

Regional Report on Covid-19 IMPACT on SME internationalization

Key findings

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Friesland - Leeuwarden

The basics

- Inhabitants Friesland 650.000
- Inhabitants Leeuwarden 125.000
- Next do Dutch: Own language (Frisian)



- Friesland is considered as the ''happiest'' province in the Netherlands, **but**:
- From a European point of view: the Frisian economic structure is unstable and employment opportunities remain insufficient in rural areas. This, partly due to the development of services and industries in cities which enhances urbanisation.



SME Survey Results (1/2)

- Wide range of fields, such as but not limited to:
 - Watertechnology, renewable energy, IT and Agri-Food
- Companies are highly aware of their societal impact and feet the urge to make the swing into a more inclusive business style.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has worked as a catalyst for innovative ways with respect to digitalisation.
- Minimal effects on exports and existing partnerships due to Covid-19. Exports remained the same or better than before the pandemic.
- But, new export partnerships haven't been realised, because building a trustful relationship without a physical setting remained a tough job.

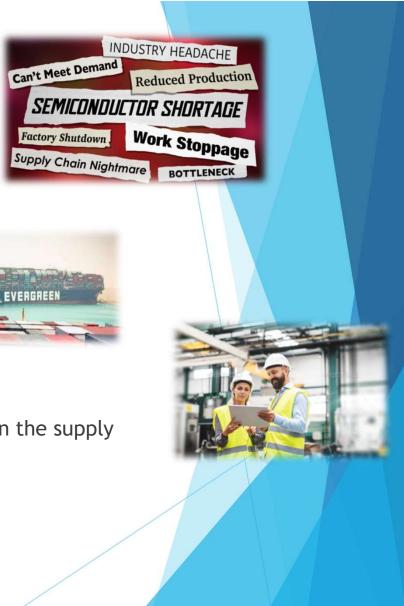


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SME Survey Results (2/2)

- However, the exports did lack, because:
 - Scarcity of electronic printing plates
 - Stranded ship: Ever Given (Evergreen)
 - Scarcity of qualified personell
- To sum it all up: The SMEs in Friesland found more difficulties in the supply chain and human capital, than from the impact of Covid-19.







Conclusion On COVID-19 impact on SME Internationalisation

- COVID-19 did not significantly affect the adsorption of export stimulating instruments in the region of Friesland
- There has been an effect on companies in the early phase of exporting or without export experience. In fact, they were unable to enter the export market
- Organizations like World Trade Center Leeuwarden, Ynbusiness and the Enterprise Europe Network consortium provide sufficient assistance to first-time exporters





