huge step forward for many, it will allow them to ask the right questions and find the right answers to their enquiries in the future.



Linda Middleton-Jones LLB (Hons) MEx(Grad), mBIT, NLP Pract
Founder & Managing Director, International Trade Matters Ltd

About

International Trade Matters Ltd

International Trade Matters Ltd is based in the South West of England, delivering international trade services across sectors, geographies and disciplines.

Our strength is in the fact that we are an independent company offering expert advice and support to companies engaged in, or interested in, overseas connections or business.

With a raft of specialists offering expert advice on entry to new markets and international marketing strategies, International Trade Matters Ltd offers bespoke packages designed to provide value and satisfaction through clear communications, messaging and metrics. We offer an unparalleled knowledge of local, regional & international contacts and networks with an in-depth knowledge of international trade documentary requirements matched against a real recognition of national and regional strengths and constraints.

Our aim

...is to match aspirations of growth through to success for every company we work for.



Linda Middleton-Jones MANAGING DIRECTOR

Linda is a graduate of the University of Plymouth and Universidad de Barcelona (LLB{Hons}) and has been a member of the Institute of Export since 1996, where she is currently Chairman of the Academic Board. She represents the economic interests of South West Companies globally and has promoted specific sector developments in Europe, Russia, the Mediterranean and Central America. Her expertise has allowed her to guide clients on exporting strategy including market research, smart procurement and contract compliance.

Linda has nurtured an extensive national and regional contact network of complementary business support providers, central and local authorities, regional LEP's and Chambers of Commerce, as well as higher and further education establishments.

Your specialists



Mike Court

Mike holds a degree in International Development and a certificate in advanced customs compliance. He is a full member of the Institute of Export, has a Green Belt in Continued Process Improvements and is a Committee member of the Devon International Trade Forum. He has extensive experience of designing successful procedures for daily operation of International trade staff, and implementation of International trade audit procedures for companies.



Frances Fawcett

Frances is a member of the Institute of Leadership and Management, and a Fellow of the Institute of Training and Occupational Learning. After almost two decades with IT companies including Borland International, Canon (UK) and Microsoft Corporation, she spent a number of years providing marketing consultancy and global programme management to a variety of small and large companies. This included global management of a licensing programme for Microsoft Corporation.



Lindy Stacey

Lindy has over 20 years' Operations and Supply Chain Management experience, working across large international corporations, SME's and start-up businesses. She is a hands-on general management professional with a history of developing and managing supply chains and business operations.



Odette Barnes

Odette has over 20 years' experience supporting businesses as an independent employment and business development manager, working with entrepreneurs, micro-enterprises, small organisations, and large corporate companies.

With thanks

This research and the success story of Somerset's world-class SME's is enhanced by continued collaboration, support and initiatives from:

- [The Department for International Trade](#)
- [Somerset Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Somerset Business Agency](#)
- [Somerset County Council](#)
- [Heart of the South West LEP](#)
- [The Institute of Export](#)

Further reading

Using the links above and below, you can access a vast range of information and services. The International Trade Matters Ltd website provides a wealth of knowledge and insight in the form of [videos](#), [blog articles](#) and [webinars](#), as well as comprehensive [event listings for upcoming training courses](#).

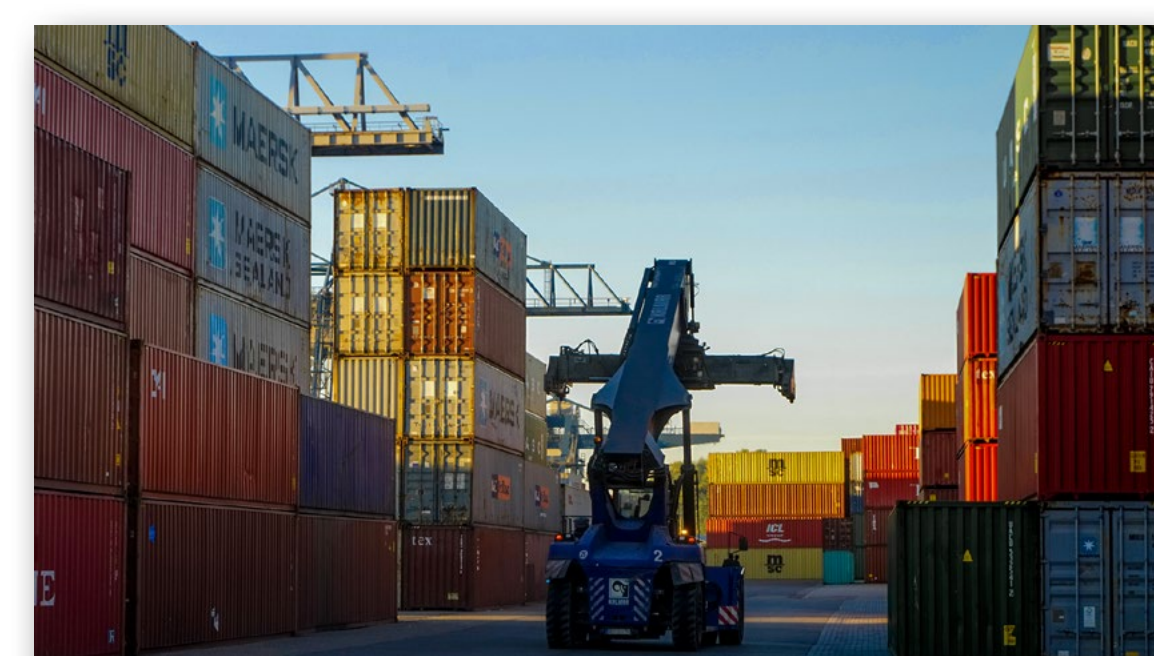
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