

'Parcours de l'Export' – The Export Pathway Programme in Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France

The Challenge:

France has faced a trade deficit for many years which was explained by the lack of a suitable national commercial strategy for international trade. To tackle this issue and boost exports, a national strategy was put in place to refocus the standard business support programmes by concentrating on the activities where the most value could be added for companies including on internationalisation.

The solution:

To help businesses from the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region with the complexities of internationalisation, several organisations are now working together and have set up a tailored support programme called the '**Parcours de l'export**' (Export Pathway). The programme began in 2013 for an initial five-year period. The programme identifies companies in the region with export potential and offers the following key services:

- A **business diagnostic** or **export audit** to identify potential barriers to international trade
- **Training courses** to help businesses to deal with needs identified
- Support for **market selection**
- Help to create **export plans** and market strategies
- **Tailored advice** from market specialists

The 'Parcours de l'export' involves many different organisations in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region which all help to provide complementary support services to companies. These include:

- CCI International (International Chamber of Commerce),
- BPI France (public investment bank),
- Business France (national trade and investment agency)
- CNCCEF (network of international trade advisors)
- Enterprise Europe Network (EEN),
- The Nouvelle-Aquitaine Regional Council

The support the business receives depends on its specific needs meaning that the company can access the most relevant services to help it with its international activity.



Resources:

The characteristics of the Parcours de l'Export programme are quite specific to the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region and so is the resourcing. Core funding is used from the International Chamber in addition to specific budget allocations for some of the newer 'Pathway' activities and some support services are now being run on a chargeable basis to cover some of their costs. The programme also relies on core funding from the various partner agencies which includes some public funding.

Measuring Success:

The success of the 'Parcours de l'export' programme used to be mainly measured in terms of the number of companies supported. More recently, however, some new measures are being recorded by the International Chamber of Commerce such as company satisfaction with the support services received. Ultimately, the success of the programme is measured by an increase in export turnover and foreign contracts secured by companies from Nouvelle-Aquitaine and thanks to new reporting and evaluation activities, this information is starting to be captured.

Challenges Faced:

- The number of different organisations involved in the 'Parcours' adds complexity to the programme so it is very important to define the role of each one at the start, not least to avoid confusion for companies.
- Some partners do not always stick to their agreed areas of activity as they are afraid that they may lose business for their own organisation, but it is much more important to put the needs of the companies first.

Transferability:

The 'Export Pathway' approach could be adopted by other regions if they can bring together all of the key players in the field of international business support to work together. The important thing is to develop a clear pathway of services which can help new and experienced exporters with everything from assessing their capacity to go international and identifying needs and selecting markets, to developing a detailed strategy and securing financing. Trust is very important between the different support organisations and because it gives clarity for companies wishing to access support. Adequate financial resources to run the support schemes are also very important to the success of the programme.

Find out more:

<http://nouvelle-aquitaine.cci.fr/International>

<https://www.objectif-international.fr/>

