

The session will be recorded

*Welcome! Bienvenue! ¡Bienvenido!*  
*Witamy! Benvenuto! Vítejte!*  
*Herzlich willkommen!*



## ‘SME Internationalisation Exchange’ Project

**SME Internationalisation Post-Pandemic  
End of Project Event  
21 June 2022 - Zoom**

**#SIEProject**

[www.interregeurope.eu/SIE](http://www.interregeurope.eu/SIE)



# Agenda 21 September 2022

**15.00 (CEST) Welcome and overview of the Session - Kent County Council**

**15:05 Summary of SIE Regional Reports on SME Internationalisation Post-Covid:  
Key Findings and challenges – Kent Business School**

**15:25-16:40 Snapshots of SME Internationalisation Post-Covid in SIE partner regions:  
Good practice in SME support and future plans to boost SME internationalisation**

**16:40 Questions & discussion – how to support SME internationalisation in the future**

**16:55 Conclusions & Round up**

**17:00 Close**

# About SIE

## 7 Partner Regions



**Kent  
County  
Council**  
kent.gov.uk



**Torun Technology  
Park**



**NBank**  
Wir fördern Niedersachsen



**CCI INTERNATIONAL  
NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE**



**Ústecký kraj**



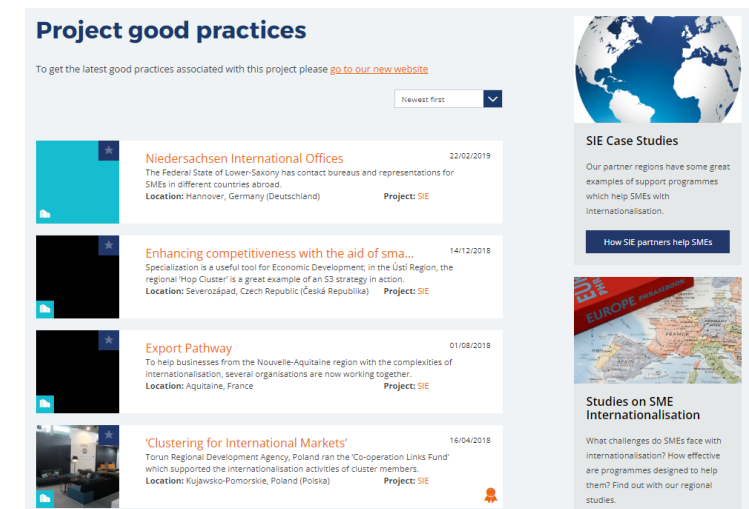
**Cámara**  
Cantabria



**REGIONE MOLISE**

# SIE Project Phase 1-2 Overview 2016-2021

- **7 Regional Studies:** Assessing barriers to exporting and levels of SME internationalisation in the SIE partner regions
- **7 Study Visits:** Examining the effectiveness of SME internationalisation policies & support programmes
- **7 Good Practices/Case Studies** from the SIE regions:
  - Kent International Business Programme (Kent)
  - ‘Go & Come Back’ Programme (Molise)
  - Zatec Hop Co-operative (Usti)
  - International Offices (Lower Saxony)
  - Export Clusters (Torun)
  - Export Consortia (Cantabria)
  - Export Pathway (Nouvelle-Aquitaine)



**Project good practices**

To get the latest good practices associated with this project please [go to our new website](#)

Sorted by: Newest first

- Niedersachsen International Offices** (22/02/2019)  
The Federal State of Lower Saxony has contact bureaux and representations for SMEs in different countries abroad.  
Location: Hannover, Germany (Deutschland) Project: SIE
- Enhancing competitiveness with the aid of sma...** (14/12/2018)  
Specialization is a useful tool for Economic Development. In the Ústí Region, the regional 'Hop Cluster' is a great example of an S3 strategy in action.  
Location: Severozápad, Czech Republic (Česká Republika) Project: SIE
- Export Pathway** (01/06/2018)  
To help businesses from the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region with the complexities of internationalisation, several organisations are now working together.  
Location: Aquitaine, France Project: SIE
- 'Clustering for International Markets'** (16/04/2018)  
Torun Regional Development Agency, Poland ran the 'Co-operation Links Fund' which supported the internationalisation activities of cluster members.  
Location: Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Poland (Polska) Project: SIE

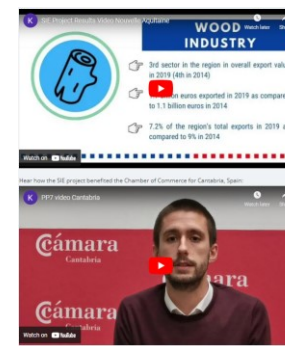
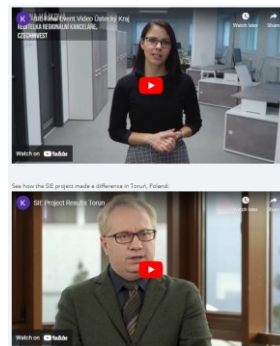
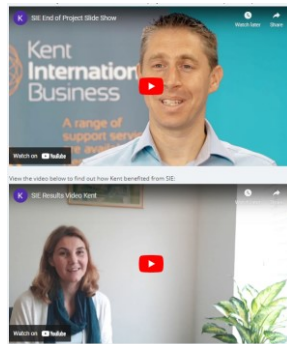
**SIE Case Studies**  
Our partner regions have some great examples of support programmes which help SMEs with internationalisation.  
[How SIE partners help SMEs](#)

**Studies on SME Internationalisation**  
What challenges do SMEs face with internationalisation? How effective are programmes designed to help them? Find out with our regional studies.

<https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/sie/sie-case-studies/>

# SIE Project Phase 1-2 Overview 2016-2021

- **2 Policy Improvement Workshops:** exploring how to adapt & adopt new SME support programmes
- **7 Regional Action Plans:** Adopting new support programmes to help tackle barriers to international trade and boost export levels
- **1 Pilot Action (others cancelled due to Covid):**  
The Kent Export Manager Pilot Scheme



<https://www.interregeurope.eu/sie/news/news-article/10739/sie-project-results/>



# SIE Project Phase 3 (2021-22)

Extra activities to investigate the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on SME internationalisation in SIE partner regions

## October 2021 - September 2022:

- New regional surveys/studies
- Cross-regional comparative study
- Interregional exchange workshops
  
- Collaborating to:
  - Share good practice
  - Plan for future SME support
  - Tackle 'new' challenges faced by SMEs



# Cross-Regional Survey Work

**How did the pandemic affect  
SME internationalisation in Europe?**

University of Kent



EUROPEAN UNION  
European Regional Development Fund



Kent  
Business School

# A Comparative Analysis of Six European Regional Studies on SME Internationalisation

21<sup>st</sup> September 2022

Dr. Carmen Stoian, Kent Business School, UK

Dr. Zita Stone, Kent Business School, UK

Professor Fragkiskos Filippaios, University of East Anglia, UK



# Content

Aim of the comparative report

Scope of the report

Our methodology

Disclaimers

Findings

Recommendations

# Aim of the comparative report

The report provides a comparison of the findings of the research completed on 6 regions, focusing on:

- ▶ Facilitators of SME internationalisation
- ▶ Barriers to SME internationalisation
- ▶ How has Covid-19 affected firm turnover and internationalisation?
- ▶ Support available for SME internationalisation
- ▶ Best practice and gaps in supporting SME internationalisation
- ▶ Recommendations for better support for SME internationalisation

# The scope of the report

We include the research reports on the following regions:

- ▶ Kent (UK)
- ▶ Molise Region (Italy)
- ▶ Ústí Region (Czech Republic)
- ▶ Lower Saxony (Germany)
- ▶ Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France)
- ▶ Cantabria (Spain)

# Our methodology

- ▶ Comparative exploratory qualitative analysis
  - ▶ Quantitative and qualitative data
  - ▶ Primary and secondary data
- ▶ Key aims:
  - ▶ To identify common patterns and trends between the six regions
  - ▶ To highlight differences between the six regions
- ▶ NVivo - a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International.

# Disclaimers

Although the research brief was similar for all partners, there are some methodological differences, as follows:

- ▶ **Presentation of information** varies between regions with different levels of detail and different formats (reports, summaries, presentations)
- ▶ **Terminology** used was also different (ex. Covid, pandemic, outbreak used to capture the same phenomenon)
- ▶ **Different sampling methods and sample characteristics** (size, industry, types of firms, timelines, level of analysis-country/region)
- ▶ **Different types of respondents**
- ▶ **Different methods** (primary vs. secondary, quantitative vs. qualitative)
- ▶ **Different measurements** (turnover/exporting, etc.)
- ▶ **Different survey aims and instruments** (most surveys are about the impact of Covid-19 on internationalisation, but some are on the usefulness of various initiatives)
- ▶ **Different regional competitive advantages**
- ▶ **Limitation of the studies: Surveys completed before 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 - the invasion of Ukraine by Russia**

# Methodology I - Word clouds

- ▶ These are used to capture the frequency of words in every report and collectively.
- ▶ Words longer than 5 characters were captured.
- ▶ Stop words (frequently used common words) were excluded.
- ▶ Top 50 words are presented.
- ▶ Generalisation of words was used (words with similar meanings were clustered together).



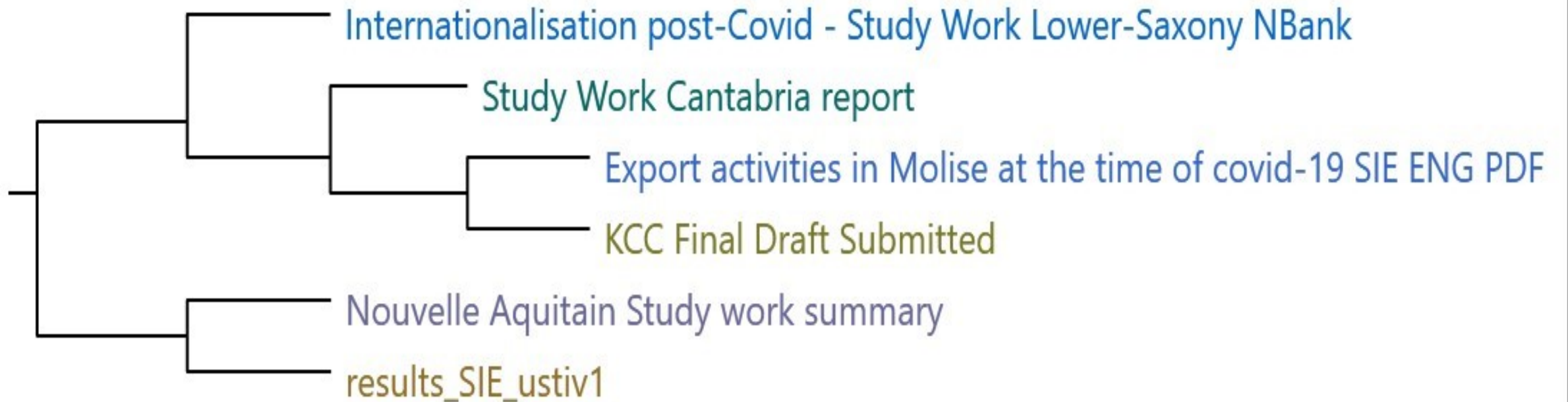


# Methodology II - Similarity tree

- ▶ An analysis of common patterns of words was used to create a similarity tree.
- ▶ **Captures the similarity in approaches and the presentation of information used in the different reports.**
- ▶ Classifies two different groups (Lower Saxony, Cantabria, Kent & Molise vs. Nouvelle Aquitaine & Ústí ) but also presents similarities at lower levels.
- ▶ Kent and Molise show significant similarities.
- ▶ Nouvelle Aquitaine and Ústí show significant similarities.

# Similarity Tree - All reports

## Items clustered by word similarity



# Word Clouds - Individual regions

- ▶ **Events** have been an important aspect of addressing the challenges posed on international trade by the UK's exit from the EU and Covid-19.
- ▶ **Communication** also appears to be an important aspect of managing uncertainty in the approaches by different regions.
- ▶ **Change** has also been an important element showing that over the period under investigation all regions faced significant change in their environment.
- ▶ There is a difference between regions in terms of the level of intervention (country vs. regional level).



# Cantabria





# Molise



# Kent



# Nouvelle Aquitaine



# Ústí



# Facilitators of SME internationalisation

- ▶ In **Kent** the survey shows that the most important factor that would help SMEs enhance exports is a favourable tax system, suitable administrative and financial regulations and availability of information on new market trends.
- ▶ Great export drive, product quality, technical skills, mix of style, design, organisation, regional and cultural characteristics, as well as the ability to transform and adapt to the market (**Molise Region**)
- ▶ In **Cantabria** the role of new technologies - continued digitalisation (virtual promotions, teleworking etc.) highlighted as key to survival and future success.

# Barriers to SME internationalisation

- ▶ **Kent:** bureaucratic and administrative delays, finding the right partners and distributors, finding access to local markets and reliable local information, and the cost of attending exhibitions and trade fairs abroad.
- ▶ **Lower Saxony:** security demands, need for local certification, sanctions
- ▶ **Nouvelle - Aquitaine** - lack of predictability, logistical problems, financing issues
- ▶ **Cantabria:** suggestions of - supply chain and logistical issues, loss of export contracts, lack of digitalisation skill/resource in business



# Firms across the six regions show resilience in the face of Covid-19.

- ▶ 11% SMEs have started exports during Covid-19, to build resilience and only 4% firms stopped exporting during Covid-19. (Kent)
- ▶ The negative effect on firm turnover and/or exports has been temporary, with 71% of export intensive firms maintaining or increasing exports as early as May 2020 (France/Nouvelle-Aquitaine) or September 2020 (Italy). 86% of firms maintained exports during the pandemic and for 56% of those the turnover is the same or higher in June 2021 than in October 2020. (France/Nouvelle-Aquitaine). Exports recovery was present in Cantabria too in 2021 (21% increase in exports).
- ▶ An exceptional case: the Molise region has seen a positive impact on exports (26% increase).

# The impact of Covid-19 on firm turnover or exports varied within the six regions. (I)

## Industry effects

Some industries were more resilient than others, and some even thrived during Covid-19:

- ▶ **Molise Region:** Automotive; Agri-food
- ▶ **France/ Nouvelle Aquitaine:** Health and biotech; Equipment and solutions for agriculture; Services; Technology

## Industries badly affected

- ▶ **France/ Nouvelle Aquitaine:** Home, sports and leisure; Perfumes and cosmetics; Clean technology and infrastructure; Wines and spirits
- ▶ **Lower Saxony:** affected by supply chain issues either on the supply side (e. g. machine building and the car industry by the lack of microchips) or the demand side (e. g. the food and drink sector with the closing of the hospitality sector)

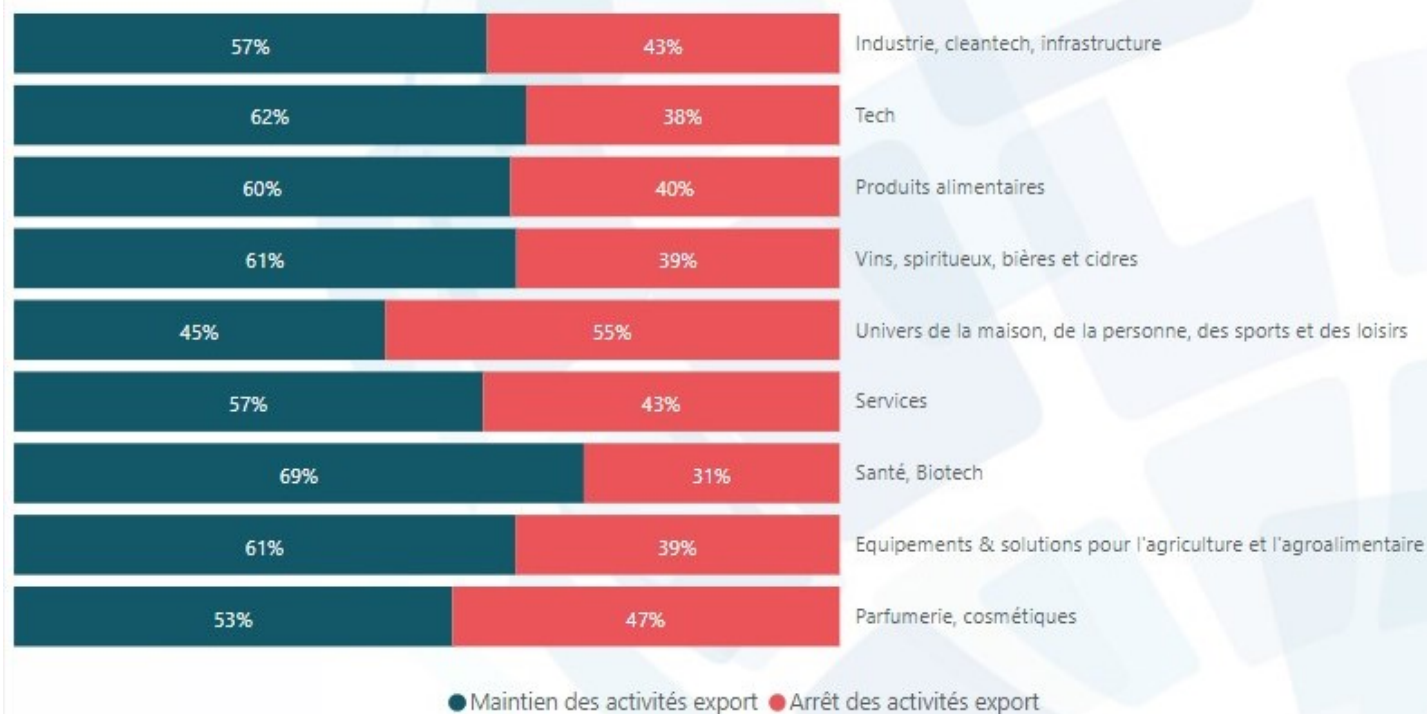
Industries that have recovered by June 2021 and even surpassed the pre-pandemic export levels:  
Agri-food; Equipment for agriculture and agri-industry

# Comportement export et motifs recueillis par secteurs d'activité –



## BAROMETRE DE L'ACTIVITE INTERNATIONALE DES ENTREPRISES FRANCAISES VUE NATIONALE

Répartition sectorielle des entreprises selon l'état de leurs activités export



Sur un échantillon de

**6115**

entreprises

Univers sectoriel	Nombre d'entreprises contactées
Equipements & solutions pour l'agriculture et l'agroalimentaire	303
Industrie, cleantech, infrastructure	2269
Parfumerie, cosmétiques	177
Produits alimentaires	602
Santé, Biotech	313
Services	537
Tech	653
Univers de la maison, de la personne, des sports et des loisirs	694
Vins, spiritueux, bières et cidres	567
<b>Total</b>	<b>6115</b>

# The impact of Covid-19 on firm turnover or exports varied within the six regions. (II)

## Firm effects

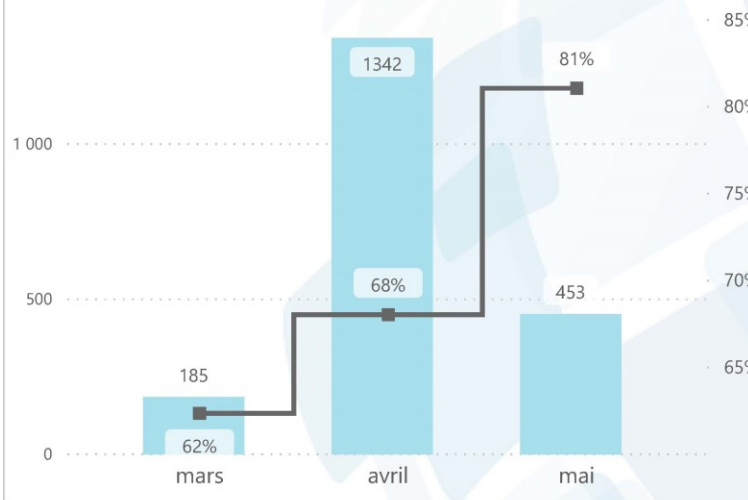
- **Export intensive firms** have been **more resilient** during Covid-19, as they **depended on the export market for survival** and they were experienced in tackling **changes and uncertainty**.
- **France/ Nouvelle Aquitaine**: Only 29% of export intensive firms stopped exporting by 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (compared to 42% of all firms).
- Firms with embedded digitalisation skill/resource/orientation report stronger performance than other forms (**Cantabria**).

Regional effects? (**Molise and Cantabria vs. Ústí Region**)

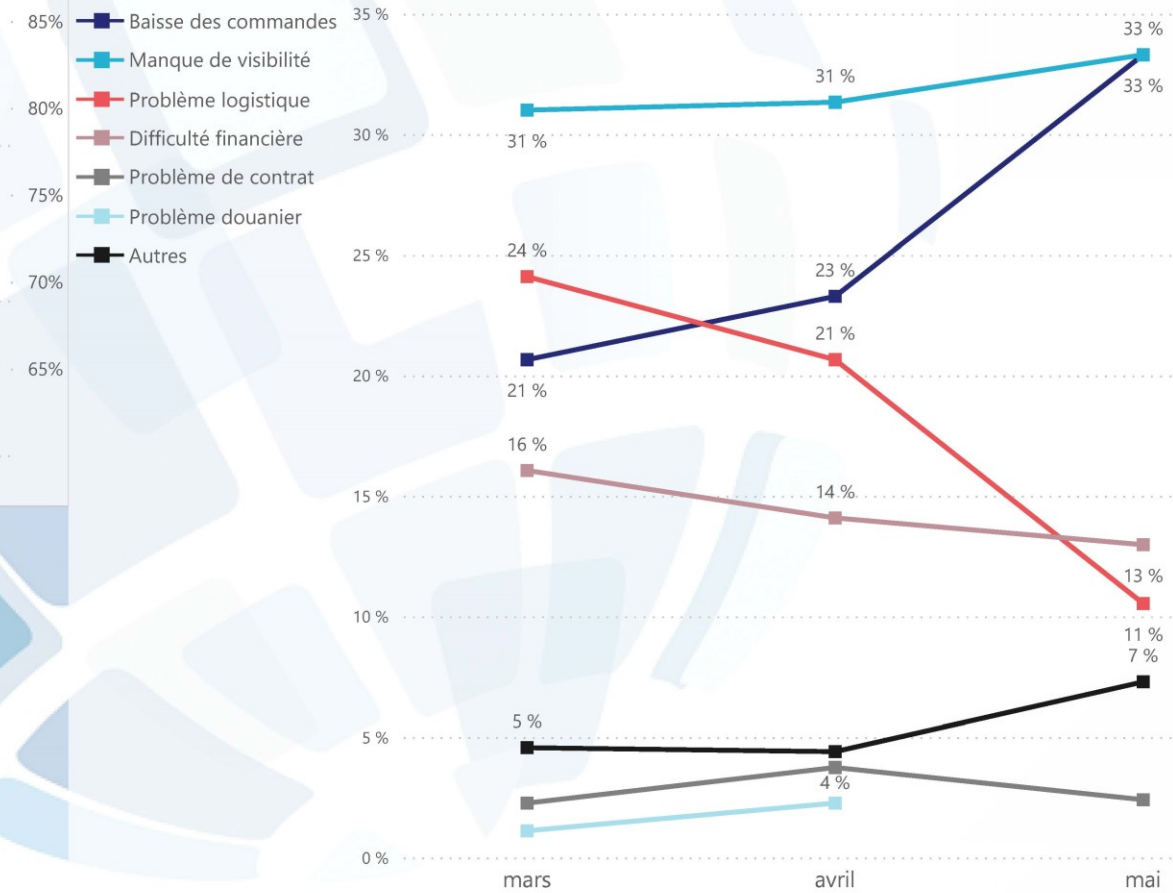
## BAROMETRE DE L'ACTIVITE INTERNATIONALE DES ENTREPRISES FRANCAISES

### VUE NATIONALE

Evolution mensuelle des entreprises qui déclarent poursuivre leurs activités export



Evolution mensuelle des motifs exprimés pour les entreprises **ayant stoppé** leurs activités export



Sur un échantillon total de

**1935**  
entreprises

 Maintien de l'export

 Arrêt de l'export

# What were the sources of the firms' resilience in terms of exporting during Covid-19 (I)?

- ▶ Exports as strategy to ensure resilience (**Kent**)
- ▶ Networks, clusters, and leveraging the firms' competitive advantage and the region's heritage, culture and natural and human resources (**Molise Region**)
- ▶ Government support including financial support to counteract the effect of Covid-19 (**all**)
- ▶ Avoiding closure during Covid-19 as firms were considered strategic by the government (**Molise Region, Cantabria**)
- ▶ Digitalisation (**Ústí Region, Cantabria, Molise Region**)

# What were the sources of the firms' resilience in terms of exporting during Covid-19 (II)?

- ▶ Dynamism, training, innovation through knowledge acquisition (**50% firms implemented innovation in production or introduced digital solutions**), investment in human capital to capture demand (**Molise Region**)
- ▶ 'Change-oriented behaviour, with strong interactions with risks and opportunities in the market (**Molise Region**); flexibility, adaptability with offices, clients, promotion, remote work (**Cantabria**)
- ▶ HR skills, communication and marketing skills and logistics skills (**Molise Region**)
- ▶ Industry specific effects: Automotive, Agri-food (**Molise Region**); Health and Biotech (**Nouvelle-Aquitaine**)

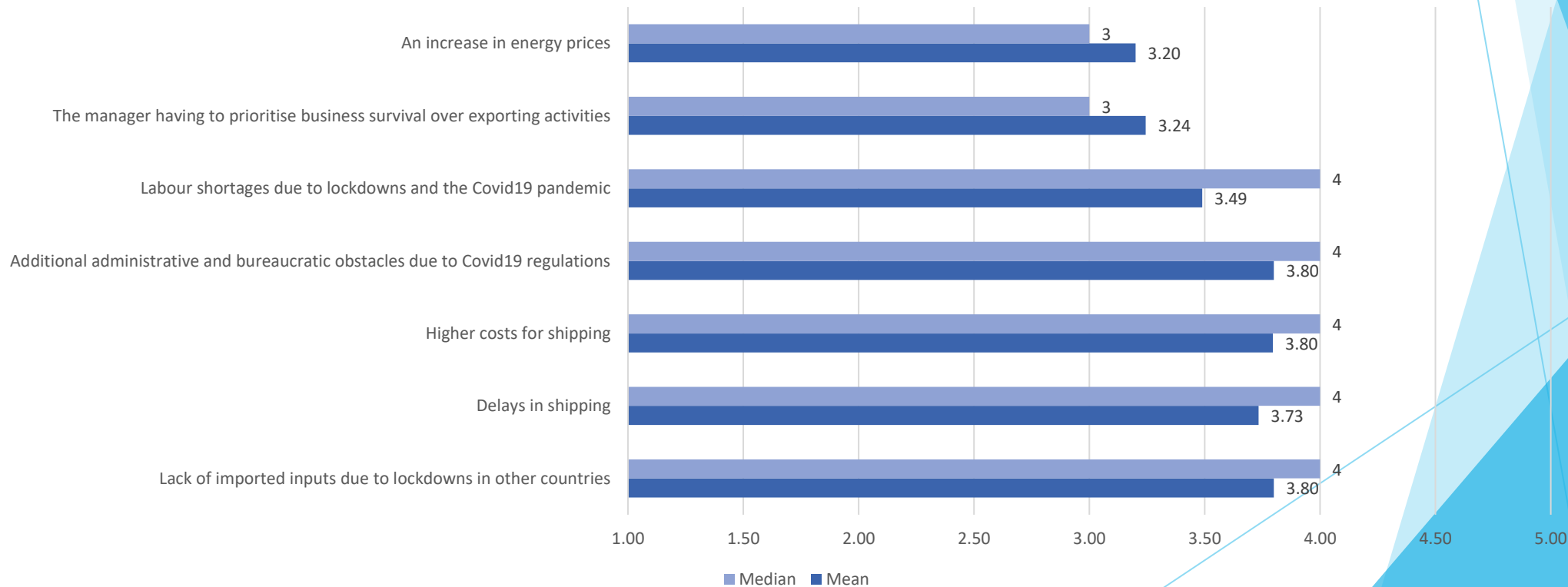


# Common challenges faced by exporters during the pandemic (I)

- ▶ Fall in demand (important and very important for **France/ Nouvelle Aquitaine**, and consistently so) (**Cantabria, Ústí Region, Lower Saxony**).
- ▶ Supply chain/logistics issues (important for **France/ Nouvelle Aquitaine**, but less so after the initial stages of the pandemic) (**Cantabria, Ústí Region, Lower Saxony**)
- ▶ Labour shortages (**Kent, Lower Saxony, Ústí Region**)
- ▶ Uncertainty regarding the future (most important for France/ **Nouvelle Aquitaine**).
- ▶ Finance difficulties (important for **France/ Nouvelle Aquitaine**, but less so after the initial stages of the pandemic); Not so important for **Lower Saxony** as a lot of support available.

# Common challenges faced by exporters during the pandemic (II)

Since 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a decrease in our exports due to:  
(1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither agree or disagree, 4- Agree, 5-Strongly agree) (Kent)



# Support available for internationalisation

- ▶ Some lack of awareness is seen in several regions. (**Kent, Cantabria**)
- ▶ Tailored support: Team France Export
- ▶ Regional support-using digitalisation:
  - ▶ personalised study to help reposition markets and remote prospecting mission (**Nouvelle Aquitaine**)
  - ▶ virtual trade missions (**Cantabria**)
  - ▶ Enterprise Europe Network (**Kent**)
  - ▶ Presentigo (**Ústí Region**)

# Recommendations regarding support needed

- ▶ More funding needed.
- ▶ Support and grow digitalisation of businesses.
- ▶ Tailored advice and support needed, depending on the stage of internationalisation (**Kent**), level of export intensity (**Kent, Nouvelle Aquitaine**), industry (**Molise Region, Nouvelle Aquitaine**)
- ▶ Increase awareness of support (**Kent, Cantabria**)
- ▶ Fewer administrative constraints (**Kent, Cantabria**)
- ▶ Financial support available, marketing/sales and crisis management (**Ústí Region**)
- ▶ In-house innovation process and the production process (**Molise Region**)

# Lessons for firms for building resilience after Covid-19

- ▶ **Clusters, networks** and making the best of the region's and country's national competitive advantage and cultural heritage are key.
- ▶ Never miss out on **the opportunity of capitalising on a great crisis**.
- ▶ SMEs can do it- being flexible and innovative is very important.
- ▶ **Digitalisation** and **investment in human capital** are crucial to exporting and need to be prioritised.
- ▶ **Making use of government help** (advice, funding, trade missions) is important but greater awareness of available support is key.
- ▶ **Encouraging the development of internationalisation processes within the company, rather than simply encouraging export activity** - networking mechanisms, understanding of cross-border industrial clusters, opening up new markets through the exchange of technology and culture.

Thank you. Any questions?

Region	The impact of Covid-19 (survey findings)
Kent (UK)	<p><b>Our survey:</b> Only 50% of the respondents have a positive perception of the export activity of their firm.</p> <p>Almost half of the firms (45%) registered a fall in exports of up to 20% due to Covid-19.</p> <p><b>Only 4% stopped exporting since Covid-19.</b></p> <p>11% of Kent SMEs have utilised exports as a strategy to build resilience during Covid-19.</p>
Molise Region (Italy)	<p><b>Regional data:</b> Losses of &gt;10% for 57.5% of exporting companies</p> <p>Only 25% exported to new markets.</p> <p><b>All SMEs continued to export due to networking.</b></p> <p><b>Innovative companies did not report a fall in exports.</b></p> <p><b>50% implemented an innovation or adopted a digital solution in production.</b></p> <p><b>Only 25% had difficulties in finding raw materials for production.</b></p> <p><b>Only 25% adopted remote working or digitalisation for marketing.</b></p>



Region	The impact of Covid-19 (survey findings)
Ústí Region (Czech Republic)	<p><b>Regional data:</b> In the 2020 survey 64% firms affected negatively by the pandemic. In the 2022 survey 33% declared that the pandemic affected most negatively their activities and turnover and 8% were affected positively.</p> <p>94% of firms stopped exporting since the beginning of the pandemic but 79% want to increase exports in the future.</p>
Lower Saxony (Germany)	<p><b>Regional data:</b> 50% firms experience more obstacles to internationalisation.</p> <p>46% cancelled or postponed investments.</p> <p>55 % believed that sales will decrease significantly or slightly (Bundesbank survey)</p>

Region	The impact of Covid-19 (survey findings)
Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France)	<p><b>Country level data:</b> 42% of firms (at country level) stopped exports during 30<sup>th</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020.</p> <p>71% of export intensive firms (exports contributing to 30% or more of their turnover)(country level) continued to export between 30<sup>th</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020.</p> <p>86% of firms (country level) maintained exports during the pandemic and for 56% of those the turnover was the same or higher in June 2021 than in October 2020.</p>
Cantabria (Spain)	<p><b>Regional data:</b> For 66% of firms covid-19 affected negatively turnover with the impact very important or important for 83%. 5% were impacted positively.</p> <p>42% of firms saw a fall in exports and 60% did not look for new markets.</p> <p><b>More resilient than other Spanish regions: only 5.3% decrease in exports compared to the 10% national average.</b></p>



# SME Internationalisation in Kent (UK) Post-Covid (and post-Brexit)



# Kent Study Findings

- Export levels had reduced (partly from Covid, more so from Brexit)
- EU Markets remained the most important
- Barriers to exporting included:
  - High costs (logistics, tariffs)
  - Additional paperwork/bureacracy
  - Delays with shipping
  - Lack of reliable market information
  - Finding the right partners & distributors
  - Lack of skilled workforce
- Need for more bespoke support (less general)
- Digitalisation could help with costs and resource
- Low awareness of support programmes
- Exporting has slipped down the priority list



# Adapting SME Internationalisation Support Programmes in Kent (UK)

**What? SEED Project** - Programme of Virtual Trade Missions

**Funding:** Part-financed by South East Local Enterprise Partnership

**Sectors:** Food & Drink, Life Sciences, Digital & Creative

**Markets:** UAE, Ireland, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, Canada, Hong Kong

**Activities:**

1. Market Insight Reports
2. Market Briefing Sessions (webinars)
3. Brochures of participating companies (and promo videos)
4. 1-2-1 online consultations with in-market experts
5. Shipping product samples (food & drink)
6. Virtual meetings with identified business contacts



# Adapting SME Internationalisation Support Programmes in Kent (UK)

**What? IMPULS Project** - supporting Health & Life Science SMEs with internationalisation

**Funding:** Interreg France-Channel-England Programme funding

**Markets:** France, UK, general international markets (UAE, Germany)

## Activities:

1. Training webinars (regulations, internationalisation)
2. Information webinars (market insight)
3. Virtual pitch & match events (just starting)
4. Virtual attendance at international trade shows (Arab Health 2022, Bio Europe etc.)
5. Back to physical attendance at international trade shows (Medica, Arab Health)
6. Videos & digital brochure entries for SMEs to help with international marketing

[www.kentinternationalbusiness.co.uk/impuls/](http://www.kentinternationalbusiness.co.uk/impuls/)



EUROPEAN UNION



# Adapting SME Internationalisation Support Programmes in Kent (UK)

**What?** Boost4Health project

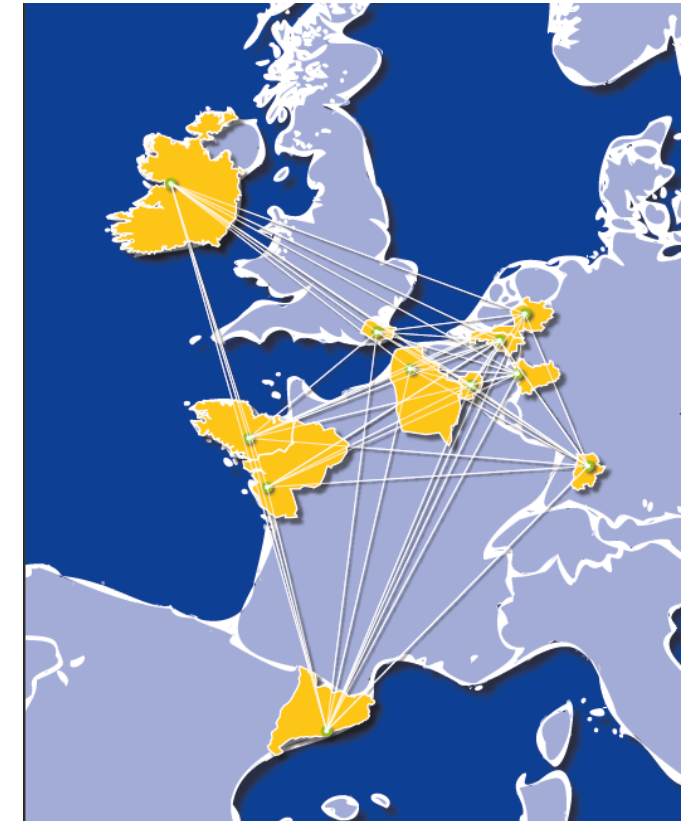
**Funding:** Interreg North West Europe Programme

**Sectors:** Life Sciences

**Markets:** France, UK, Germany, Spain, Netherlands,  
Belgium, Ireland

**Activities:**

- Webinars & European market 'deep dives'
- ~~Travel vouchers~~ => Connection vouchers  
(used in Kent for international marketing)
- Support vouchers (market research/lead generation etc.)





# What did we learn?

1. Virtual export support is efficient & cost-effective  
– especially for distant international markets
2. You can reach a wide audience but good in-market partners are essential
3. Virtual is not ideal for certain sectors (food & drink)
4. Not all companies have perfected their digital marketing
5. Businesses are keen to go back to face-to-face
6. The future is hybrid!

# SIE Project Legacy: What's next for SME Internationalisation Support in Kent?

Work in progress:

1. Complete **evaluations** of adapted programmes of support
2. Find the balance between **virtual & physical** activities
3. **Re-map export support services** post-pandemic & post-Brexit (no more EU-funded programmes of support)
4. **Identify (& fill) gaps** in support according to company needs
5. **Retain links** with EU & international partner regions
6. Develop **new strategy & action plan** to continue SME support activity
7. **Re-engage with SMEs** to help them through current & future challenges (Covid, Brexit, Ukraine War, 'Cost of Living', Climate Emergency etc...)



# SME Internationalisation in Molise (Italy)

# **SME Internationalisation Exchange (SIE) Project Online Closing Event**



**21 September 2022**



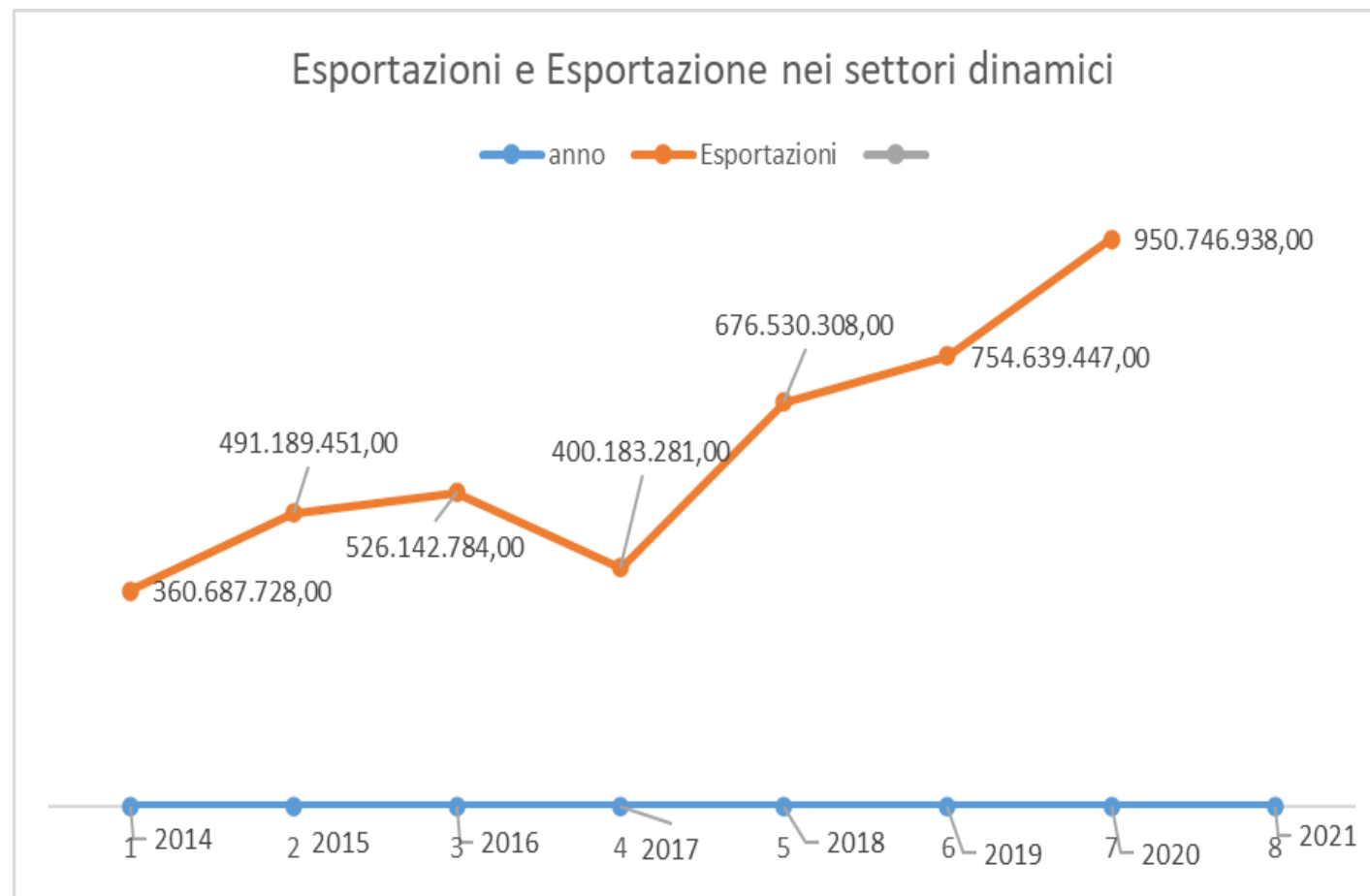
# Future Plans with SME Internationalisation

*How the Molise Region has responded to  
study findings in the post-Covid context*

## Export activities in Molise at the time of Covid-19

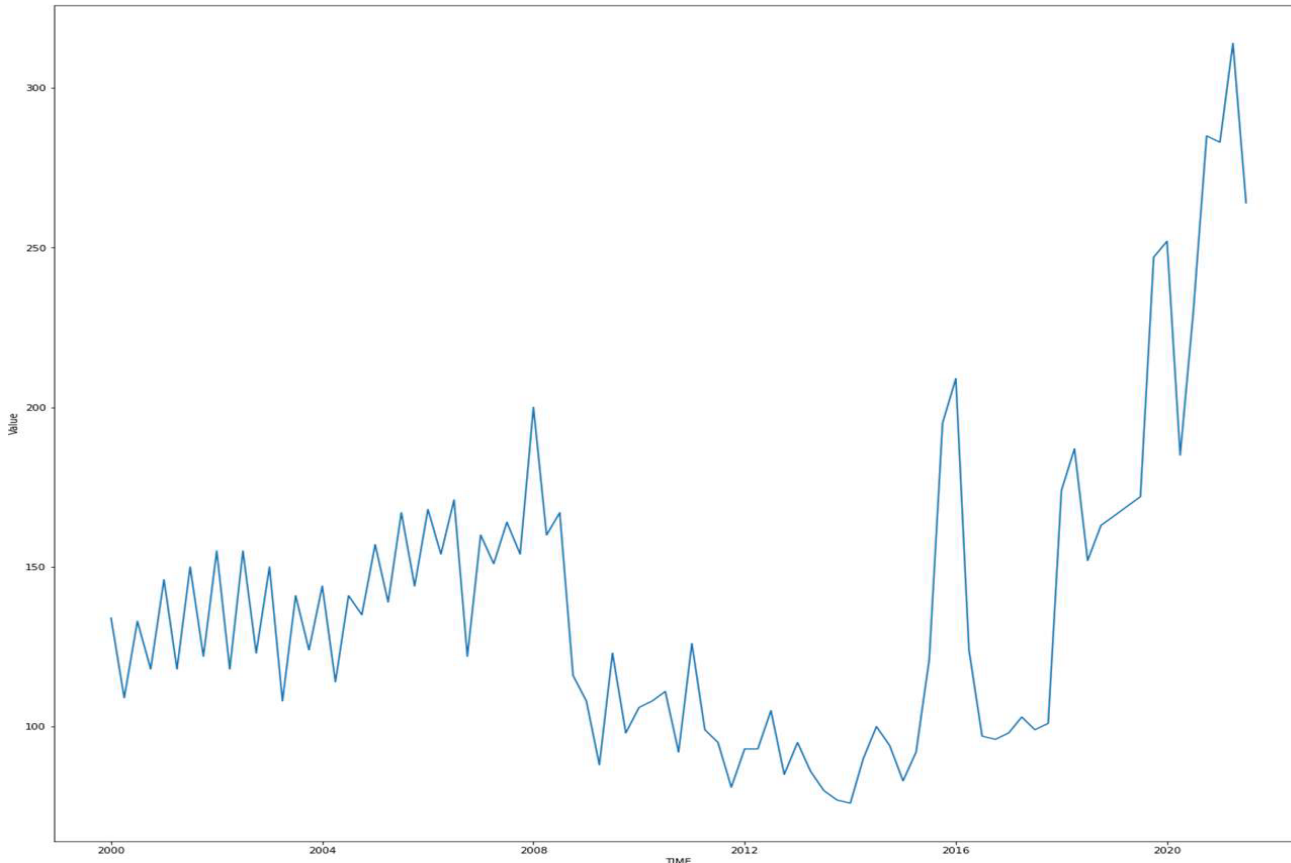
### Molise export during Covid – 19

Molise is the only region in Italy that reported a positive trend in term of export + 26% in the 2020 respect the 2019. As a matter of fact, in Molise, highly dynamic companies account for 70% of the total export turnover.



## *Export activities in Molise at the time of Covid-19*

### **Molise export during Covid – 19**



- Exports from Molise between 2020 and 2021, the years of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, have never been as high as they have been in the last 20 years.



## *Export activities in Molise at the time of Covid-19*

### **Molise export during Covid – 19**

#### **Main sectors**

#### **AUTOMOTIVE**



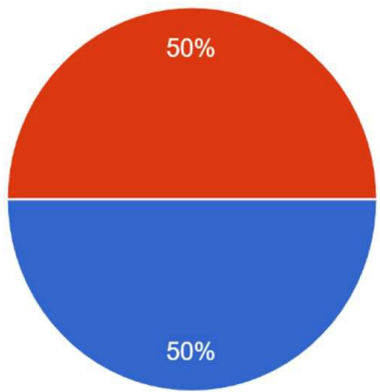
#### **AGRI-FOOD**



Molise is the only region in Italy that reported a positive trend in term of export + 26% in the 2020 respect the 2019. As a matter of fact, in Molise, highly dynamic companies account for 70% of the total export turnover.

## *Export activities in Molise at the time of Covid-19*

**The results of the survey – *Did you implement digital solutions for production or innovate the production process in the period between 2020 and 2021?***



● si  
● no

- During the Covid-19 pandemic crisis 50% of the responding companies successfully implemented an innovation in the production process or introduced a digital solution for production.

## *Export activities in Molise at the time of Covid-19*

**WHAT  
DO  
YOU  
EXPECT**



### **The results of the survey – Expectations of Molise SMEs**

- Only one SME received public aid in connection with export activity
- 50% of SME's think that in 2021/2022 will see a growth to their export activity
- 87,5 % of SME's could be interested in receive found for internationalization
- 75% of the SME's might be interested in utilize voucher for internalization

## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



## INITIATIVES



**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

- 1) **Voucher internationalization**
- 2) **EUMATCH project**



## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



### Voucher internationalization 2022

#### OBJECTIVE

To support the competitiveness of SMEs of all sectors of the Molise Region during the post covid emergency to improve their international trade mainly through innovative tools and digital technologies.

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?**

**SMSs which export habitually or occasionally,  
whose intention is to promote their presence  
abroad.**



*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*

**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**Amount financed**

**(65% of the total amount )**



Minimum investment	Maximum contribution
4.000,00 Euro	6.000,00 Euro

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*

**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**SMSs have to submit a project.**







**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



### **Voucher internationalization 2022**

#### **WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?**

- A) Initiatives to promote the presence of a company abroad.**
- Strengthening of promotional and marketing tools in foreign languages (design, preparation, revision, translation of contents of catalogs/brochures/company presentation).





**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?**



**- Obtaining or renewing the product certifications**

**necessary for export to Foreign countries or to exploit**

**certain commercial channels (eg. GDO).**

## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



## Voucher internationalization 2022

### WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?

- Protection of the trademark of the company abroad.



*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



## Voucher internationalization 2022

### WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?



- Training to improve the management

skills of the company in the field of export.

## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



### **Voucher internationalization 2022**

### **WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?**

**- Engagement of Temporary Export Manager**

**(TEM) or of a Digital Export Manager (DEM)**







**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



## Voucher internationalization 2022

### WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?



**B) The development of channels and  
promotional tools abroad.**



**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



## Voucher internationalization 2022

### WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?



- Realization of virtual matchmaking



**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



## Voucher internationalization 2022

### WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?

- Launch and development of online business.







**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?**

**- Design, preparation, revision, translation of the contents of the website for the development of distance promotional activities.**





**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?**

**- Creation of digital marketing campaigns or digital showcases in foreign languages to promote e-commerce activities.**





**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



## Voucher internationalization 2022

### WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?

- Participation in trade fairs abroad.





**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?**

**- Search for customers/partners, to enter into  
commercial contracts or collaboration agreements.**





**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**WHAT CAN BE FINANCED?**

**- Search for customers/partners, to enter into  
commercial contracts or collaboration agreements.**



## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*

**EUMATCH project – III edition**

### **OBJECTIVE**

**Encourage the process of internationalization of SMEs in Molise by putting them in direct contact with selected operators in the main European markets.**





*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*

**Voucher internationalization 2022**

**Amount financed per company**

**2.196,00 Euro**

**VAT included**



*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**EUMATCH project – III edition**

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?**

**SMSs active in the wine and food  
sector legally registered in Molise**



*How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context*



**EUMATCH project – III edition**

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?**

**5 MICRO or SMSs active in the wine and  
food sector legally registered in Molise.**

*How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



**EUMATCH project – III edition**

**WATH CAN BE FINANCED?**

**- Seminars on how to operate in European markets.**



## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



EUMATCH project – III edition

**LABELS &  
LABELING**

**WATH CAN BE FINANCED?**

- Orientation on target markets through the elaboration of specific dossier on labeling, certifications, customs, etc...



## *How the Molise Region has responded to study findings in the post-Covid context*



**EUMATCH project – III edition**

**WATH CAN BE FINANCED?**

- Training activities to support the MICRO and SMEs for the management of matching platforms.



**CAMERA DI COMMERCIO  
DEL MOLISE**

***How the Molise Region has  
responded to study findings in the  
post-Covid context***



**EUMATCH project – III edition**

**WATH CAN BE FINANCED?**

- Support the MICRO and SMEs for the partner research and matching with selected operators of target markets.





# Future Plans with SME Internationalisation

*Future focus for SME internationalisation  
support in Molise*

*Future focus for SMEs internationalization support in Molise*



## PROPOSALS OF INITIATIVES

### 1) European Digital Innovation Hubs





## *Future focus for SMEs internationalization support in Molise*

# PROPOSALS OF INITIATIVES



- 2) One to one (face to face) meetings between potential  
buyers and sellers





## *Future focus for SMEs internationalization support in Molise*

# PROPOSALS OF INITIATIVES

### 3) Training activities – Road shows



## CONTACTS



**Mrs Patrizia Niro**

**Project Coordinator SIE project**

**Email: [p.niro@regione.molise.it](mailto:p.niro@regione.molise.it)**

**Mrs Miriam Panichella**

**Financial manager SIE project**

**Email: [miriampanichella@gmail.com](mailto:miriampanichella@gmail.com)**

# **SME Internationalisation & Future Plans in Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France)**

# Good practices

Several good practices have been implemented in NA at the very beginning of the pandemic period in March 2019.

The most significant are presented hereafter

# National recovery plan (France)

## The national export recovery plan is based on 5 axes :

### 1. INTELLIGENCE: better inform on foreign markets.

- Sectoral Webinars :
- Live market information map :

### 1. PROJECTION: Facilitate export prospecting activities

“Le Chèque Relance Export.” covers 50% of eligible expenses (excluding taxes, with a floor value of €500) for an international support service, including digitalised, for French SMEs and mid-caps, up to a ceiling.

### 3. SUPPORTING YOUTH WITH V.I.E PLAN:

“Le Chèque Relance V.I.E” supports €5,000 for the implementation of a new V.I.E mission or an ongoing extension of the mission with a minimum duration of 12 months.

### 4. REINFORCE FINANCIAL EXPORT TOOLS: *Facilitate and maintain the realisation of export projects*

### 5. PROMOTE FRENCH BRAND: *Deploy a conquering communication around the architecture of the French brand and sectoral brands*

**In this respect, the international advisers have made 929 calls for the presentation of the recovery plan to the companies in Nouvelle-Aquitaine in 2020. See barometers**

**For more details :** <https://www.teamfrance-export.fr/nouvelle-aquitaine/actualites/plan-relance-export>

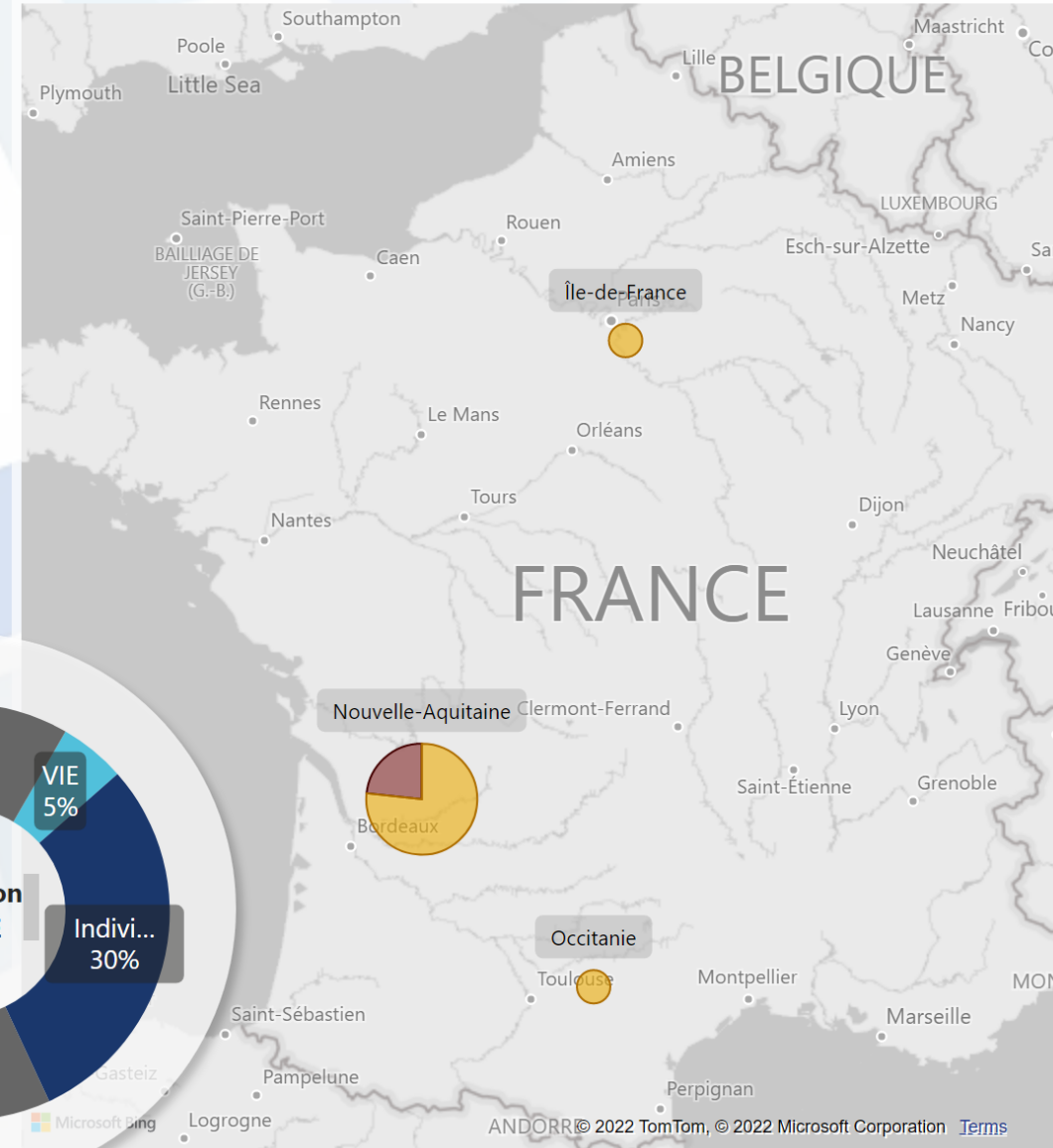
# CHEQUES RELANCE EXPORT TFE

mobilisés pour une prestation TFE, par les entreprises en portefeuille des CI BF, CI CCI et dans le réseau CI/ Nouvelle Aquitaine

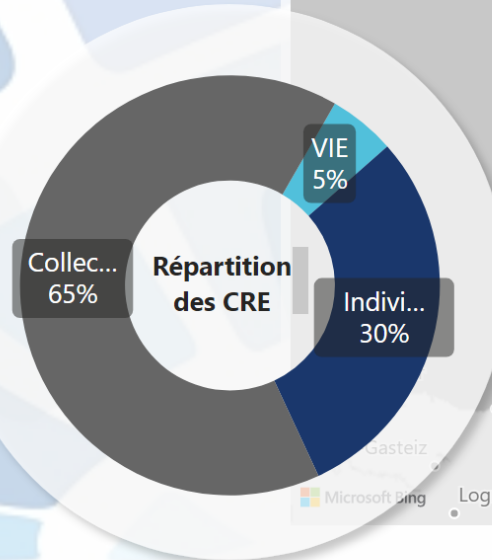
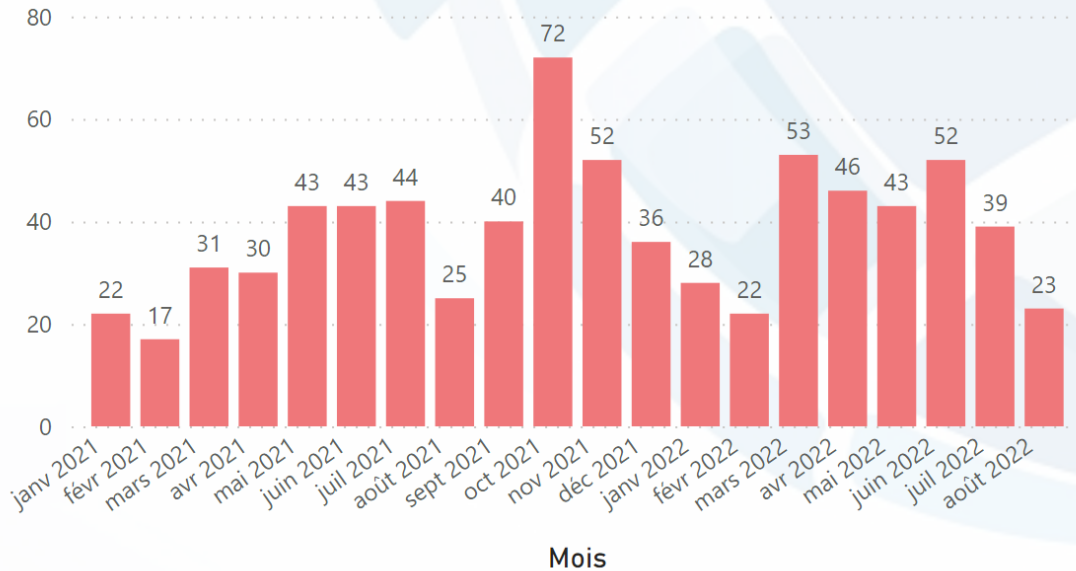
Réseaux TFE

<b>1030</b> demandes de chèques	<b>830</b> chèques accordés	<b>1 621 783 €</b> d'aide accordée	<b>506</b> entreprises bénéficiaires
<b>556</b> en 2021	<b>455</b> en 2021	<b>883 382 €</b> en 2021	<b>329</b> en 2021
<b>358</b> en 2022	<b>306</b> en 2022	<b>618 016 €</b> en 2022	<b>226</b> en 2022

## Requêtes accordées par région



## Requêtes accordées par mois & semaine



# Regional Recovery Plan

In 2020, the COVID-19 health crisis severely disrupted international trade relations and even stopped companies from taking action to explore and maintain their international trade networks.

In this regard, the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and Team France Export have reinforced support for companies towards dematerialised actions:

1. Prioritisation export markets: a personalized study to reposition the company's export markets.
2. Remote Prospecting: Organizing Remote Meetings with Future Business Partners through Video Conferencing.

**Since 2020, 96 companies have been supported out of a total of 100 planned. Grant allocated : €256 694 (data from August 2022)**

This project has now been reconducted until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and can be cumulated with a “Chèque Relance Export.”

For more information:

[https://teamfranceexportnouvelleaquitaine.cdn.prismic.io/teamfranceexportnouvelleaquitaine/e4e0febd-49a6-4bcf-a40d-e61458ccee10\\_DEFPlanExport\\_COVID\\_v2.pdf](https://teamfranceexportnouvelleaquitaine.cdn.prismic.io/teamfranceexportnouvelleaquitaine/e4e0febd-49a6-4bcf-a40d-e61458ccee10_DEFPlanExport_COVID_v2.pdf)

## 2 DISPOSITIFS DE CRISE

proposés aux entreprises via leurs conseillers internationaux

### 1. Priorisation Marchés Export

Une étude personnalisée pour repositionner les marchés des entreprises à l'export

#### OBJECTIFS :

- > Identifier les pays dans lesquels l'activité export de l'entreprise pourra rebondir
- > Hiérarchiser les marchés à prospecter en fonction de leur potentiel post-crise

### 2. Prospection à distance

Organisation de rencontres à distance avec de futurs partenaires commerciaux grâce à des rendez-vous en visio-conférences.



*Ces 2 dispositifs exceptionnels seront disponibles pour toute entreprise régionale éligible, jusqu'au 30 juin 2022.*



# Future plans ?

End of vouchers at 31/12/2022. And after ?  
End of regional support. And after ?

Survey conducted by the observatory at the end of 2022 to better know companies, and their needs.



**SIE**

**Interreg Europe**



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

# Best practice in digitalisation, online tool 'Presenti Go'

Regional Authority Usti

June 20-21 th, 2022 | Kent Workshop



# Transformation center one stop shop

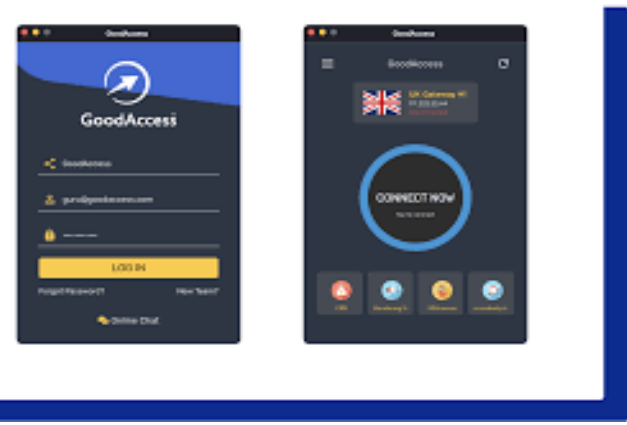


Including „bridge“ to national services, online and offline services.



UNIVERZITA J. E. PURKYNĚ V ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM

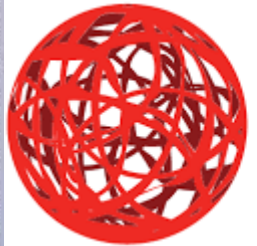




# Internationalisation service integration



- ❑ Ynnovate – existing SME growth (vouchers, mentoring, soft loan)
- ❑ „Selling“ third parties services (CzechTrade, EENetwork)
- ❑ Digital tools for International trade – eDigital Innovation Hub
- ❑ Welcome office – abroad experts, immigrants, expats.



## NANO4 FIBERS





# Best practice - PresentiGo



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

Tool for presenting power point in 3D  
or in virtual reality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQoKK7frrk8>



Case study – Presentation of Transformation Center Usti region



# Best practice: PresentiGO



## Virtual ExpoHall

- a virtual tour, virtual meetings and live demos, which can amaze with well-prepared content full of infographics, animations, and links
- You move here like in the game (using keys W,A,S,D and mouse)



# Best practice: PresentiGO



- One huge advantage of a **virtual showroom** over a physical one is that in a virtual showroom you can invite interested from all around the world
  - you can invite anyone to remote presentation
  - You can meet anyone in real time
- **Customer engagement**
  - it is more entertaining form of presentation for the user than what you can achieve with only website
  - it does not cost more than a big website



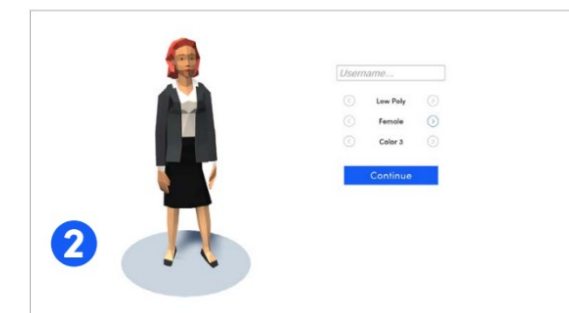
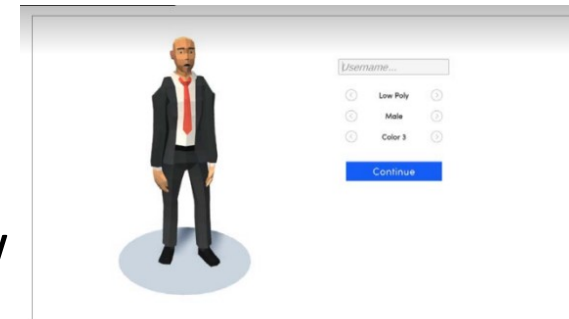


# Best practice: PresentiGO



## PresentiGo goes beyond an ordinary presentation

- Organizing of live meetings / virtual events
- Organizing of live streams
- Sharing a content – .mp4, .jpg, .csv, .xlsx, .pptx, .fbx (3D), .mp3
- In virtual meeting you can choose/program your Avatar and take a part in event or live meeting
- 3D objects – f.e. for manufacturing companies, which can show their products in interesting form
- Teleport – allows users to travel between the Metaverse world
- There can be several exhibitions to connect
- METAVERSE





**SIE**

**Interreg Europe**



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

**Thank You!**



# **SME Internationalisation in Cantabria (Spain)**

# Internationalisation in Cantabria after the pandemic



# Results of the SIE survey.

## How the pandemic hit our companies.

- The survey was circulated around companies with international activities through email.
- The survey was answered by 67 companies (31% of region regular exporters).
- Survey was open for a month and was anonymous.

# Results of the SIE survey.

## How the pandemic hit our companies.

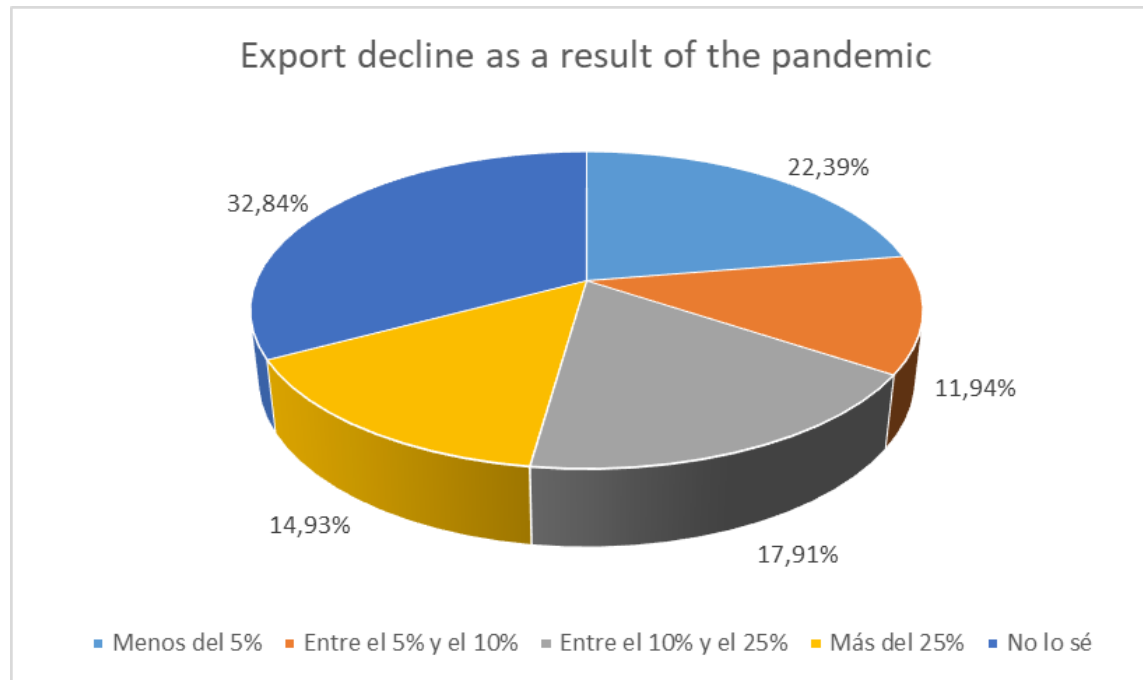
- 66% declared that COVID pandemic affected negatively their activities and turnover.
- Questioned about how great this impact was, 83% thought that it was very important/important.
- Biggest impact: export sales and supplies

# Results of the SIE survey.

## How the pandemic hit our companies.

- Negative effect on export sales:

### Official Data



Decline in 2020 (from previous year)

Regional: 5,7%

National: 10%

Recovery in 2021 (from previous year)

Regional: 20,4%

National: 21,2%



# Results of the SIE survey.

## How the pandemic hit our companies.

- 42% of the companies declared that the amount weight of exports in their total sales declined as a result of the COVID-19
- Despite of this data, 60% of the companies declared that they rather not look for new markets during this period.

# Results of the SIE survey.

## How did they adapt internally?

- A good note – 70% declared that they maintain their number of workers or even hired more people. This could be affected by the broad framework of economic aid deployed by the government.
- What aspects they consider key:
  - Flexibility in the offices (turns, remote work, sanitary protocols)
  - Flexibility for the clients (increase deadlines, extend storage capacity or time)
  - Change of promotion efforts (remote meetings or even focus on national market)

# Cantabria's good practice

- The main good practice identified for us was the virtual format on Trade Missions. We maintain the same partners, but change destinations for various reasons.
  - We act quick
  - We change destinations that suited the format better.
  - In general the world was more prone to the format.
  - There was no other option.
  - This success have been declining over time. We are turning back to traditional format.

# Cantabria's good practice.

## Our data

- Since the raise of the pandemic, COCIN has organized 16 virtual trade missions.
- The data shows that the format is declining, not being as useful as at the beginning.

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Format	Traditional	Traditional	Virtual	Virtual
Number of participants	43	50	55	48
Do you keep in touch after 6 months? (% companies answering positive)	58%	76%	47%	37.5%
Do you think there is potential for future business? (% companies answering positive))	53%	68%	34%	37.5%
Economic turnover (from the trade mission contacts)	2.400.000	1.700.000	230.000	408.000

# Cantabria's good practice.

## Our data



- During 2022 we still have 3 more missions, on a virtual format, which have not take place yet. One in USA, one in Israel and another one in Chile and Peru.
- So far we have 17 more participants joining.

# What is waiting for next year

- Our plans next year are to go back to a more traditional format.
  - Companies are demanding it.
  - Data shows it is time to abandon the virtual format as the go-to format.
  - Other Spanish regions have been traveling this year. We will lose opportunities.
- This can mean we need to find other new ways of funding.

# THANK YOU!!





# **SME Internationalisation in Lower Saxony (Germany)**

**Lower-Saxony:**

# **Internationalisation of SMEs Good Practices and Further Plans**

**Florian Lange, NBank**



# Initiatives for SME Internationalisation so Far

- The measures in place are proven and tested but were developed before the 'new challenges' emerged
- The programs envisaged in the framework of the ERDF were developed roughly 3 – 5 years ago
- Internationalisation not in the focus of L-S policy; many initiatives are executed by Chambers or sectoral associations

# Internationalisation – New Frameconditions

- Personal contacts and physical meetings/ tradefairs are still seen as important by SMEs but the Covid crisis demonstrated that there are other, cheaper ways to get in touch (more easily)
- Cheap energy from Russia, reliable supplies from China, safe outlet markets → this old German model does not work anymore
- Ethical aspects or sustainability ... are getting more important for companies

- The Ministry of Economics organises business trips several times a year with the minister
  - sectoral focus; often combined with stands at tradefairs and/ or matchmaking events, company visits and political receptions
- Program will be sustained but the Covid-pandemic led to a refocus on hybrid or virtual events which are also attractive and far cheaper

# Agencies Abroad (→ best practice)

- foreign representations in the USA, China, Japan, Iran, South-Africa; partner bureaus in Poland, Cuba and Panama, Russia, Turkey and for Scandinavia
  - counsel on the market ('SWOT-analysis'), economic/political contacts, assistance with partnersearch/ red tape
- General approach is fruitful, realignment of target markets, focus also on e. g. ethical aspects

- Foreign Trade Award: annual award for SMEs and for large companies for exporting companies
  - Foreign Trade Day: annual event, concentration on key challenges
- Measure will be sustained but the focus should shift: internationalisation is more than to export, it is also about joint R&D or good cooperation with suppliers



- funding for participation in international trade fairs (own or joint stand)
- internationalisation audit (together with chamber of commerce or craft)
- Leader of the Enterprise Europe Network consortium in Lower-Saxony: close cooperation with chambers and stakeholders
- Participation in international projects

- Hardly any financial support but the counsel/ audits are free of charge
  - New partners in the EEN consortium (Laserzentrum, Niedersachsenmetall) → new input for R&D as well as for producing 'classic' companies
  - Member in almost all SGs and TGs
- As internationalisation is only a small part of the NBank, the services need to be promoted by all branches

- measures and programs in place are proved and tested
- as seen in the study: internationalisation not the key issue for policy on L-S and for many companies
- overlying urgent topics: covid, energy crisis, supplies...; new setting concerning international trade

- New initiatives/ programs needed with a new mind-set, financial means bound by other topics/ debts
- Sustained initiatives need to re-focus
- Internationalisation is more than to export
- Besides energy or secure supply-chains ... 'soft' factors are getting more important (ethical aspects, sustainability, ...)

- EEN: ‘Train the Trainers’ approach
  - Institutions that want to assist SMEs with internationalisation should exchange, especially when there is less financial aid available and the setting for SMEs has changed dramatically
- in L-S, one main aim of the SIE project (implementation of regional action plan) was not achieved but perhaps the challenges during the project demonstrated the need for new ways in internationalisation



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



## Questions / comments?

# Supporting SME internationalisation in the future

#SIEProject

[www.interregeurope.eu/SIE](http://www.interregeurope.eu/SIE)

