

Survey on Plastics Businesses Trading Internationally During and Post COVID-19

Survey Conducted: 4 - 6 May 2020

The following results are the findings of a survey circulated to export contacts of the British Plastics Federation in May 2020. BPF members can access the BPF Exporters Toolbox, providing detailed information on the plastics industry in more than 70 countries at...

www.bpf.co.uk/topics/export

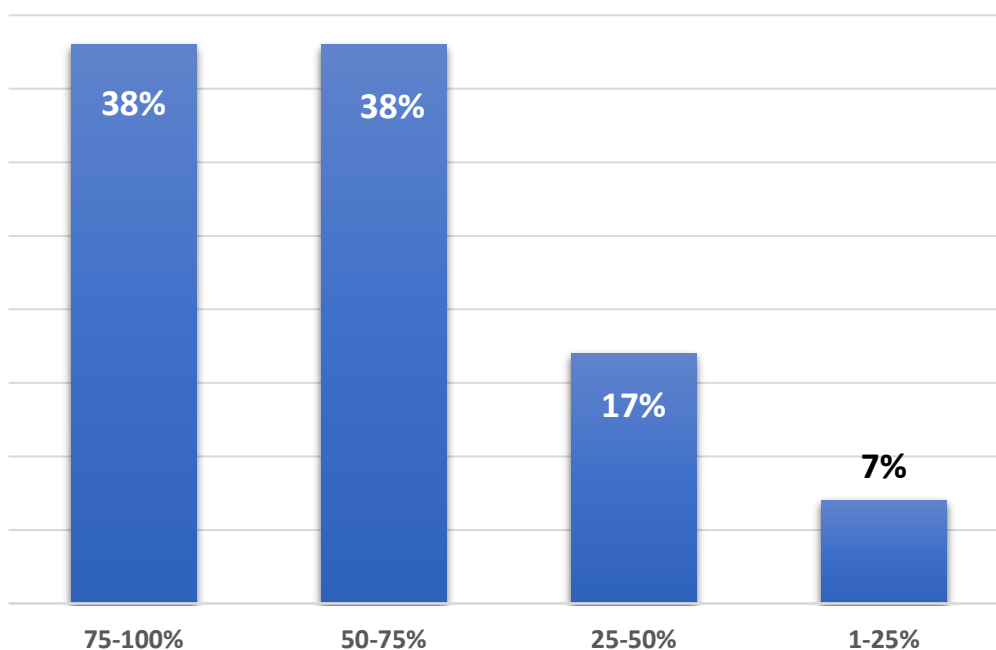
Participation

The survey was carried out between the 4 and 6 May. 29 companies responded.

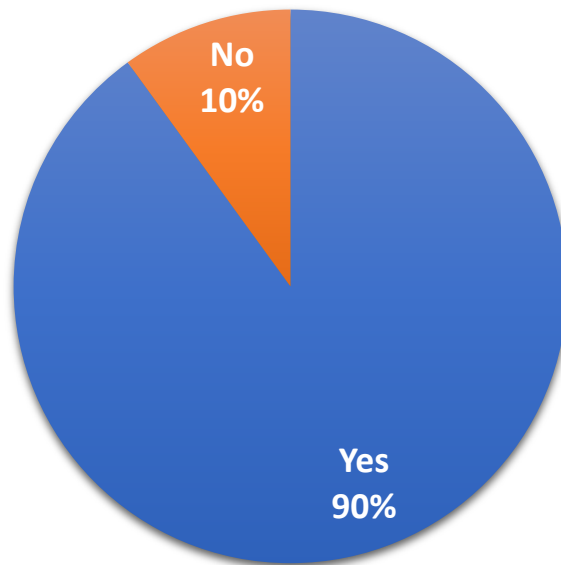
1. Which of these best describes your business?

Machinery	45%
Additives/Masterbatch Supplier	17%
Manufacturer of finished/semi-finished products	14%
Recycler	7%
Polymer Suppliers	3%

2. How much of your turnover is typically accounted for by export sales?



3. Will you be actively trying to expand export activities over the next 12 months?



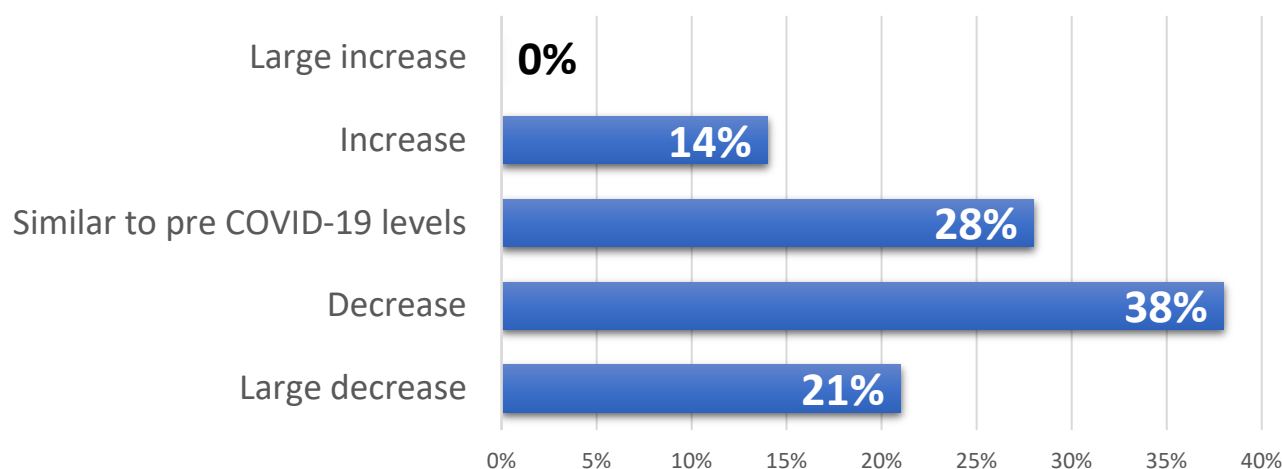
4. What medium and long-term negative impacts do you think will arise from COVID-19 for UK businesses trading internationally?



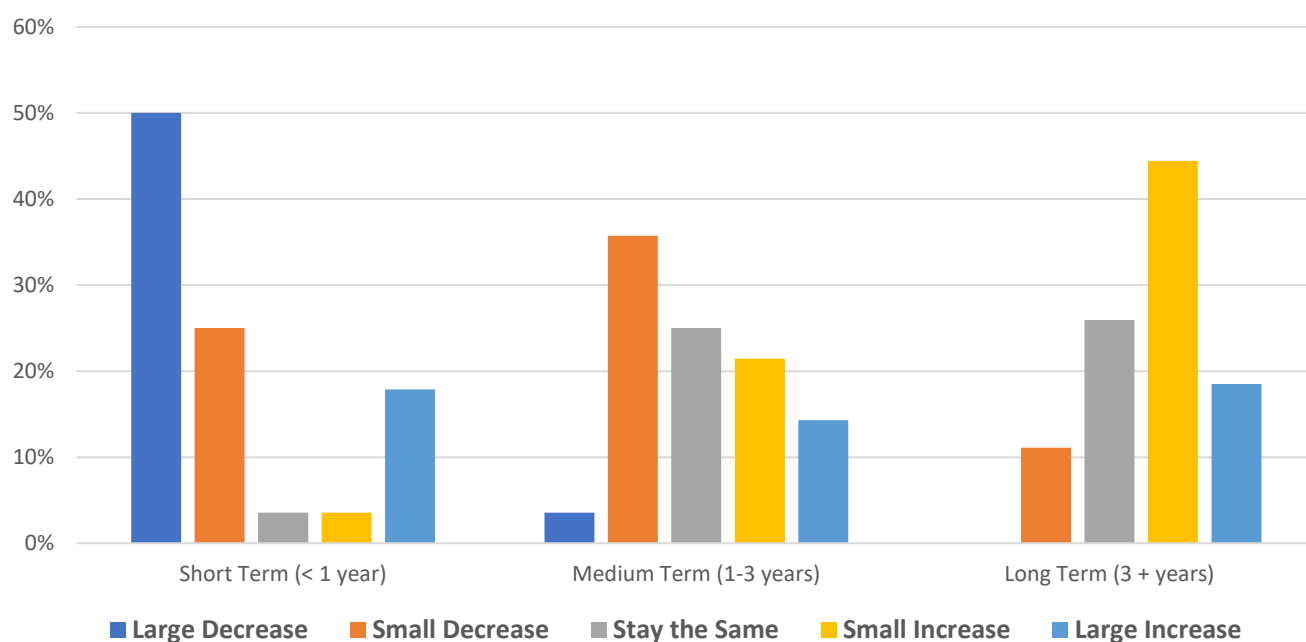
Other medium and long-term negative impacts that were put forward included....

- Limitations on essential international travel
- Reduction / withdrawal of trade credit insurance

5. During 2021, do you anticipate an increase or decrease in international business trips within your company?



6. How do you anticipate export sales to be affected by COVID-19 over the following period?

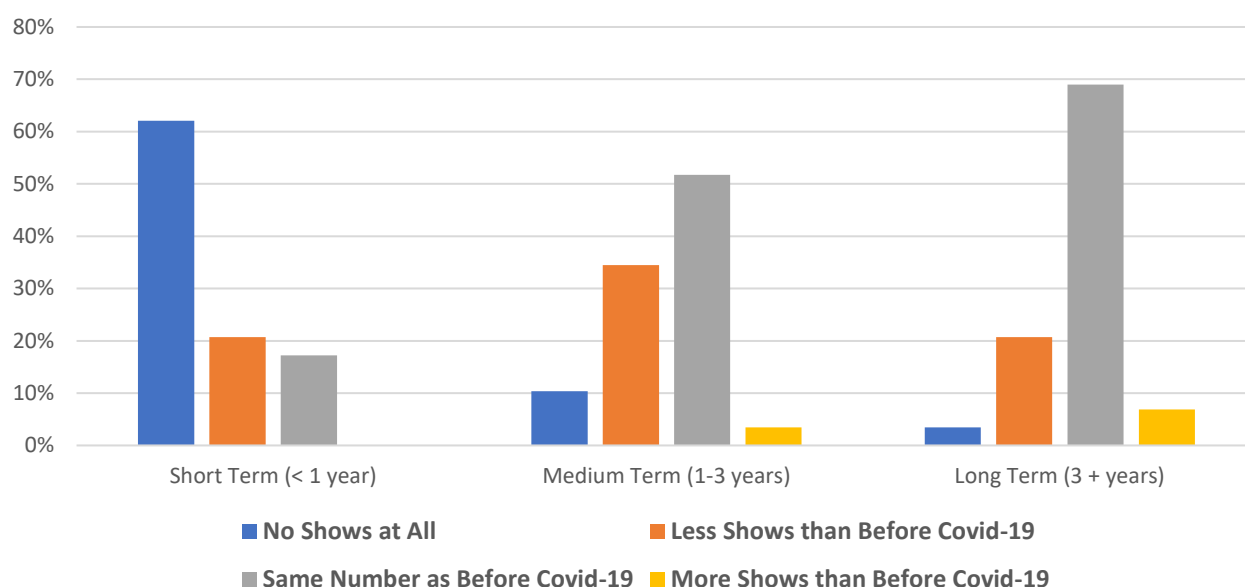


	Large Decrease	Small Decrease	Stay the Same	Small Increase	Large Increase
Short Term (< 1 year)	50%	25%	4%	4%	18%
Medium Term (1-3 years)	4%	36%	25%	21%	14%
Long Term (3+ years)	0%	11%	26%	44%	19%

7. Pre COVID-19 how often did your company exhibit at foreign tradeshows?

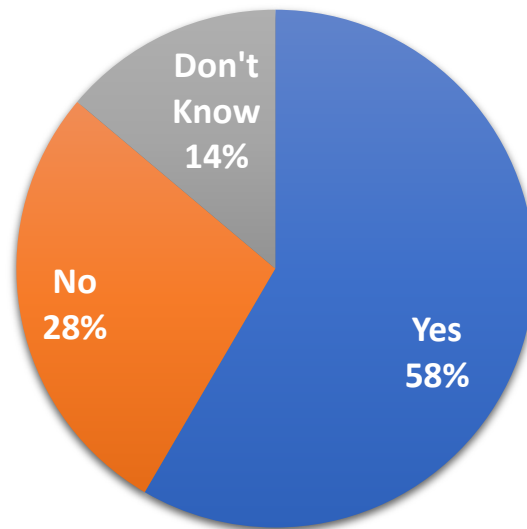
3+ times per year	28%
Twice per year	17%
Once per year	21%
Once every two years	0%
Once every three years	14%
Less than once every three years	14%
Never	7%

8. If your company normally exhibits at trade shows, how do you anticipate the Covid-19 will affect the number of exhibitions your company will take part in the future?



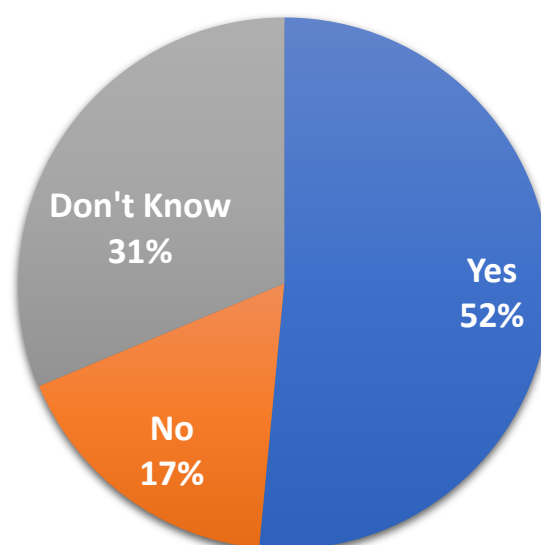
	No Shows at All	Less Shows than Before Covid-19	Same Number as Before Covid-19	More Shows than Before Covid-19
Short Term (< 1 year)	62%	21%	17%	0%
Medium Term (1-3 years)	10%	34%	52%	3%
Long Term (3+ years)	3%	21%	69%	7%

9. Would your business value the government expanding direct support to exporters by increasing the availability of Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) grants?*



** TAP grants are direct funding from the Department for International Trade to UK SMEs who exhibit at foreign trade shows and vary from £1,000 to £2,500 per eligible company. The current limit is 6 TAP grants per company from 1 April 2009)*

10. Would you be interested in matched funding from the government if it involved working with the Department for International Trade to win business in new markets?



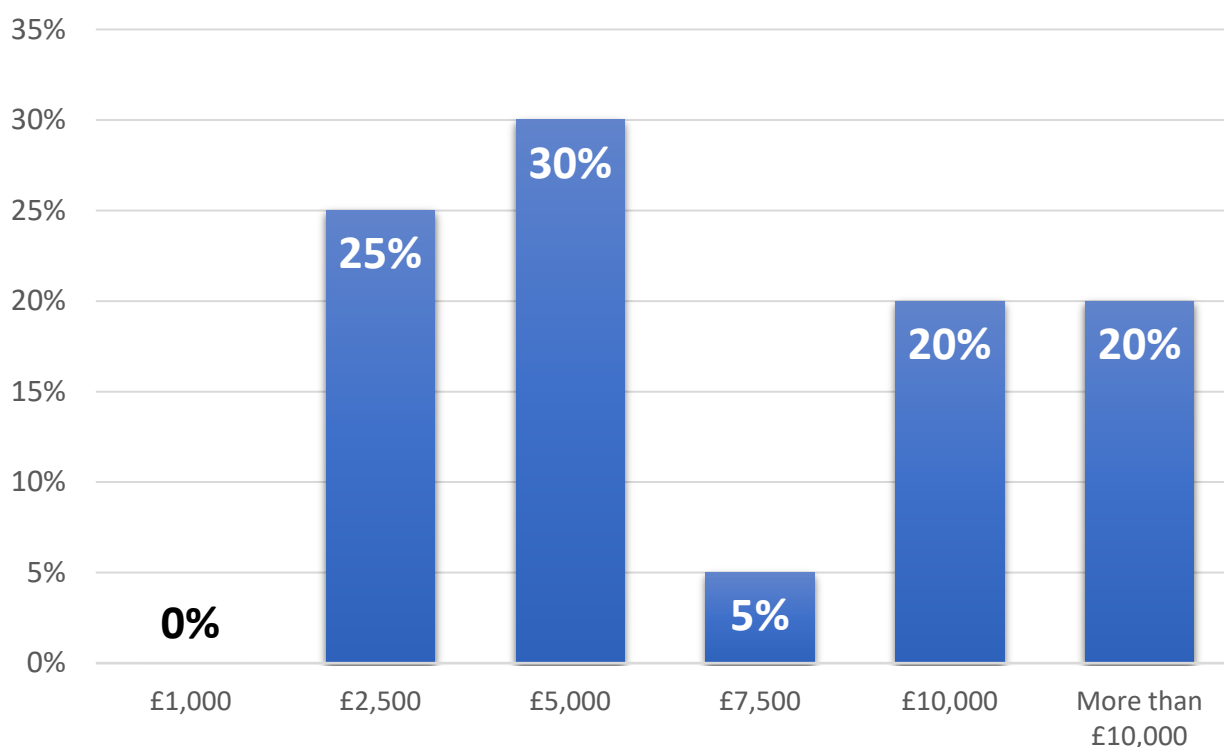
11. Are there any other ways the UK government could support UK businesses that export?

The most common responses were that the UK government could support British businesses that export by providing help with sourcing local agents and distributors, providing subsidised research into new export markets, to subsidise exhibitors on UK-organised pavilions and to provide funding for market visits. Also, help with securing a local representative office in the market was mentioned.

A few respondents mentioned that they are having problems with getting visas for their foreign customers (some from emerging countries) who want to come to UK for training or demonstration. They would value support in dealing with immigration for specific visas to be granted.

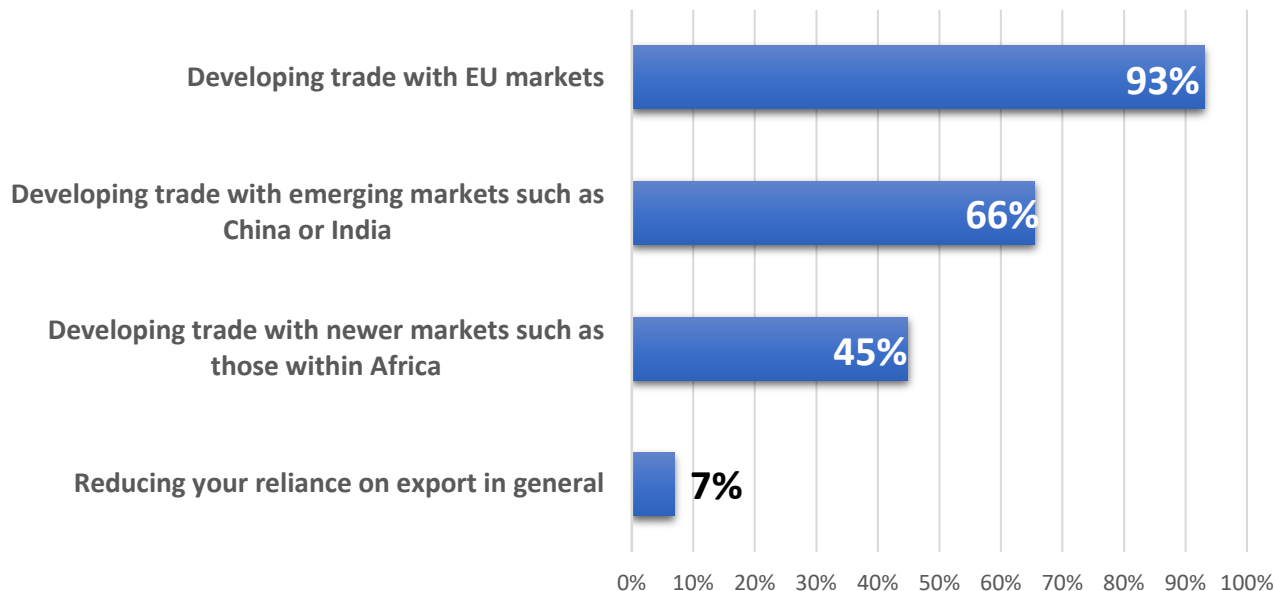
Many said they would also like to see a free-trade agreement with the EU.

12. In terms of government support, what is the minimum level of funding required to make a difference to your business decisions when it comes to exploring new markets?



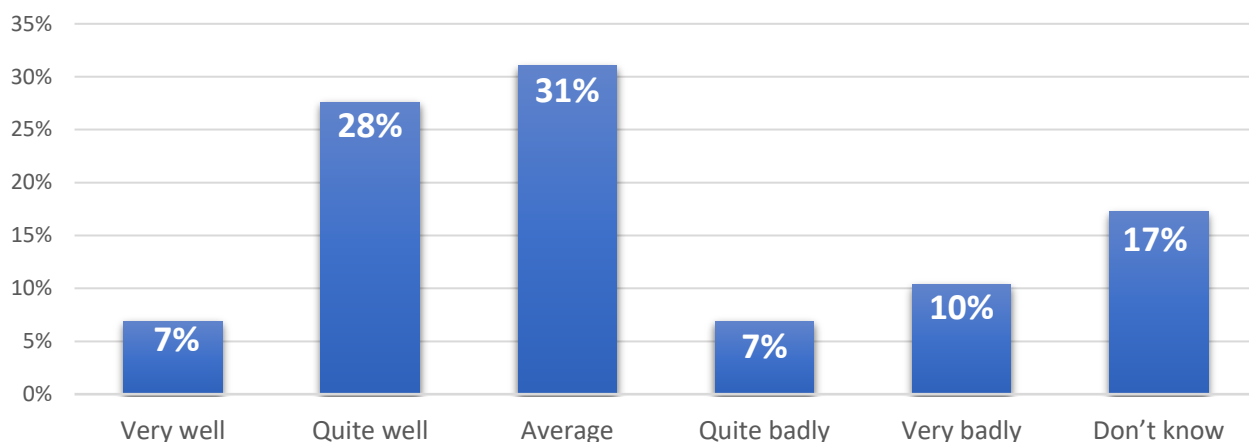
Note: Companies that answered 'Don't Know/Not applicable' have been removed.

13. Post COVID-19, does your export strategy encompass any of the following? (Note: companies could give multiple answers)



Respondents also mentioned that they will still focus on developing trade with markets in: USA, Russia, UAE, South America, Australasia and South East Asia.

14. How effectively has the UK government responded, both in the UK and in overseas posts, to the short-term negative impact of the pandemic on UK businesses trading internationally?



Some respondents mentioned that there does not appear to have been any help specific to exporters. Overall, it was felt the government has performed well in terms of business assistance with the job retention and loan schemes.



BPF House
6 Bath Place
Rivington Street
London
EC2A 3JE

www.bpf.co.uk