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CONTENTS

■ 9 Belgium overview

Welcome from Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) –
Director General, Institute of Export & International
Trade



11



13

Foreword from the British Ambassador to Belgium,
Alison Rose

Foreword from Glenn Vaughan, Chief Executive
of the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium



15

23



Why Belgium?

■ 17 About the Department for International Trade (DIT)

■ 21 About this Guide

Help available for you



■ 23 Why Belgium?

- 24 • Summary
- 25 • General overview
- 26 • Government overview
- 27 • Economic overview

■ 33 Help available for you

- 35 • Overview
 - Support from the Department for International Trade (DIT)
- 38 • Support from the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium
 - Support from the Institute of Export & International Trade

■ 41 Getting here and advice about your stay

- 42 • Entry requirements
 - Local laws and customs
 - Safety and security
- 44 • Protective security advice
- 45 • Health
 - FCO travel advice

■ 47 Sector-specific opportunities in Belgium

- 48 • Government tenders in Belgium
 - Business services, office services and e-commerce/logistics
- 49 • Chemicals and life sciences
 - Construction
- 50 • Energy
 - Food and drink
 - ICT
- 51 • Security
- 52 • International schools in Belgium – briefing
 - Relocation
- 53 • The legal profession

CONTENTS

■ 55 Preparing to export

- 57 • Consultation and bespoke research
- 58 • Start-up considerations
- 61 • Getting finance to fulfil an export contract to Belgium



41

■ 63 How to do business in Belgium

- 64 • Legal considerations
- 65 • Tax and customs considerations in Belgium
- 66 • Customs and documentation in Belgium
- 67 • Shipping your goods to Belgium



47

■ 69 Business etiquette, language & culture

- 70 • Overview
- 71 • Belgium public holidays



55

■ 72 What are the challenges?

- 72 • Overview
- Business risk
- 73 • Payment risks in Belgium
- Currency risks when exporting to Belgium



63



69



79

Self-employed & employers

Doing business in Belgium



Creation of enterprises

Payroll provider

Social fund for the self – employed

Child benefit fund

Legal assistance

- Start your own activity
- Set up your own company, hire employees
- Be self-employed as a secondary occupation

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GROUP S

HUMAN RESOURCES &
MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

CONTENTS

79

Resources

- **79 Resources**
- **80** What does membership of the Institute of Export & International Trade mean?
- **82** Focusing on qualifications. Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) - Director General, Institute of Export & International Trade
- **84** The British Embassy in Brussels
- **86** Supporting organisations contact details
- **88** Market experts contact details
- **90** Useful links
- **97** Trade shows
- **101** Map of Belgium
- **103** Quick Facts

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Belgium overview

Belgium is an ideal starting place for UK companies new to exporting. For any company looking to expand into Europe, Belgium is the ideal tester market – it is an open and dynamic market with plenty of opportunities for high-value products and services, and English is an accepted business language, and for UK companies it is just a short train ride away, making your export journey that much easier.

Belgium is a small, affluent and multicultural country located at the heart of decision-making in Europe. It is a developed, modern, private-enterprise economy which has capitalised on its central geographic location, highly developed transport network, and diversified industrial and commercial base. It is an open and highly-competitive market with opportunities in most sectors. Belgium has similar business risks and requirements to the UK. If your product or service is successful in the UK, there is a good chance you will be successful in Belgium. It is also the entry point for many imports into Europe so product pricing must be competitive.

Often referred to as the crossroads of Europe, Belgium consists of two very distinct cultural regions, Flanders (Dutch speaking northern half, around 6.5 million inhabitants) and Wallonia (French speaking southern half, with a population of around 3.6 million), and an officially-bilingual capital, Brussels (over 1.2 million inhabitants).

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Welcome from Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) – Director General, Institute of Export & International Trade

Belgium's strategic location means it enjoys a pivotal position in international politics and economics. Often referred to as the crossroads of Europe, the European Union, NATO and some 1,400 international non-governmental organisations are also headquartered there. For these and several other reasons Belgium is an attractive destination for UK exporters. This Doing Business in Belgium Guide will help prepare UK businesses who are looking to trade with this key European market.

British products enjoy a good reputation in Belgium and there are great opportunities for British businesses in the biotechnology, environmental technology, ICT and transport & logistics. Belgium's proximity to the UK is also a great advantage with good transport links which offer the possibility of getting there and back for meetings within a working day.

Belgium consists of two very distinct cultural regions, Flanders (Dutch speaking northern half) and Wallonia (French speaking southern half), and an officially bilingual capital, Brussels. With this in mind, it is often best to speak English in Belgium, even if reasonably fluent in French, Dutch or German, as this maintains neutrality, although this will vary according to location. In Brussels, English is widely spoken and is a preferred language of business.

Owing to the bi-cultural nature of the country, the Belgians have a flair for compromise and negotiated settlements which means that decisions can take a while as they have to go through a process of compromise and debate if they are to be accepted. With this in mind, business meetings are usually conducted formally, are likely to be structured and efficient and for a pre-set agenda to be followed.

All in all, Belgium has the potential to be a valuable market for British businesses and the Institute of Export & International Trade can help guide you through the intricacies of doing business in this fascinating country through our education programmes, training and practical support, our helpline and one-to-one assistance with paperwork.

Why not contact us and find out how you can join?

Good Luck!

Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad)

Director General – Institute of Export & International Trade

www.export.org.uk



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British Embassy Brussels

Foreword from the British Ambassador to Belgium, Alison Rose

I am delighted to welcome you to this guide to doing business in Belgium, our close neighbour and the UK's 9th biggest export partner.

Belgium is an affluent country. GDP growth for 2017 is expected to be 1.6%. The country has an open and highly competitive market with few barriers to trade. English is widely spoken and with 11 million, often wealthy, customers who are receptive to British products and services, it offers opportunities in most sectors. UK exports to Belgium are considerable with over £17.4 billion of goods and services exported in 2015. Sectors which currently offer particular opportunities for British companies are British food and drink, defence and security, renewable energy, digital economy, financial services and infrastructure.

Belgium is a stable, reliable market for first time exporters to start their international export activities. So if you learn the ropes here, you're better prepared for success across the rest of Europe. Strategically situated in the heart of Europe, Belgium is also home to many EU institutions, NATO and numerous multinational companies, making it an even more attractive location to be commercially active. Key benefits for British businesses exporting to Belgium include:

- Strong and long standing trade relationship with the UK
- Proximity and easy transport links to the UK
- English is widely spoken
- Barriers to market entry are low
- Population with a high disposable income

Helping British companies – small, medium or large – develop business opportunities in Belgium and supporting those companies which are already here, is a top priority for me and my team from the Department of International Trade based at the British Embassy in Brussels. By spotting and publishing commercial opportunities in the Belgian market we support first-time and experienced UK exporters to tap into live export opportunities in sectors ranging from food and drink, infrastructure, the digital economy, energy, etc, and we give Belgian companies access to the best ideas, innovative goods and top-class services available in the UK. I hope you will find this guide useful. We would be pleased to support you in doing business in Belgium.

Alison Rose

British Ambassador to Belgium

<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-brussels>



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Foreword from Glenn Vaughan, Chief Executive of the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium

Most people are surprised to learn that Belgium, with only 11 million people, is one of Britain's top 10 global export markets. Why? Because it's close, a good test market and a gateway to success in the rest of Europe.

Being able to get to your market quickly and easily is a huge advantage. You can meet potential partners and customers face-to-face. It's easier to see opportunities for real and solve problems if you can get there easily when needed.

Many companies use Belgium as a test market because it's small and diverse. It has a wealthy, open and highly competitive market with opportunities in most sectors. If you can learn how to sell your product or service here, that sets you up really well to move on to other markets close by, and it can be easier to enter than starting with larger European markets.

As Belgium is at the centre of a rich region including Germany, France and the Netherlands, with great logistics facilities and expertise, it's a natural gateway to those bigger markets. It's a recurring factor in the success stories of British exporters, like SuperDry, that they learned how to succeed in exporting here, then went on to ever greater success in Europe and beyond.

The long shared history and cultural ties between Britain and Belgium helps too.

It's not all easy of course. Belgium can be complicated and it pays to understand the market and how it works. Luckily, that's where the expertise of the Institute of Export & International Trade, and the connections on the ground of the British Chamber of Commerce, comes into its own.

Glenn Vaughan

Chief Executive – British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium

<http://britishchamber.be/>



HM Government



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Department for International Trade (DIT)

(formerly UK Trade & Investment - UKTI)

DIT is the British Government department that helps UK-based companies succeed in an increasingly global economy. DIT also helps overseas companies bring their high quality investment to the UK's economy. DIT's range of expert services are tailored to the needs of individual businesses to maximise their international success. DIT provides companies with knowledge, advice and practical support.

Through a range of unique services, including participation at selected tradeshows, outward trade missions and providing bespoke market intelligence, DIT can help you crack foreign markets and get to grips quickly with overseas regulations and business practice.

With headquarters in London, DIT have professional advisers around the UK and staff across more than 100 countries.

Contact DIT

Contact your local International Trade Team or Scottish Development International (SDI), Welsh Government (WG) or Invest Northern Ireland (INI) offices to find out more about the range of services available to you.

You can find your nearest International Trade Team at:

www.contactus.trade.gov.uk/office-finder/

General enquiry number: +44 (0) 207 215 5000
Department for International Trade
3 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2AW
United Kingdom

Email: enquiries@trade.gsi.gov.uk



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Website and Mobile App features include:

- Latest business news
- Up-to-date travel advice
- Interactive 'Supporting Organisations' and 'Market Experts' profiles
- Essential contact details
- Listings with links to up-and-coming trade shows
- Links to the Department for International Trade (DIT) support services.

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About International Market Advisor (IMA)

International Market Advisor (IMA) works with British and foreign government departments, Embassies, High Commissions and international Chambers of Commerce throughout the world. Our work helps to identify the most efficient ways for British companies to trade with and invest in opportunity-rich overseas markets.

During the last ten years IMA has worked with the British Government's overseas trade and investment department, the Department for International Trade (DIT) [formerly UK Trade & Investment (UKTI)], and has written, designed, produced, launched and distributed over one million copies of more than 100 country-specific print and multi-media based reports, guides and publications, including the internationally-recognised 'Doing Business Guide' series of trade publications. These are composed of market and industry sector-specific, multi-format print and digital trade reports, together with some of the internet's most visited international trade websites - all of which are designed to advise and assist UK companies looking to trade with and invest in overseas markets. These reports and guides are then distributed free-of-charge through the IMA and DIT global networks - over 500 distribution outlets in total. Further distribution takes place at global exhibitions, roadshows, conferences and trade missions, and IMA receives daily requests for additional copies of the guides from these networks and from businesses considering exporting.

Each of IMA's 'Doing Business Guides' is produced in three formats: a full colour, glossy, paper-based brochure; a supporting fully-interactive and updatable multi-media based website; and the website contents available as a free-of-charge downloadable smartphone/tablet app.

The guides' contents focus on the market in question, how to approach that market and the help and support available, and include informative market overviews, plus details of business opportunities, listings with website links to British and Foreign Government support services and essential private sector service-provider profiles.

Sponsoring a 'Doing Business Guide' therefore offers a unique opportunity to positively promote your products and services to high-profile business leaders, specific exporters, investors and effective business travellers who will be actively seeking out service providers to assist them in developing their business interests in the targeted markets.

For more information on IMA please visit our website:

www.DoingBusinessGuides.com

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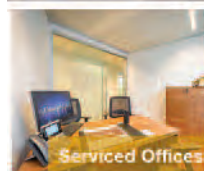
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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide aims to provide a route map of the way ahead, together with signposts to other sources of help.

The main objective of this **Doing Business in Belgium Guide** is to provide you with basic knowledge about Belgium; an overview of its economy, business culture, potential opportunities and to identify the main issues associated with initial research, market entry, risk management and cultural and language issues.

We do not pretend to provide all the answers in the guide, but novice exporters in particular will find it a useful starting point. Further assistance is available from the Department for International Trade (DIT) team in Belgium. Full contact details are available in this guide.

To help your business succeed in Belgium we have carefully selected a variety of essential service providers as 'Market Experts'.

The guide is available in 4 formats:

- Website: www.Belgium.DoingBusinessGuide.co.uk
- a 'free' downloadable 'mobile device-friendly' app
- this full colour hard-copy brochure
- PDF download/e-flipbook (available soon)

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BELGIUM

If your product or service is successful in the UK, there is a good chance you will be successful in Belgium. It is also the entry point for many imports into Europe so product pricing must be competitive.



Why Belgium?

Summary

Area:

30,528 km² (11,790 mi²)

Population:

11.3 million

Population growth rate (change):

0.5%

Population density:

371.5 people per km²

Urban population:

97.9%

Capital city:

Brussels (Pop: 1.168 million)

Official languages:

Dutch, French, German

Currency:

Euro (EUR / €)

Nominal GDP:

US \$467.0 billion

Real annual GDP growth:

1.2%

GDP per capita:

US \$41,283.3

Annual inflation rate:

1.8%

Unemployment rate:

8.0%

General government gross debt:

105.5% of GDP

Fiscal balance:

-2.7% of GDP

Current account balance:

1.0% of GDP / US \$4.6 billion

Exports of goods to UK:

£20,900 million

Imports of goods from UK:

£11,586 million

Inward direct investment flow:

US \$31 billion

Exports + imports as share of GDP:

155.3%

*[Source – mostly FCO Economics Unit,
Apr 2017]*



General overview

Belgium is a small, affluent and multicultural country located at the heart of decision-making in Europe.

It is an open and highly-competitive market with opportunities in most sectors. Belgium has similar business risks and requirements to the UK. If your product or service is successful in the UK, there is a good chance you will be successful in Belgium. It is also the entry point for many imports into Europe so product pricing must be competitive.

Often referred to as the crossroads of Europe, Belgium consists of two very distinct cultural regions, Flanders (Dutch speaking northern half, around 6.5 million inhabitants) and Wallonia (French speaking southern half, with a population of around 3.6 million), and an officially-bilingual capital, Brussels (over 1.2 million inhabitants). There is also a small German-speaking community (70,000) in the south-east of Wallonia.

The Kingdom of Belgium is a founding member of both NATO and the European Union and one of the first-wave countries to adopt the Euro. Belgium also hosts the headquarters of the Council and Commission of the EU, NATO, and many other international organisations.

More than 1,000 public and private international organisations have set up headquarters in Belgium. This offers opportunities to access huge procurement chains.

Important and longstanding relationships exist between the UK and Belgium.

Belgium is the UK's 9th largest export market and UK goods and services are well received in the market. UK companies that already work in Belgium include, Shell, BP, BT and GSK.

Belgium is an ideal starting place for UK companies new to exporting. For any company looking to expand into Europe, Belgium is the ideal tester market – it is an open and dynamic market with plenty of opportunities for high-value products and services, and English is an accepted business language, and for UK companies it is just a short train ride away, making your export journey that much easier.

However, you need to treat Belgium as a regional market. It is a federal state which has devolved powers to both regions and linguistic communities in terms of industry and culture. Business support, agriculture and licensing are all carried out at a regional level.

You can read the EU's practical guide to doing business in Europe at: http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm, which gives detail on rules and processes common to European countries, and also contact a Department for International Trade (DIT) Belgium export adviser at: <https://www.contactus.trade.gov.uk/enquiry/topic> for a free consultation if you are interested in exporting to Belgium.

You can also contact the Belgian DIT team directly at: DITBelgium@mobile.trade.gov.uk.

Contact UK Export Finance (UKEF) about trade finance and insurance cover for UK companies. You can also check the current UKEF cover position for Belgium, at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/country-cover-policy-and-indicators#belgium>.

The British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium offers professional advice and services for UK companies in, or entering, the Belgian market. See: <http://britishchamber.be/>.

The 'Help available for you' section provides further details on organisations which can offer you support in Belgium.

Government overview

Parliament

Belgium is a constitutional monarchy governed by a multi-party coalition, comprised of both Flemish and francophone parties. Following a number of state reforms, Belgium is now a federal state divided into three regions (Flanders, Wallonia and the Brussels Capital Region) and three language-based communities (Flemish, French and German). There are also 10 provinces and almost 600 local authorities (municipalities).

The federal government is responsible for some major issues like defence, foreign affairs, justice and home affairs, the national budget, including setting and collecting most taxes, and social security.

Responsibility for education and culture rests with the language communities, while the regions' responsibilities include environment, transport, energy, agriculture, public works and some elements of

unemployment support. Some issues are divided between the different levels, e.g. health.

Regional and community governments are entirely autonomous and their ministers have equal status with federal ones. Their powers are not therefore devolved as in the UK model.

This complex model can lead to complications when working with the public sector. Different parts of the Belgian governmental system often need to co-ordinate with one another to reach agreement.

Federal, regional and community elections are held every five years and local elections every six years. Voting is compulsory at all levels. All the major political parties split along linguistic lines in the 1970s.

Following the May 2014 elections and 135 days of coalition talks, a centre-right coalition was installed in October 2014. The coalition government is led by Prime Minister Charles Michel (from the Francophone liberals, MR) and consists of four parties: three Flemish (N-VA, CD&V and Open VLD) and one French-speaking party (MR). It is the first time that the Flemish pro-devolution party N-VA is part of the federal government in Belgium.

Business and human rights

Belgium was a founding member of the European Union and the Council of Europe and a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights. According to international observers, human rights in Belgium are generally respected and the law and the judiciary provided effective means of addressing individual instances of abuse. However, some sporadic

concerns have been reported over prison and detention conditions, and occasional instances of racial and ethnic discrimination in the job market.

[Source – FCO Overseas Business Risk/gov.uk, June 2017]

Economic overview

Belgium is a developed, modern, private-enterprise economy which has capitalised on its central geographic location in Western Europe, highly developed transport network, and diversified industrial and commercial base.

Belgium's main imports are raw materials, machinery and equipment, chemicals, raw diamonds, pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs, transportation equipment and oil products. Its main exports are machinery and equipment, chemicals, finished diamonds, metals and metal products and foodstuffs. Industry is concentrated mainly in the populous Flemish area in the north. With few natural resources, Belgium must import substantial quantities of raw materials and export a large volume of manufactured goods, making its economy unusually dependent on the state of world markets.

Trade focuses very much on the European market. Half the goods exported by Belgium are sold in neighbouring countries (Germany, France and the Netherlands), while one quarter go to other EU member states. Imports follow more or less the same pattern. This situation reflects Belgium's role as a hub within the EU.

Competitiveness of Belgian businesses is under pressure: Belgium has the second-

highest tax level in the EU (45.4%) and ranks second on labour taxation (42.8%). This centre-right government is shifting tax from labour to capital, consumption and environment, with a 'tax shift' announced in July 2015 reducing employers' contributions and increasing taxation on short-term stock market speculation. Flagship reforms for the government include raising the retirement age from 65 to 67 by 2030 (the first change since 1956) and the suspension of the automatic indexation of wages.

[Source – FCO Overseas Business Risk/DIT/gov.uk, June 2017]

Growth potential

Belgium's priority sectors for economic development include:

- biotechnology
- agri-food sector
- environmental technology
- pharmaceutical sector
- information communications technology (ICT)
- transport and logistics

Trade agreements

Belgium is a member of the EU and the World Trade Organization (WTO). This means that goods manufactured in the UK are exempt from import duties. Contact the SOLVIT team at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-single-market-centre> if you have market access issues relating to the operation of the single market.

Strengths of the Belgian market

Strengths of the Belgian market include:

- strategic location
- open economy
- early adopter of new technologies
- excellent transport network

Read the practical guide to doing business in Europe, at: http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm.

Benefits to UK businesses

Benefits for UK businesses exporting to Belgium include:

- strong and long-standing trade relationship
- proximity and easy transport links
- English is widely spoken
- barriers to market entry are low
- population with a high disposable income
- close to top decision makers in international organisations such as the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Trade between the UK and Belgium

Belgium is the UK's 9th largest export market, and the Benelux countries – made up of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – are together the UK's second-largest export market (after the US). Top UK exports to Belgium include:

- chemical products
- medical products
- automotive equipment
- diamonds

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

In addition:

- In 2016 Belgium was ranked 15th out of 176 countries in Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index (the UK ranked 10th): http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016
- Belgium is ranked 42nd out of 190 in the World Bank's 2016 Ease of Doing Business index (the UK ranks 7th): <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings>
- The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness report 2016-17 ranks Belgium 17th out of 138 (the UK is ranked 7th): <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-index/country-profiles/#economy=BEL>

Contact a DIT export adviser at: <https://www.contactus.trade.gov.uk/enquiry/topic> for a free consultation if you are interested in exporting to Belgium.

Contact UK Export Finance (UKEF) about trade finance and insurance cover for UK companies. You can also check the current UKEF cover position for Belgium. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/country-cover-policy-and-indicators#belgium>.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]



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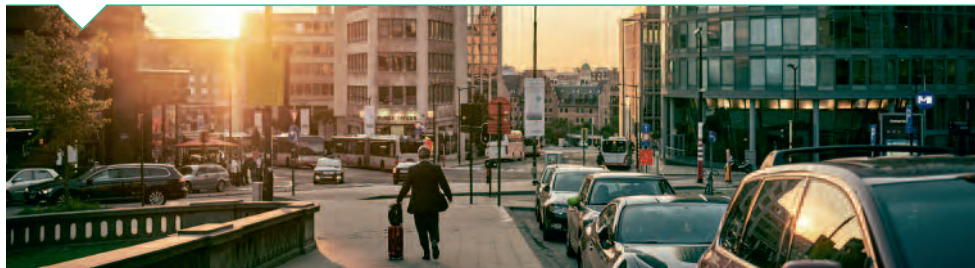
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London

Luxembourg

New York



Stibbe is a leading internationally-oriented Benelux law firm with main offices in Amsterdam, Brussels, and Luxembourg; and branch offices in Dubai, London, and New York.

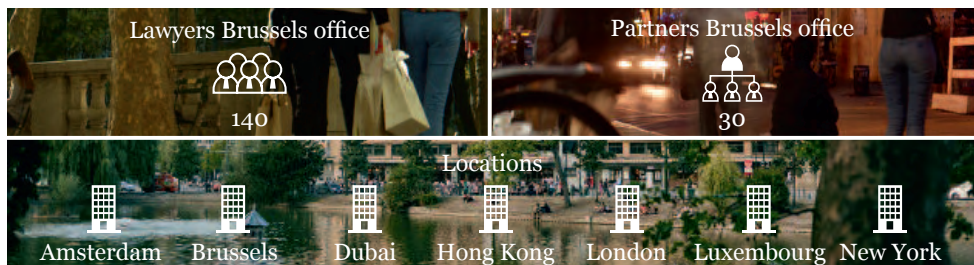
Stibbe provides companies and public institutions with full legal service covering all areas of law, such as constitutional and administrative law, real estate law, corporate law, tax law, employment law, social security law, criminal law, ICT law, EU law, competition law, pensions law, energy law, IP law, environmental law, etc.

Located next to the iconic Grand Place in Brussels city center, our award-winning Brussels office advises clients on their legal issues in Belgium, across the Benelux, and around the world, and represents them in litigations. Since its inception over 100 years ago, our Brussels office has grown into the largest firm in the Belgian legal landscape with around 150 lawyers, including 30 partners.

Our dedicated, multidisciplinary teams have become a longstanding and trusted business advisor to our clients. Additionally, many of our lawyers are academics who are involved in ground-breaking legislative work.

Our clients range from multinational and national corporations and financial institutions to government organizations and other public authorities. We handle their transactions, disputes, and projects across a broad spectrum of sectors including finance, energy, real estate and construction, industrials and chemicals, retail and consumer goods, life sciences, transport, and telecommunications, media and technology. Our thorough understanding of their commercial objectives, their market position, and their sector or industry allows us to provide them with the most appropriate and effective advice.

In addition to our own international presence, we collaborate closely with other top-tier firms on cross-border matters outside our home jurisdictions (the Benelux). These relations are non-exclusive and enable us to assemble a tailor-made, integrated team of lawyers with the best expertise and contacts for each specific matter and client. This guarantees efficient coordination on cross-border transactions throughout a multitude of legal areas, whatever their complexity and nature.



Our Approach

Problem-solving approach

We know that in order to be effective at solving problems, we must get to know our clients well and understand the bigger picture of the matter at hand. Seeing issues fully in context and having a practical approach enable us to provide insightful and appropriate advice and assistance to help our clients achieve the right results.

Quality first

Recognized for handling our private and public clients' most complex and business-critical cases, we invest in our lawyers' hard and soft skills heavily through our market-leading education programme — Stibbe Academy — and advanced, efficient ICT tools. This approach helps us maintain our market position as a leading firm while differentiating ourselves from the competition through a high degree of partner involvement in everything we do.

Teamwork in complex cross-border matters

Many of our major clients choose us so they can benefit from the many synergies that are created by the constant day-to-day collaboration between our experts throughout the world in many legal areas, especially regarding complex and often cross-border transactions.

Recognition

Stibbe is an award-winning law firm, recognized nationally and internationally, with very satisfied clients, whose endorsement and praises of us are published in legal directories:

"They have experts in different domains, are very flexible and stick to deadlines. The service is excellent and they create a strategy with us in order to get to the best solutions. They are very co-operative."

Chambers Europe (2017)

"Stibbe is valued for its 'accurate, reliable and swift responses' and 'excellent legal and commercial expertise'."

Legal 500 (2016)

"Benelux firm Stibbe is widely recognised as one of the leading local practices in the region, with Belgium being no exception."

IFLR1000 (2016)

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Stibbe

BELGIUM

UK companies are set to benefit from a unique new five-year programme presenting real-time export opportunities that you can apply for online. This is part of the drive to significantly increase the number of UK companies exporting.





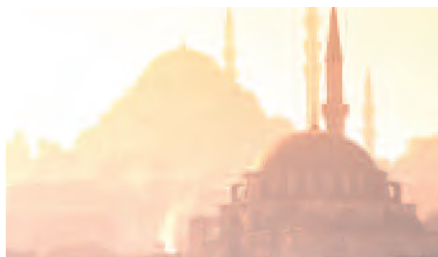
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- Leading UK authority on trading globally
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- Expert solutions for international trade



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Join us today

Call: +44(0)1733 404 400

email: institute@export.org.uk



Help available for you

Overview

The UK Department for International Trade (DIT) provides tailored support packages for companies who are:

- first time exporters (FTEs)
- small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- medium-sized businesses (MSBs)

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade/about/about-our-services> for further information.

In addition, the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium can assist as the premier professional forum for British expats and UK-related business in Belgium, by organising regular high-level events and networking opportunities, facilitating business development by providing targeted exposure for their members' goods and services, and providing news and information relevant to the UK-Belgium business community, serving as a conduit for member-to-member communication.

See: <http://britishchamber.be/> for further information.

The following details are a selection of support services available for you:

Support from the Department for International Trade (DIT)

Business opportunities

UK companies are set to benefit from a unique new five-year programme presenting real-time export opportunities that you can apply for online. This is part of the drive to significantly increase the number of UK companies exporting.

'Exporting is GREAT' is part of the UK Government's GREAT campaign, and presents live export opportunities to UK businesses across a range of media outlets and digital channels. Hundreds of these export opportunities, with a potential total value of more than £300 million, are hosted on: <https://www.export.great.gov.uk/>.

'Exporting is GREAT' provides business advice and expertise to support you at every step on your exporting journey, from initial interest to selling in-market and using the latest technology to connect these businesses with live export opportunities.

Events and missions

Taking part in overseas exhibitions is an effective way for you to test markets, attract customers, appoint agents or distributors and make sales. DIT's Tradeshaw Access Programme (TAP) provides grant support for eligible SMEs to attend trade shows overseas.

Participation is usually as part of a group, a great advantage for inexperienced businesses, and is usually led by one of DIT's Accredited Trade Associations (ATOs). ATOs work with DIT to raise the profile of UK groups and sectors at key exhibitions.

The DIT calendar of events has some 400 core events and missions, and 1,000 opportunities across the TAP 'Trade Access Programme' and the English national regions.

DIT Events Portal

The DIT Events Portal provides a single calendar view of all DIT events and missions, and has been developed to provide companies with more detailed information on each event in order to help them decide on the most appropriate event to attend. The calendar can be filtered and searched by sector and/or market.

There are also detailed events websites which include more information about the event and also allow users to register for an event.

The DIT Events Portal is your central hub for business and networking opportunities. Search for future events and missions, register online and network with fellow delegates. See: <https://www.events.trade.gov.uk/>.

DIT webinars

The DIT Webinar Service runs hundreds of free hour-long internet events covering topics, sectors and countries around the world, helping you shape your export plan. These events allow you to interact with the experts in specific sectors and countries and allow you to ask questions to enhance your knowledge

To see upcoming DIT webinars, please visit: <http://www.events.trade.gov.uk/> and search for webinars.

Other DIT services

DIT assists new and experienced exporters with information, help and advice on entering overseas markets such as Belgium. These services include:

- an Export Health Check to assess your company's readiness for exporting and help develop a plan of action
- training in the requirements for trading overseas
- access to an experienced local international trade adviser
- help to grow your business through online exports
- specialist help with tackling cultural issues when communicating with Belgian customers and partners
- advice on how to go about market research and the possibility of a grant towards approved market-research projects
- ongoing support to help you continue to develop overseas trade, and look at dealing with more-sophisticated activities or markets
- information, contacts, advice, mentoring and support from DIT staff in the UK and their network of staff in Belgium
- support to participate in trade fairs in Belgium
- opportunities to participate in sector-based trade missions and seminars

- access to major buyers, local government and supply chains in Belgium
- advice on forming international joint ventures and partnerships
- exploratory visits to Belgium
- alerts to the latest and best business opportunities

To find out more about commissioning any of these services, contact a DIT export adviser at: <https://www.contactus.trade.gov.uk/enquiry/topic> for a free consultation, or see further details at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade/about/about-our-services>.

DIT E-Exporting Programme

DIT's E-Exporting Programme aims to help UK companies get their brands to millions of global consumers and grow their business through online exports.

DIT's E-Exporting Programme helps UK companies who are:

- new to selling online
- already selling online, but need help with specific issues
- experienced in online sales, but are looking to sell on multiple platforms globally

The programme enables you to:

- arrange a free meeting through your local DIT office to get expert international trade advice and support, and access to DIT's global network of contacts. See: <https://www.contactus.trade.gov.uk/office-finder>
- meet a digital trade adviser (where relevant), to help you develop and implement an international online strategy

- set up on e-marketplaces quickly and also identify new e-marketplaces around the world
- access better-than-commercial rates to list on some e-marketplaces, including lower commission fees and 'try for free' periods. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting#preferential-rates>
- access the 'E-Expertise Bank', a community of over 175 B2B/B2C service providers offering free advice. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting#expertise>
- join DIT's mailing list for opportunities to hear from industry experts, network with like-minded individuals and find out about e-commerce trends

In-market support

If you already export, and have decided Belgium is part of your business strategy, you are advised to contact the DIT team in Brussels prior to your visit to discuss your objectives and what help you may need at: DITBelgium@mobile.trade.gov.uk (see the 'Resources' section at the end of this guide). They can provide a range of Belgian-specific services for you, including the provision of market information, validated lists of agents/potential partners, key market players or potential customers, establishing interest from such contacts, and arranging in-market appointments for you. In addition, they can also organise events for you to meet contacts in Belgium, or to promote your company and your products/services.

[Source – [DIT/gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)]

Support from the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium

The British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium works closely with a number of partners to maximise the reach and effectiveness of their trade and investment activities. These include partners in Belgium and the UK, and government and non-governmental bodies.

Each partner has a different area of expertise – some focus on supporting companies entering the Belgian market for the first time, others work with Belgian companies looking to invest in the UK. They also work with national business organisations in Belgium and other international Chambers of Commerce.

Together they are able to fully support companies in Belgium – whether from the UK, Belgium, or any other country.

The British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium offers one hour of free advice from any or all of their accredited service providers. Any company in Belgium, or thinking of doing business in Belgium, can access this service. They also understand that there are many steps to establish or improve a business and that this can take a number of years, which is why there is no limit to when you can use their services. They can provide advice on the best way to structure a company in Belgium, and months later provide advice on the best marketing strategy in Belgium too.

Advice is available in the following areas:

- office set-up (legal, accountancy, VAT, registration etc.)
- financial, legal and tax advice
- office space and virtual offices
- marketing and promotional services
- sales support (strategy, trade fairs, distributors etc.)
- human resources (recruitment, payroll, social security etc.)
- living in Belgium (relocation, accommodation, health insurance etc.)
- logistics
- grants and subsidies
- training and development

All accredited service providers work in English, but most can also offer advice in French and Flemish as well.

For more information on how the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium can help you, or on becoming a member, contact them at: <http://britishchamber.be/>.

[Source – the British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium]

Support from the Institute of Export & International Trade

Raising the profile of international trade qualifications and experienced members is only part of how IOE&IT membership is essential for any individual or business involved with global trade.

Importantly, the IOE&IT also offer access to a unique range of benefits and services specific to international trade:

- Help with any export issues you come across. Our team of experts can help with questions on documentation, export controls, the UK Bribery Act, customs & VAT procedures, regulatory and compliance issues, insurance issues, payment terms, transport and logistics. Members get free access to our experts via a Technical Helpline. See: https://www.export.org.uk/page/Export_Helpline.
- A voice for your ideas and concerns. We represent your point of view and feed back to government, HMRC and other influencing bodies on issues that impact you, plus participate in Institute responses to central government with regard to proposed legislative changes.
- A complete range of international trade qualifications – for those that have no experience, up to those who wish to qualify themselves to take a business degree. The Institute's qualifications are widely recognised as providing both employers and employees with the necessary international business practice linked to satisfying career planning and development. See: <https://www.export.org.uk/page/qualifications>.
- A range of short courses giving you the skills and expertise you need to gain a competitive advantage in the challenging and complex world of export, import and international trade. See: <https://www.export.org.uk/page/TrainingCourses>.

- An extensive events programme to help you share information and connect at every level in the international trade community, whether it is sector-specific or regional. See: https://www.export.org.uk/events/event_list.asp.
- Inclusion in surveys to research the attitudes and changes to world trade.

For more information on how the IOE&IT can help you, or on becoming a member, contact the IOE&IT at: <https://www.export.org.uk/page/about>.

[Source – Institute of Export & International Trade]

Open to Export

Open to Export is the IOE&IT's free, online advice service for UK companies looking to grow internationally. It offers free information and support on anything to do with exporting and hosts online discussions via its forum, webinars and social media, where businesses can ask any export question, and learn from each other. Open to Export can be accessed at: <http://opentoexport.com/>.

For more information on how the IOE&IT can help you, or on becoming a member, contact the IOE&IT at: <https://www.export.org.uk/page/about>.

[Source – Institute of Export & International Trade]

BELGIUM

Holders of British passports endorsed 'British Citizen' do not need a visa to enter Belgium. If you intend to work or remain in Belgium for more than three months you must apply to the local communal authorities for a residence permit.





GETTING HERE AND ADVICE ABOUT YOUR STAY

Getting here and advice about your stay

Entry requirements

Passport validity

If you are a UK citizen your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; you do not need any additional period of validity on your passport beyond this.

Visas

Holders of British passports endorsed 'British Citizen' do not need a visa to enter Belgium. If you intend to work or remain in Belgium for more than three months you must apply to the local communal authorities for a residence permit.

Those with other types of British nationality should check entry requirements with the Embassy of Belgium in the United Kingdom. See: <http://unitedkingdom.diplomatie.belgium.be/en>

UK Emergency Travel Documents

UK Emergency Travel Documents are accepted for entry, airside transit and exit from Belgium.

Travel advice for Belgium

If you are travelling to Belgium for business, check the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice first, at: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium>.

Local laws and customs

According to Belgian law, you must have some form of identification with you at all times.

Possession of drugs and trafficking in drugs are serious offences.

It is illegal to wear in public places (parks, buildings, public transport, on the street etc.) clothing that hides a person's face largely or completely. People wearing such clothing (e.g. the burka and nikab) risk a fine of up to €137.50 and/or detention for up to seven days. There is no exemption for tourists.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk]


Safety and security

Crime

Petty crime rates are similar to the UK, but on the increase. You should take sensible precautions to protect yourself and your belongings.

Take only the minimum amount of cash, credit cards and personal ID necessary when you go out. As far as possible leave jewellery, other valuables and documents in a secure place like a hotel safe. Avoid carrying money, bank/credit cards and your passport in the same bag or pocket. Leave a photocopy of your passport and itinerary with a contact in the UK. Enter next-of-kin details into the back of your passport.

In the event of theft, contact the nearest police station and get a police report. If you lose your passport, you should also contact the British Embassy in Brussels, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-brussels>. If you have difficulty reporting the theft of your cards to your UK card issuer, you can ask the Belgian group 'Card Stop' (telephone: +32 (0) 70 344 344) to send



a fax to your UK card company to block your card. Alternatively, if you have Belgian issued bank/credit cards, Card Stop will be able to block them.

Be vigilant and take extra care in major railway stations, and on public transport, particularly late at night. Thieves and muggers operate around the Brussels Gare du Midi/Zuidstation (Eurostar terminal), Gare du Nord and Schuman (the EU quarter). Pickpockets also operate on international trains, mainly Paris-Brussels and Amsterdam-Brussels.

Never leave luggage unattended. There have been reports of luggage being stolen from the racks at the end of carriages in high-speed trains (TGV and Thalys), usually just before the doors close. Do not leave valuable items visible in your car, even when you are in it. Keep car doors locked and windows secure at all times. It is increasingly common for thieves, usually on motorbikes, to break a window and snatch valuables from the front or back passenger seat when the vehicle is stationary at traffic lights. Car-jacking, especially of up-market vehicles, remains a risk.

Road travel

If you wish to drive in Belgium you must have a valid UK driving licence, insurance and vehicle documents. If you are driving a vehicle that does not belong to you then written permission from the registered owner may also be required. Traffic is fast and Belgium's accident rate is high mainly due to speeding. In 2016 there were 637 road deaths in Belgium.

*[Source – UK Department for Transport:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ras52-international-comparisons>]*

This equates to 56 road deaths per 1 million of population, double in comparison to the UK average of 28 road deaths per 1 million of population in the same year.

Speed traps, cameras and unmarked vehicles are in operation throughout the country.

Drivers must give absolute priority to vehicles joining a road from the right, even if they have stopped at a road junction or stopped for pedestrians or cyclists. Exemptions to this rule include motorways, roundabouts, roads sign-posted with an orange diamond within a white background, and drivers who are attempting to join a road after having driven down a street in the wrong direction.

Trams have priority over other traffic. If a tram or bus stops in the middle of the road to allow passengers on or off, you must stop.

There is a speed restriction of 30kph in school areas, which is valid 24 hours (even when schools are closed) unless indicated otherwise. The start and finish of these zones are not always clearly marked.

Fines have increased dramatically (up to €2,750 for exceeding the speed limit by 40kph and a possible court appearance for exceeding the speed limit by more than 40kph). If you are unable to pay an on-the-spot fine your vehicle may be impounded. More detailed information is available on the British Embassy website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/belgium>.

Do not drink and drive; frequent alcohol checks are made. Less than 0.05% alcohol in the bloodstream is allowed (a lower level than in the UK). A blood sample will be taken if you refuse to be breathalysed. Fines are heavy depending on the degree of intoxication, and can range from €1,100 to €11,000. In certain cases driving licences have been confiscated immediately.

Using a mobile phone while driving is not allowed; the use of 'hands free' equipment is allowed.

Information on road travel (in French) can be found on the website of Le Soir, at: <http://www.lesoir.be/trafic>.

See also the European Commission, AA and RAC guides on driving in Belgium, at: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/going_abroad/belgium/index_en.htm, <https://www.theaa.com/european-break-down-cover/driving-in-europe/country-by-country>; and <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/travel/country/belgium/>.

Terrorism

Terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in Belgium. Attacks could happen anywhere, including on public transport and transport hubs and in other places visited by foreigners. You should be vigilant in public places and follow the advice of local Belgian authorities.

There have been a number of high-profile terrorist attacks across Belgium. On 25th August 2017, a man attacked two soldiers with a knife in Brussels. On 20th June 2017, Belgian security forces helped prevent a suspected terrorist attack at Brussels central station. On 6th August

2016, two police officers were attacked with a machete in the city of Charleroi. On 22nd March 2016 co-ordinated terrorist attacks killed 32 and injured hundreds more at Brussels Airport and on the metro system.

The main threat is from extremists linked to Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL). Daesh has claimed responsibility for attacks in Belgium.

Brussels hosts a number of international institutions (EU and NATO) and government and foreign embassy buildings which are sensitive locations.

There is considered to be a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

Find out more about the global threat from terrorism, how to minimise your risk and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack, at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reduce-your-risk-from-terrorism-while-abroad>.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk]

Protective security advice

Business disputes

The UK Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) provides protective security advice to businesses. See: <http://www.cpni.gov.uk/>.

[Source – FCO Overseas Business Risk/gov.uk]

Health

Visit your health professional at least four-to-six weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures.

Country-specific information and advice is published by the National Travel Health Network and Centre on the TravelHealthPro website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries> and by NHS (Scotland) on the FitForTravel website: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx>.

Useful information and advice about healthcare abroad is also available on the NHS Choices website: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx>.

If you are visiting Belgium you should get a free European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before leaving the UK. See: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic.aspx>. The EHIC is not a substitute for medical and travel insurance, but it entitles you to state-provided medical treatment that may become necessary during your trip. Any treatment provided is on the same terms as for Belgian nationals.

If you do not have your EHIC with you or you have lost it, you can call the Department of Health Overseas Healthcare Team (+44 191 218 1999) to get a Provisional Replacement Certificate. The EHIC will not cover medical repatriation, ongoing medical treatment or non-urgent treatment, so you should make sure you have adequate travel insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment and repatriation.

If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 112 and ask for an ambulance. If you are referred to a medical facility for treatment you should contact your insurance/medical assistance company immediately.

Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk]

FCO travel advice

If you are travelling to Belgium for business, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) pages on gov.uk have up-to-date travel advice to help you prepare for your visit overseas and to stay safe and secure while you are there.

For advice please visit the FCO Travel section pages on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belgium>

Travel insurance

Take out comprehensive travel and medical insurance before you travel. See the FCO Foreign Travel Insurance guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance>.

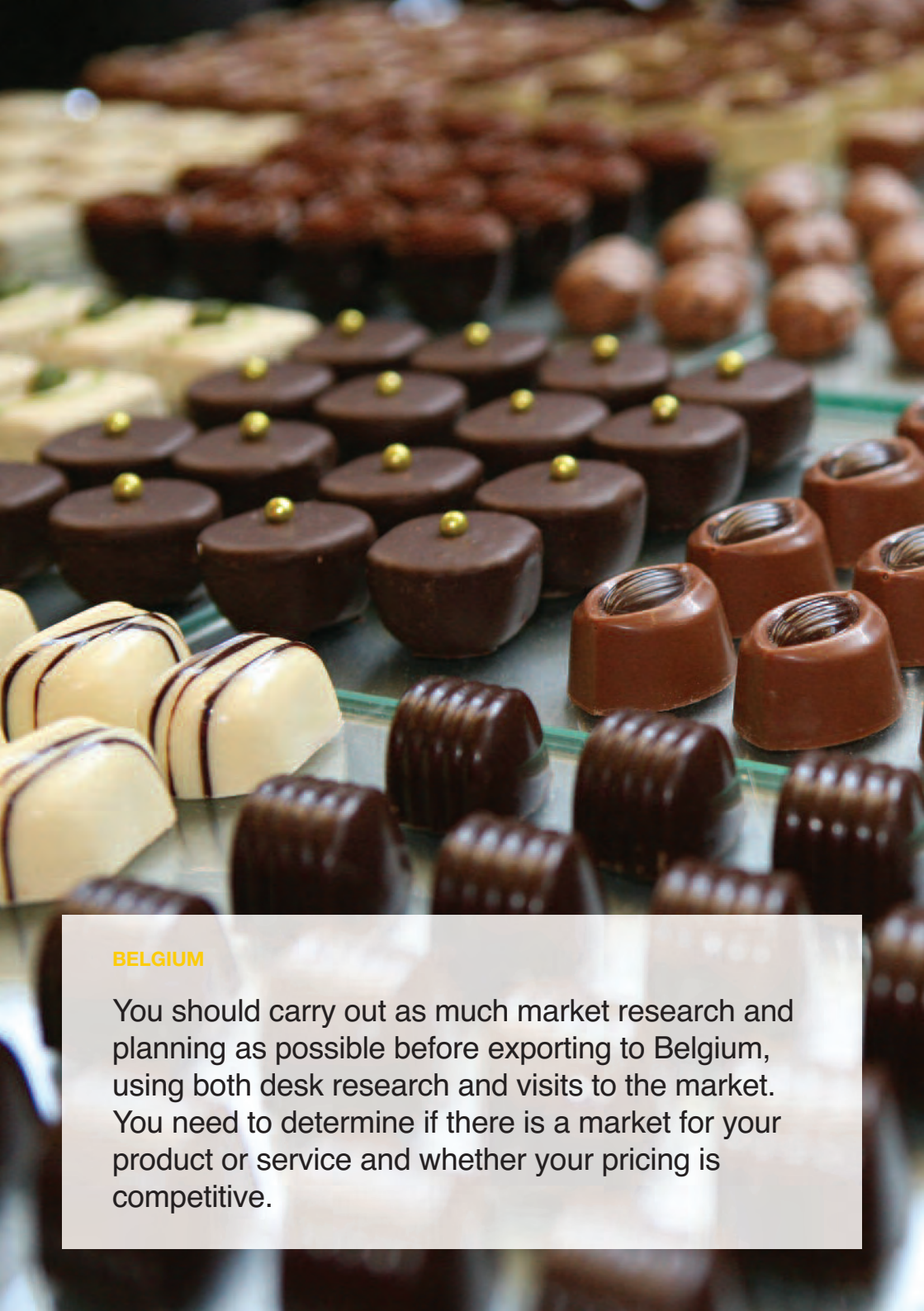
Contact FCO travel advice team

This email service only offers information and advice for British nationals planning to travel abroad:
traveladvicepublicenquiries@fco.gov.uk.

If you need urgent help because something has happened to a friend or relative abroad, contact the consular assistance team on +44 (0)20 7008 1500 (24 hours).

If you are abroad and need emergency help from the UK Government, contact the nearest British Embassy, Consulate or High Commission.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk]



BELGIUM

You should carry out as much market research and planning as possible before exporting to Belgium, using both desk research and visits to the market. You need to determine if there is a market for your product or service and whether your pricing is competitive.



Sector-specific opportunities in Belgium

You should carry out as much market research and planning as possible before exporting to Belgium, using both desk research and visits to the market. You need to determine if there is a market for your product or service and whether your pricing is competitive.

UK DIT's trade specialists can help you identify local representatives for your products in Belgium. See: <https://www.gov.uk/overseas-customers-export-opportunities>.

UK DIT provides free international export sales leads from its worldwide network. You can search for export opportunities in Belgium at: <https://opportunities.export.great.gov.uk/>.

Government tenders in Belgium

You can find high-value public procurement notices from the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) on Tenders Electronic Daily (TED), the 'Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union', at: <http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do>, and you can access Belgian public tenders at: <http://www.publicprocurement.be/nl/publicprocurementbe-english-0>.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

Business services, office services and e-commerce/logistics


Labour costs may be lower in the Netherlands, but a central location close to customers is more important, and Belgium is an ideal central location between London, Paris, Amsterdam and Frankfurt.

Flanders is a prosperous region. Its location in the heart of Western Europe and its intense trade relations with surrounding countries are contributing factors. 60% of Europe's purchasing power is located within a 500 kilometre radius of Flanders. This means that Europe's main markets can be reached in less than 24 hours.

Flanders is centrally located within this megalopolis – stretching from Greater London to the Netherlands, Belgium, and parts of Germany and France. As such, the region ensures smooth access to one of the world's highest concentrations of people, money and industries.

International package delivery players – such as FedEx, DPD and DHL – all have major sites in Flanders, enabling them to deliver more quickly to their customers, and the central and easily-accessible Brussels Airport only adds to that.

60 million consumers are within three hours' reach by road from Liège in Wallonia (only 31 million consumers from Paris). This notion of accessibility to the markets is further reinforced by the fact that Wallonia lies in the path of the major freight corridors. The density of the road and rail networks, as well as the presence of a practical network of interior navigable waterways, are Wallonia's major strengths.



Logistics in Wallonia is one of the six competitiveness clusters set up by the Walloon Government within the framework of the Marshall Plan launched to boost the Walloon economy. The cluster's objective is to support all innovations in the logistics sector, in particular its technological dimension.

The primary aims of the clusters are to stimulate and support innovation, including through financial measures, via the regional aid programmes. It serves as a research consultancy and helps shape and roll-out projects in the four thematic areas of multimodality, the securisation of logistical chains, sustainable logistics and internal company logistics.

Wallonia heads-up the ranking of Europe's most attractive logistics hub and continues to be considered as the region that will be Europe's most attractive logistical hub in 2020.

Finally, Wallonia has to contend with less road congestion than other regions. A Wallonia-based EDC is in a better position to keep its promises as far as transit times are concerned.

[Source – Flanders Investment and Trade/Invest in Wallonia, 2017]

Chemicals and life sciences

The chemicals and life science industry is one of the largest industries in Belgium. There is steady growth forecast for the coming years.

Antwerp has the second-largest petrochemicals manufacturing cluster in the world after Houston.

The pharmaceutical research and manufacturing sector is strong in Belgium with companies such as UCB and GSK vaccines.

Opportunities for UK companies include:

- process equipment supply
- maintenance expertise
- process monitoring and safety

Contact: gert.wauters@fco.gov.uk for more information on chemical and life sciences opportunities in Belgium.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

Construction

The construction market in Belgium is split into three main sectors: residential, non-residential and civil engineering.

Opportunities for UK companies include:

- collaboration with architects
- public private partnership projects
- sustainable building products
- energy and cost saving products
- specialist building products

Contact: sophie.beyers@mobile.trade.gov.uk for more information on construction opportunities in Belgium.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

Energy

Offshore wind has a big role in the future energy mix in Belgium. There are nine offshore wind concessions off the Belgian coast. Some are operational while others are still in the early planning phase. There are incentives from the government to encourage the uptake of energy efficiency measures.

Opportunities for UK companies include:

- offshore wind installation services and cost-reduction solutions
- energy efficiency in industrial environments
- intelligent energy monitoring

Contact: gert.wauters@fco.gov.uk for more information on energy opportunities in Belgium.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

Food and drink

Belgium is often used by small and large companies as a test market for food products.

Opportunities for UK companies include:

- convenience foods
- snacking
- spirits
- seafood
- ethnic foods

- healthy and organic foods

Contact: nadine.vandenbroucke@mobile.trade.gov.uk for more information on food and drink opportunities in Belgium.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

ICT

The ICT sector contributes for over 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) annually. Government interest and support is directed to R&D and innovation-clusters working within:

- micro- and nano-electronics
- internet of things (IoT)
- fintech
- cyber security
- big data
- smart cities
- smart devices (M2M)
- cloud computing
- network technology
- creative media, gaming and animation

Opportunities for UK companies include:

- financial service solutions
- ICT solutions
- e-health solutions

- cyber security
- big data collection and analysis technology

Contact: mathieu.vanoverberghe@fco.gov.uk for more information on ICT opportunities in Belgium.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

Security

Recent terror attacks and investigations have increased in country security awareness. As home to NATO, European institutions and many other international organisations, Belgium has a thriving security industry.

Opportunities for UK companies include expertise in:

- counter terrorism
- critical infrastructure protection
- tackling organised crime
- security equipment
- guarding services

Contact the UK Export Control Organisation (ECO) at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/export-control-organisation> to check your goods are meeting legal requirements for export.

Contact: james.cooper@fco.gov.uk for more information on security opportunities in Belgium.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

Defence

In June 2016, the Belgian Government published its 2030 Defence Strategic Vision which sets out plans for a smaller, but more modern Belgian defence. This vision also includes a desire to spend around €9.4 billion on new defence equipment by 2030, in the air, navy, land, and cyber domains.

Contact: james.cooper@fco.gov.uk for more information on security opportunities in Belgium.

NATO

The NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA) in Brussels and the Hague currently runs around 70% of NATO procurement and has announced that there will be €3 billion of opportunities in the coming years as part of a technology refresh. In addition to opportunities which come through the NCIA, frequent opportunities also arise through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA).

This agency provides a platform for nations to procure equipment together, keeping costs down, as well as managing NATO's logistics and procurement support activities and projects.

Contact: ben.wilson@fco.gov.uk for more information on NATO opportunities.

International schools in Belgium – briefing

Families moving to Belgium can struggle to find appropriate schooling for their children if English is the only spoken language, since all publicly-maintained schools will teach in French or Dutch. Because of this, private international schools are a popular choice with English speaking families and there are more than twenty of them with around 25,000 pupils.

The majority of these international schools in Belgium are situated in the city centre and southern suburbs of Brussels, catering for the needs of families particularly with the international focus of the city and those working for the European Commission, European Parliament and NATO.

Numbers of schools and students are increasing due to increased demand due in-part to the creation of new executive agencies based in Brussels, and an increase in births. Student numbers are constantly increasing, with an average growth of about 1,000 students per year.

Further information about international schools in Brussels can be found at: https://www.expatifocus.com/expatriate-belgium-educationschools?gclid=CKSM0N av5dQCF e6_7QodiAgIEQ; and <http://www.internationalschoolsinbrussels.com>

See the British School of Brussels information on page 89 and visit the website at: www.britishschool.be.

Relocation

With its rich history, culture, cuisine, architecture and countryside, and also closeness to the UK, Belgium is a very popular location for British nationals moving abroad.

However, if you are not Belgian and you wish to move there, you must have the necessary residence documents.

The residence procedure which a foreign national must follow depends on their nationality and on the duration and purpose of their stay in Belgium. The free movement of persons applies within the EU, making the residence rules for British citizens much more flexible than those for the citizens of other countries.

More information about residence documents for foreign nationals in Belgium is available in French or Dutch at: www.newintown.be, and additionally about the naturalisation procedure, getting married and social security in Belgium, in English at: https://www.belgium.be/en/housing/moving_to_belgium and https://www.belgium.be/en/family/residence_documents_for_belgium.

If as a foreign national you wish to stay in Belgium for longer than three months, you must register with the municipal authorities in which you are staying, within eight days of your arrival. You will need to be registered on the Belgian National Register, and to do so, you must have an actual place of residence in that municipality.

[Source – Belgian Federal Government, 2017]

Gov.uk also has details for UK nationals moving to, living in or retiring to Belgium, at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-belgium>.

The legal profession

The Belgian legal system is based on the civil law tradition. Due to the linguistic division in Belgium, lawyers are either Avocat (French), Advocaat (Flemish) or Rechtsanwalt (German). There are over 7,000 lawyers registered with the French- and German-speaking Bar Association and over 8,500 registered with the Flemish-speaking Bar Association.

Regulation of legal profession: There are two federal bars in Belgium: the Ordre des barreaux francophones et germanophones (OBFG – French- and German-speaking Federal Bar) and the Orde van Vlaamse Balies (OVb – Flemish-speaking Federal Bar). Regulation lies with the local bar association in one of the 27 judicial districts. The bilingual judicial district of Brussels has two bar associations, one Flemish-speaking and one French-speaking.

Regulatory compliance: Belgium implemented the Establishment Directive 98/5/EC. Establishment is permitted for EU, EEA and Swiss nationals who are qualified in these countries. It allows them to give advice in international law, the law of their home country as well as Belgian law. Registration under this directive is with the local bar associations for French- and German-speaking and for Flemish-speaking.

Legal services by EU, EEA and Swiss qualified lawyers can also be provided cross-border on a temporary basis under the provisions of the Lawyers Services Directive 77/249/EEC. Contrary to the Establishment Directive, there are no conditions of nationality under the Lawyers Services Directive.

[Source – The Law Society, 2017]



BELGIUM

Talking to other people in your industry and regularly visiting Belgium will give you access to the most current advice, and such experience can often lead to new insights and form the basis for further research.



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Visit great.gov.uk at: www.great.gov.uk/uk for guidance on how to research overseas markets as well as a range of other important issues for exporters.

Regional plans and good local research are likely to be needed, using both desk research and market visits.

You should determine whether:

- there is a market for your product or service
- your pricing is competitive
- to localise your product
- to adapt your business model

The questions listed below should help you to focus your thoughts. Your answers to them will highlight areas for further research and also suggest a way forward that is right for your company. You may then want to use this as a basis for developing a formal Belgium strategy, although this may not be necessary or appropriate for all companies:

Your aims

- Do you wish to buy from Belgium, sell to Belgium or both?
- Do you wish to establish your own company presence in Belgium (for example through exporting directly, appointing a local partner or distributor, setting up a local subsidiary, operating through a branch or a joint venture)?

- Do you need to be involved in Belgium at all?
- Do you see Belgium as part of a wider plan including e.g. other Benelux or west European markets?

Your company

- What are the unique selling points for your product or service?
- Do you know if there is a market for your product in Belgium?
- Do you know if you can be competitive in Belgium?
- Are your competitors already in Belgium? If so, what are they doing?
- Do you have the time and resources to handle the demands of communication, travel, product delivery and after-sales service?

Your knowledge

- Do you know how to secure payment for your products or service?
- Do you know where in Belgium you should start?
- Do you know how to locate and screen potential partners, agents or distributors?
- Have you carried out any Belgian-specific customer segmentation, and do you know how to best reach potential customers in-market?

It is unlikely that you will have the answers to all these questions at the outset and these 'knowledge gaps' should form the basis for further research and investigation. Some of these questions will require quantitative research in your sector, while others involve more contextual and cultural considerations.

Talking to other people in your industry and regularly visiting Belgium will give you access to the most current advice, and such experience can often lead to new insights and form the basis for further research.

There are a number of trade shows held in Belgium each year – these can be useful to test product viability in the market. The Department for International Trade (DIT) Tradeshow Access Programme at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tradeshow-access-programme> provides funding in the form of grants for eligible businesses to attend overseas trade shows. The funding helps your business gain:

- market knowledge
- experience in attending and getting the most from overseas trade shows
- advice and support from trade experts

Visit the DIT events portal at: <https://www.events.trade.gov.uk/> to find upcoming events and missions in Belgium. Find out more about marketing your goods and services for Belgium, at: <https://www.great.gov.uk/uk/>.

Contact the DIT team in Belgium at: DITBelgium@mobile.trade.gov.uk; or <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/department-for-international-trade-belgium#contact-us> for events and company launches at Embassy locations.

Start-up considerations

Belgium has simple start-up procedures. The administrative formalities to set up your business can take as little as three or four days.

There are several ways you can do business in Belgium:

- exporting directly (direct exports and sales)
- appointing a local partner or distributor
- setting up a local company – a branch or joint venture
- online selling
- licensing or franchising

The Belgian Office for Intellectual Property (OPRI) is a public service where you can find more information. See: http://economie.fgov.be/en/entreprises/Intellectual_property/Aspects_institutionnels_et_pratiques/OPRI/#.WVJhUOmQzIU

It is recommended you consult local English-speaking lawyers at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-list-of-lawyers>, to avoid costly mistakes and ensure you start out in the way that is best suited to your sector of activity.

Direct exports and sales in Belgium

Direct exports means you supply your products direct to the customer. You handle all the logistics of marketing, selling, sending overseas and getting paid yourself.

Appointing a local partner or distributor in Belgium

Direct sales are possible to retailers and through online sales, but if you do not have a high level of fluency in business French, Dutch or German, you may wish to use a local partner. Options include using an agent, distributor or wholesaler.

The Department for International Trade (DIT)'s trade specialists can help you identify local representatives for your products in Belgium. See: <https://www.gov.uk/overseas-customers-export-opportunities>.

Setting up a local company in Belgium

Belgium has simple start-up procedures. The administrative formalities to set up your business can take as little as three or four days.

No prior authorisation is needed to set up a company except for certain specific types of businesses including banking, transport and insurance.

Invest in Belgium provides details on setting up a company and the different company types. See: http://www.business.belgium.be/en/managing_your_business for more information.

Belgium's three different regions may have differences in the formalities to set up and operate a business. You should check procedures in:

- Flanders (<http://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/invest/en>)
- Wallonia (<http://www.investinwallonia.be/?lang=en>)

- Brussels (<http://www.investinbrussels.com/en/>)

Online selling to Belgium

If you are selling your goods over the internet to private consumers you must be registered for value added tax (VAT) with the Belgian tax office when your annual turnover reaches €35,000.

You can find out about DIT's E-Exporting programme at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting>, which can help you export your products to Belgium.

Check out the online marketplace in Belgium at: <https://selling-online-overseas.export.great.gov.uk/>, where DIT has negotiated listings at better-than-commercial rates.

Licensing or franchising in Belgium

You can licence your goods or services to be sold in Belgium. Belgium has passed a pre-sale disclosure franchise law. Failure to comply with the law may result in the agreement being unenforceable.

You should undertake due diligence on partners when licensing technology and ensure your intellectual property rights are protected.

Visit the international section of the British Franchise Association at: <http://www.thebfa.org/international> for more information on franchising.

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Getting finance to fulfil an export contract to Belgium

Schemes are available to UK companies selling products and services to Belgium to make it easier to fulfil an export contract. Contact your bank or specialist financial organisation for assistance.

UK Export Finance (UKEF) has significant risk capacity to support exports to Belgium. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/country-cover-policy-and-indicators#belgium>. Contact one of UKEF's export finance advisers for free and impartial advice on your finance options. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-an-export-finance-manager>.

Getting paid in Belgium

You may wish to talk to a specialist about finance, including how to get paid in Belgium. This could be a bank, an accountant or you can contact the DIT team in Belgium at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/department-for-international-trade-belgium#contact-us>, to help find a financial adviser in Belgium.

Your contract will specify the terms for payment. If there is any dispute you will need to go through the Belgian legal system for resolution.

Within the EU, many businesses use payment on account in much the same way as within the UK.

Customers in Belgium may require credit terms to buy your products and services.

Payment conditions must be factored into prices. For business-to-business transactions these can range from immediate payments on receipt of goods (often with a negotiated small discount) to a negotiated 60-day payment.

Standard payment terms for business-to-business transactions in the EU are 60 calendar days and 30 calendar days for public authorities. Late payment interest can be claimed when terms are not met. Find out more about the EU's late payment directive, at: http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/sell-abroad/late-payment-fees/index_en.htm.





BELGIUM

The UK and Belgium have signed a double taxation agreement ensuring the same income is not taxed in more than one country.



How to do business in Belgium

Legal considerations

EU legislation forms the basis of Belgian law for trade and commerce. However, you should still seek professional legal advice.

Find a notary in Belgium at: <https://www.notaris.be/other-languages/english>, for assistance on aspects of business. For disputes you will need a lawyer.

Contact the DIT team in Belgium at: DITBelgium@mobile.trade.gov.uk or <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/department-for-international-trade-belgium#contact-us> to help find tax and legal advisers before entering into agreements in Belgium.

Export licences for Belgium

You will need a licence to supply any goods to Belgium which are on the UK strategic export control lists. You can find out more at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/beginners-guide-to-export-controls>.

Some other products may need certification and licensing. To find out more about licences and permits in Belgium, see: http://www.business.belgium.be/en/managing_your_business/setting_up_your_business/main_steps/licences_and_permits.

To find out which other products may need certification or licensing before they can be exported to Belgium, also contact: <https://www.gov.uk/starting-to-export/licences>.

Law on marketing and selling in Belgium

If you are selling to consumers (rather than businesses) you must comply with EU consumer protection law.

Customers in Belgium have various consumer rights when you sell at a distance (without meeting the customer face-to-face).

Find out about consumer rights in the EU at: http://europa.eu/european-union/life/consumer-rights_en.

Standards and technical regulations in Belgium


Suppliers and manufacturers have an obligation to make sure products are safe. Products must meet relevant safety standards, have clear instructions for proper use and include warnings against possible misuse.

Product standards are the same in most EU member states. If you sell products in the UK it is likely that you already comply with standards in other EU countries.

Product requirements in Belgium

Many products require a CE marking before they can be sold in the European Economic Area (EEA), see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ce-marking>. This marking proves your product has been assessed and meets EU safety, health and environmental protection requirements.

Find out more about CE markings at: http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/product/ce-mark/index_en.htm.



In Belgium, the Bureau for Standardisation (NBN) is responsible for developing, publishing and selling standards in Belgium. See: <https://www.nbn.be/en>.

You should consider taking out product liability insurance if you manufacture or supply a physical product that is sold or given away for free. See: <https://www.abi.org.uk/Insurance-and-savings/Products/Business-insurance/Liability-insurance/Product-liability-insurance>.

Packaging for export to Belgium

Packaging must conform to EU legislation on the prevention of health risks to consumers and the protection of the environment, especially with regards to waste treatment.

Find out more about packaging regulations in the EU, see: http://exporthelp.europa.eu/thdapp/display.htm?page=rt%2Frt_TechnicalRequirements.html&docType=main&languageId=en#Packaging.

Find out about requirements for using wood packaging in the EU, at: <https://www.gov.uk/wood-packaging-import-export>.

Labelling your products for Belgium

Labelling should be translated into both French and Dutch. Food products have specific labelling requirements. Textile products must be labelled with fibre content information.

You can choose to use the e-mark on packaging when exporting food products to Belgium, or use Belgium's rules on weights and measures. See: <https://www.gov.uk/weights-measures-and-packaging-the-law/labelling-packaged-goods>.

Tax and customs considerations in Belgium

The UK and Belgium have signed a double taxation agreement ensuring the same income is not taxed in more than one country. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-tax-treaties>. Find more information on taxation in Belgium at: https://www.belgium.be/en/economy/business/taxation_and_accounting.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

The standard rate of VAT is currently 21%. A reduced rate of 12% applies to social housing and agricultural products. A 6% tax rate applies to basic foodstuffs, water, hotel services, property restoration and certain other supplies. You can find the exact breakdown of taxes from the Belgium tax authority at: https://www.belgium.be/en/work/coming_to_work_in_belgium/taxes.

VAT is zero rated if your Belgian customer provides their VAT registration number and you have proof of export. You will need your Belgian customer's VAT registration number (from the invoice) for your VAT return and paperwork proving that the goods have been sent within certain time limits (usually three months).

Check with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regarding VAT refund of business expenses incurred in Belgium, at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-notice-723a-refunds-of-vat-in-the-european-community-for-ec-and-non-ec-busineses?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageVAT_Show-Content&id=HMCE_PROD1_029943&propertyType=document

You can check to see if a Belgian VAT number is valid, at: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/vies/vieshome.do?selectedLanguage=EN.

Find more information on VAT in EU markets at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vat-exports-dispatches-and-supplying-goods-abroad>.

Excise duty in Belgium

You should check you have paid excise duty on any alcohol, alcoholic drinks, energy products, electricity or tobacco products you send to Belgium.

Find out more about excise duty and duty drawback within the EU, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/excise-notice-207-excise-duty-drawback/excise-notice-207-excise-duty-drawback>.

Company and corporate tax in Belgium

You can transfer capital, dividends, proceeds of sale abroad without any limitations or taxes if you are a holder of registered foreign investments. You only need to complete certain minor bank formalities for statistical information.

The corporate tax rate in Belgium is 33.99%. In certain cases, a progressively-reduced rate applies.

Contact the DIT team in Belgium at: DITBelgium@mobile.trade.gov.uk or <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/departement-for-international-trade-belgium#contact-us>, to help find local tax advisers before entering into agreements in Belgium.

Customs and documentation in Belgium

Belgium is part of the EU single market (https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market_en). This allows the free movement of goods and services without customs checks or the need to pay duty (except excise).

You can send goods to Belgium without special customs documentation. However, excise or controlled goods will need extra documentation. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/beginners-guide-to-export-controls> for further information.

Although customs declarations are not generally required, traders must raise VAT invoices showing the VAT registration number of their customers and obtain evidence of shipment.

You have to:

- record all the goods sold to Belgium on your VAT return: <https://www.gov.uk/vat-returns>
- fill in an EC Sales List: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vat-how-to-report-your-eu-sales>
- fill in an Intrastat declaration if your total dispatches are worth more than £250,000: <https://www.gov.uk/intrastat>

Read HMRC's guidance on dispatching your goods within the EU, at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dispatching-your-goods-within-the-eu>. Also you can find out more about complying with Intrastat rules at: <https://www.gov.uk/intrastat>.

Belgian trade agreements

Belgium is a member of the EU and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Contact the SOLVIT team at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-single-market-centre> if you have market access issues relating to the operation of the single market.

Shipping your goods to Belgium

You can usually send samples of your goods through the postal system. Your local post office can also be used to export small orders to Belgium which can be easily packaged and are within the current weight restrictions.

If you are sending goods by post you must check that the items are not prohibited or restricted by mail services in the UK and in Belgium. You can find out more about prohibited or restricted items in Belgium on Royal Mail's website: <http://www.royalmail.com/belgium>.

When using postal services on a more commercial basis you must complete the required customs form with the commodity code that relates to your goods. You can find your commodity code in the UK Trade Tariff: <https://www.gov.uk/trade-tariff>.

You can contact the HMRC Tariff Classification Service for more help, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-600-classifying-your-imports-or-exports/notice-600-classifying-your-imports-or-exports#list-of-useful-contacts>.

You must get a Certificate of Posting (form C&E 132) from the post office branch and you should ensure it is date-stamped. This supports the VAT zero-rating of your goods. If you are exporting UK duty-paid excise goods, you will need the certificate of posting form to support a claim for reimbursement of the UK excise duty. See: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374167/ce132.pdf.

A pro-forma invoice (and licence, if you need one) must be attached to your consignment. Records of pro-forma invoices must be kept for four years.

For bigger orders, most businesses use a courier or freight forwarder. A forwarder will have extensive knowledge of documentation requirements, regulations, transportation costs and banking practices in Belgium.

You can find freight forwarding companies to help you transport your goods to Belgium via the British International Freight Association (BIFA) at: <http://www.bifa.org/home>, or the Freight Transport Association (FTA) at: <http://www.fta.co.uk/>.

Find out more about shipping your goods to international markets, at: <https://www.export.great.gov.uk/shipping-and-logistics/>.

Terms of delivery to Belgium

Your contract should include agreement on terms of delivery using Incoterms. See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/international-trade-paperwork-the-basics#international-trade-contracts-and-incoterms>.

UK Export Finance

The government can provide finance or credit insurance specifically to support UK exports through UK Export Finance (UKEF) – the UK's export credit agency. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-export-finance>. For up-to-date country-specific information on the support available see UKEF's cover policy and indicators for Belgium at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/country-cover-policy-and-indicators#belgium>.

[Source – DIT/UKEF/gov.uk]



BELGIUM

There are three official languages, French (Wallonia) used by 33% of the population – mostly in the south of the country, Dutch (Flanders) by more than 60% of the population, mostly in the north, and German by about 1% in the east.



Business etiquette, language & culture

Overview

There are three official languages, French (Wallonia) used by 33% of the population – mostly in the south of the country, Dutch (Flanders) by more than 60% of the population, mostly in the north, and German by about 1% in the east. Luxembourgish is also spoken by around 0.5% of the population, but has no official status. Knowledge of English is good among Dutch speakers, particularly in Brussels.

Business culture in Flanders and Wallonia broadly reflects that of the Netherlands and France respectively. An egalitarian society where over 97% of the population live in urban areas, yet still retain predominantly conservative values, the family plays a central role in most Belgians' lives.

Appearances are important to Belgians, particularly with their houses and personal appearance. You should dress smartly in order to impress in the business world, and punctuality is expected.

Avoid scheduling meetings during July and August, which are prime holiday months, the week before Easter and the week between Christmas and New Year. Meetings tend to be formal with a brief handshake the common greeting. Once a relationship has developed further, three kisses on the cheek is not uncommon (starting on the left), if one or both of the people are women.





Belgium public holidays

2017

Date:	Weekday:	Holiday:
1 st November	Wednesday	All Saint's Day
11 th November	Saturday	Armistice Day
25 th December	Monday	Christmas Day

2018

Date:	Weekday:	Holiday:
1 st January	Monday	New Year's Day
2 nd April	Monday	Easter Monday
1 st May	Tuesday	International Workers Day
10 th May	Thursday	Ascension Day
17 th May	Thursday	Constitution Day
21 st May	Monday	Whit Monday
21 st July	Saturday	National Day
15 th August	Wednesday	Assumption Day
1 st November	Thursday	All Saint's Day
11 th November	Sunday	Armistice Day
25 th December	Tuesday	Christmas Day

What are the challenges?

Overview

Doing business in Belgium is very similar to doing business in the UK. If your product or service is successful in the UK, there is a good chance you will be successful in Belgium. At present there are no major challenges to UK companies. Contact the DIT team in Brussels at: DITBelgium@mobile.trade.gov.uk or <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/department-for-international-trade-belgium#contact-us> for more help and advice on doing business in Belgium.

[Source – DIT/gov.uk]

Business risk

Bribery and corruption

Corruption is not an obstacle to doing business in Belgium, and incidents of corruption are relatively rare. However, corruption prevention efforts vary between the country's regional governments. Belgium has a well-developed legal framework, and the Criminal Code criminalises public and private bribery, passive and active bribery, and bribery of national and foreign public officials.

In 2016 Belgium was ranked 15th out of 176 countries in Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). See: http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016.

You should read the information provided on the UK Government's bribery and corruption page at: <https://www.gov.uk/anti-bribery-policy>.

Protecting your Intellectual Property (IP) in Belgium

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), as intangible assets, are a key factor in the competitiveness of your business in the global economy. IPR can protect your innovation from competitors and can also be an important source of cash flow through licensing deals or selling IP.

IPR infringement can lead to loss of business, revenue, reputation and competitive advantage unless you take steps to protect your IP both in the UK and abroad.

If you do business in more than one EU country, an EU trademark and a registered community design gives protection in all 28 member states.

Belgium adheres to all EU laws regarding copyright and intellectual property and the local branches of international watchdogs monitor breaches that may occur, including downloading of illegal software which mostly concerns the music/film industry.

You can apply for a Belgian patent at the Belgian Office for Intellectual Property (OPRI) at: http://economie.fgov.be/en/entreprises/Intellectual_property/Aspects_institutionnels_et_pratiques/OPRI/, or for a European patent through the European Patent Office (EPO), at: <https://www.epo.org/index.html>. However, a European patent needs to be validated by the Belgian patent office.

You can check out the European Commission site for more information on making a European patent valid in Belgium, at: http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/start-grow/intellectual-property-rights/belgium/index_en.htm. The UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has more detailed guidance on IP protection abroad. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-your-uk-intellectual-property-abroad>.

Cyber security

As host to NATO and a number of European institutions, Belgium is a prominent target for cyber-attacks. A series of high-profile incidents have hit Belgian Government, military and the country's biggest telecoms operator in recent years. The Belgian Cyber Security Centre is charged with the task of monitoring internet security in Belgium and advising business and the general public on issues related to online security and cybercrime.

Payment risks in Belgium

UKEF helps UK companies get paid by insuring against buyer default.

Be confident you will get paid for your export contract. Speak to one of UKEF's export finance advisers at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/find-an-export-finance-manager> for free and impartial advice on your insurance options, or contact one of UKEF's approved export insurance brokers at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-export-finance-insurance-list-of-approved-brokers/export-insurance-approved-brokers>.

Currency risks when exporting to Belgium

If you have not fixed your exchange rate you have not fixed your price.

You should consider whether the best option for you is to agree terms in Sterling or Euros in any contract. You should also consider getting expert financial advice on exchange rates (sometimes called FX).



> Clear, consistent content is vital to making your business understood overseas. **So don't leave it to chance.**

- > Well-known companies we already work with include: Serco, Experian, Intertek, IKEA and Caterpillar
- > For a structured approach to translation, please read the article that follows



Protecting your Reputation
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If you're reading this guide, the chances are you're either a seasoned exporter, or you're committed to investigating new export opportunities for your business. Whichever category you fall into, you'll have a good idea of the huge investment in time, effort and resources which is required for export success.

Your priority will be to get your product or service to market, and it's a fact of life that procurement of peripheral resources such as translation is often left to the last minute. In this article we'd like to demonstrate to you how building translation into the early planning stages of your export campaigns can pay dividends.

The internet, mobile connectivity and social media mean that now more than ever before customers, be they B2B or B2C, are buying goods and services within the context of a connected world of instant communication.

Buying decisions carried out in isolation of wider and constantly changing sector, economic or social contexts are a thing of the past. This means that increasingly any product or service has to be supported with professional technical, marketing or other contextual content.

As examples of this, exporters need their technical documentation to be easily assimilated, their marketing content to be compelling, and their website to be informative and memorable. Human resources departments on the other hand need sensitive localisation of policies & procedures in line with local legislation, corporate guidelines and house style. After all an international expansion strategy or company restructuring could easily be undermined by insensitive internal communication.

In non English-speaking markets, all of the above can be achieved by working with a reliable and professional translation partner.

So how can really good translation help build your export success:

- clear and accurate foreign-language branding and content will motivate foreign customers to buy from you
- consistent and harmonised messaging helps to convey and reinforce your company's values and ethos
- corporate and operational risk through poor quality communication and misunderstanding is eliminated
- overall brand integrity and reputation are enhanced



language services

Protecting your Reputation
Worldwide™

The following components are key to a successful translation project, and show how AST can make the process of internationalising outward-facing and internal communications simpler, more professional and more cost-effective:

Rigorous selection of translators

AST's ISO9001 certified and ISO17100 compliant processes mean that the company has approved sector-specialist translators whatever the language and deadline requirements, with experienced proofreaders to give the text precision and professionalism to really focus the reader's attention.

Translation memory technology

Client-facing documents produced periodically often contain sections which stay the same and sections which need updating. Similarly company websites and technical data or manuals can contain identical paragraphs and sections. Translation Memory technology is used in this situation to identify duplicate and legacy text. The duplicates are logged and reused – leading to reduced turnaround times and resulting

cost savings – with company wordings for products, processes, titles and descriptions translated consistently.

Terminology management

The key words used to describe your company's products, services and processes support your brand and identity. This is equally true in your foreign language communications. Unfortunately, once translated it is often easy to lose control of key terms, leading to uncertainty as to whether the translations are having the desired impact. AST's terminology management prevents this. Glossaries are maintained in multiple languages and client terminology is checked in each language by industry sector experts. As the glossary grows it can be reused with each new project, so client content is always on-message and brand integrity consistent.

So there's really no need for you to leave the "softer" aspects of your export campaign to chance. Using a professional translation company like AST provides a guarantee that your international content will be clear, consistent and effective. Whatever the language.

> YOU NEED YOUR SALES, TECHNICAL AND WEBSITE CONTENT TO BE **TRANSLATED BY EXPERTS!**

- > We're recognised as a UK leader for translating high profile, client-facing documents
- > All our translators are rigorously selected so your text will be translated by the best people in the business
- > We ensure you get premium quality translations every time, on time and within budget

No matter how urgent your assignment we can translate it.



BELGIUM

You should consider whether the best option for you is to agree terms in Sterling or Euros in any contract. You should also consider getting expert financial advice on exchange rates (sometimes called FX).



INSTITUTE OF EXPORT

& INTERNATIONAL TRADE

What does membership of the Institute of Export & International Trade mean?

To most the Institute of Export & International Trade simply plods away providing much needed qualifications to professionalise the industry however, did you realise that our helpline is one of the busiest and best in the industry? It's all part of membership and, if you need more than a phone call, we can put together a project to fulfil your needs. 2015 saw the launch of our Technical Help for Exporters that recognises the volume of legislation and regulation that covers our industry and gives you the comfort of knowing that if you don't know, you know someone who does!



Innovation is key to the success of the Institute and new ideas include our New Exporter package. This allows a business to enter a new market secure in the knowledge that they have an understanding of how they will operate and comply with any specific regulations and standards. Practical help and assistance is always available from the Institute so any additional training can be tailored to the business and the team that needs the knowledge.

The work of the IOE&IT also extends to representing membership views. Knowledge gained from our members' feedback, those who get involved with

the forums and Special Interest Groups, and those who attend our training courses or study with us, enables us to represent the industry at government levels in both the process and delivery of policy for international trade. These views also help us to ensure that the training programmes are effective and pertinent to the industry needs. Our Diploma in World Customs Compliance and Regulation is testament to the way we listen to our members' needs. This was driven by Nissan, Adidas, John Lewis and many others and will neatly dovetail into any AEO work ensuring that quality standards are met at manager and junior staffing levels.

Starting in 1935, the Institute committed itself to building competence and growing confidence for businesses trading in goods and services, which at the time, was a far reaching remit. Over the years this remit has seen us develop from simply providing training in short course format over a day, or perhaps two, into a fully-fledged Ofqual Awarding Organisation that operates specifically to deliver international trade education.



This status allows our individual members and corporates alike to be sure that they are part of a quality organisation with plans for growth integrated with a sustainable future for the global prosperity of UKPIc.

Part of our work includes mapping existing qualifications to roles and producing training needs analyses to ensure staffing progression and continuity. The need to upskill our workforce to match those of our competitors is a key element vital for growth. Our focus is on recognising that International trade needs specific knowledge, coupled with a strong belief that we must start to talk to

our young people at an earlier stage. We need to engage the next generation in thinking about how world trade works and how it will be great for British businesses. They need to know how items arrive in the shops which, in turn, will begin to spark ideas. As these young people join companies they will bring a fresh outlook that all things are possible especially if you operate globally.



Why not call us and get involved?

It has never been more important that we act as an industry to help – we need experts and commitment to professionalising international trade from businesses large and small – help your institute to stay ahead of the curve.

Institute of Export & International Trade

Export House
Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood,
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire,
PE2 6FT, UK
Telephone: +44(0)1733 - 404400
Fax: +44(0)1733 - 404444



Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) –
Director General, Institute of Export & International Trade

Focusing on qualifications.

A focus on qualifications - but why do we need them?

I'd like to tell you about my story, it's ok it won't take too long but I think it's similar to a lot of people that work in international trade.

I left school with no ambition to do anything other than help my mum make ends meet. I wanted to be a seamstress but we couldn't afford the material for the interview so I went into an accounts department at a large pharmaceutical company. Luckily for me they recognised a hard worker and asked me to work in various departments. After a year they asked me which one I like the best and without even thinking I said "international", and that was my career set out for me.

Working in international trade I found that I needed to understand so many different things - from how trade agreements impacted a sale to the legal aspects of trade and how different systems worked in terms of contract and disputes. Getting paid brought about a whole new set of issues and this really made me learn and think about the implications of offering credit and how it can be used to your advantage.

Things I learnt about logistics and the paperwork that was needed to support a trade were empirical and slowly I became sure of my knowledge. The problem was, that when I wanted to move on to the next company, I had nothing to show I had that knowledge. It was frustrating to find that the knowledge that I had accumulated over 11 years wasn't evidenced in any way and that no-one knew exactly what I knew. I was lucky enough to get my next job with a well-known Japanese computer company but it made me realise that if I wanted a career, I needed to get qualified.

So I spent the next two years, two nights a week at night school honing my skills and building a knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the trade I had entered "by the back door". Finally, exhausted but with a full understanding of how planning and control worked, I passed and became a Graduate Member of the Institute of Export & International Trade, suffix MIEEx (Grad) in 1991.

Well, many things have changed since then, as after many years of working in international trade, I took over at the helm, steering the qualifications and the Institute towards a better place. We have now gained Ofqual Awarding Organisation status for the qualifications and have worked hard on ensuring we are ready for the next 80 years of representing the industry and standing as guardian of professional standards in international trade.

OFQUAL* awarding status is hard earned and we are proud to be the only professional body operating in this international trade environment.

IOE&IT Qualifications in brief

www.export.org.uk/page/qualifications

- Level 1 Young International Trader
(Available electronically)
- Level 2 International Trade Logistic Operations **
- Level 3 Certificate of International Trade
Certified International Trade Adviser
- Level 4 Advanced Certificate in
International Trade
- Level 5 Diploma in International Trade
Diploma in World Customs
Compliance and Regulations
- Level 6 Foundation Degree jointly
delivered with *** Anglia Ruskin
University
**Higher Apprenticeship in
International Trade - the first
so far.**

Our courses at level 3 onwards are delivered online using a blended learning technique which involves the support of an expert tutor for each topic. The IOE&IT online campus offers a range of learning tools, from power-point presentations and videos to online chats and forums for the students. The Institute has a success rate of 95% in helping our students through these academic programmes.

The Advanced Certificate in International Trade - Elective modules have been added to the level 4 Advanced Certificate syllabus. In addition to the three core modules of Business Environment, Market Research & Marketing and Finance of International Trade, students can now choose a fourth elective module from:

- a. International Physical Distribution
- b. Selling Services, Skills and Software Overseas
- c. Or one of:
 - i. Doing business & communicating in Arabic speaking markets
 - ii. Doing business & communicating in Spanish speaking markets
 - iii. Doing business & communicating in German markets
 - iv. Doing business & communicating in Chinese markets
 - v. Doing business & communicating in Russian markets

The series of modules above carry language skills training, the focus being on basic business language needed and business culture

Finally, eBusiness internationally will be launched summer 2016.

The Diploma in International Trade - level 5 is equivalent to the second year of a degree and is accepted as entry level for:-

BSc (Hons) in Management Practice - International Trade with Plymouth University
-Online 24 months

MSc International Trade, Strategy and Operations with Warwick University - 36 months part residential

www.export.org.uk/page/qualifications will give you more detail and a contact who will talk you through your options.

*The OFQUAL Register of Regulated Qualifications contains details of Recognised Awarding Organisations and Regulated Qualifications in England (Ofqual), Wales (Welsh Government) and Northern Ireland (Ofqual for vocational qualifications and CCEA Accreditation for all other qualifications).

** International Trade Logistic Operations is delivered through our approved centres

*** Anglia Ruskin University is Entrepreneurial University of the Year



British Embassy Brussels

The British Embassy in Brussels develop and maintain relations between the UK and Belgium.

In close liaison with British and Belgian businesses, they improve trade and investment performance and develop their commercial diplomacy to best serve Britain's economic interests and prosperity. The Embassy also works with the Belgian authorities on justice and home affairs, science and innovation, environment and climate change, and international crisis management. Additionally, the Embassy and its Consulate work on delivering a high quality consular assistance service to British nationals.

British Consulate Brussels: Services for British nationals

Urgent assistance

If you are in Belgium and you urgently need help (e.g. if you have been attacked, arrested or there has been a death), call + 32 2 287 62 11. If you are in the UK and concerned about a British national in Belgium, call 020 7008 1500.

Get or renew a passport

The British Embassy cannot help with passport enquiries. Contact Her Majesty's Passport Office if you need help, here: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-passport-office

If you cannot get a new or replacement passport in time to travel, you may be able to get an emergency travel document, here: www.gov.uk/emergency-travel-document

Get an emergency travel document

You can apply for an emergency travel document if you are abroad and your passport has been lost or stolen, damaged or expired, and you cannot get a new or

replacement passport in time to travel, here: www.gov.uk/renew-adult-passport

If you are due to travel in the next 24 hours, contact the British Embassy in Brussels as soon as possible.

Apply online for an emergency travel document if you:

- are over 16 years old and
- are a British citizen and
- have previously owned a British passport

Contact the Embassy to apply for an emergency travel document if you are:

- over 16 years old but have not owned a British passport before or
- not a British citizen or
- applying for a child under 16 years old

Once you have contacted the Embassy, you will be advised to make an appointment to apply for an emergency travel document at the British Embassy Brussels, here: www.consular-appointments.service.gov.uk/fco/#/british-embassy-brussels/issuing-an-emergency-travel-document/slot_picker

Get a visa

The British Embassy cannot help with visa enquiries.

If you are not a British national, you may need a visa to travel to the UK. Check if you need a UK visa here: www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa

If you are a British national travelling abroad and need to apply for a visa to visit a particular country or check if you need a visa,

see the entry requirements on their foreign travel advice for the country you want to visit here: www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

For more information on visas, see UK visas and immigration here: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration

Notarial and documentary services

They may be able to offer notarial services, including Administer an oath, affirmation or affidavit; make a certified copy of a document (British passports only). See the full list of notarial and documentary services they provide here: www.gov.uk/guidance/notarial-and-documentary-services-guide-for-belgium

Legalisation services

How to get official confirmation that your UK public documentation is genuine so it can be accepted by foreign authorities, see: www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised. The UK does not require any documents to be legalised for use within the UK.

Local service providers

Use their list of local suppliers and services if you need help in Belgium. Please note that inclusion in this list does not constitute official endorsement by the British Embassy or the UK Government.

- Medical facilities and practitioners:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-list-of-medical-facilitiespractitioners

How else the British Embassy in Brussels can help

In addition to the services listed above they can also:

- provide information about transferring funds
- provide appropriate help if you have suffered rape or serious assault, are a victim of other crime, or are in hospital

- help people with mental illness
- offer support and help in a range of other cases, such as child abductions, missing people and kidnapping
- contact family or friends for you if you want
- make special arrangements in cases of terrorism, civil disturbances or natural disasters or other crises abroad

For more information on the services they can provide, see Support for British nationals abroad: A guide here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide

Consular fees

The British Embassy charge fees for some of their services. See the full list of consular fees in Belgium here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/belgium-consular-fees

British Embassy Brussels

Avenue d'Auderghem 10
1040 Brussels
Belgium

Telephone: (+32) 2 287 62 11

Fax: (+32) 2 287 62 50

Email: public.brussels@fco.gov.uk

Opening Hours:

www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassybrussels/office/british-embassy

British Consulate Brussels

Avenue d'Auderghem 10
1040 Brussels
Belgium

Telephone: + 32 2 287 62 11 - 24/7

Email: consularsection.brussels@fco.gov.uk

Opening Hours:

www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-brussels/office/british-consulate



The Institute of Export & International Trade

Export House
Minerva Business Park
Lynch Wood
Peterborough
PE2 6FT, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 1733 404400

Website: www.export.org.uk



UK Export Finance

UK Export Finance is the UK's export credit agency, serving UK companies of all sizes. We help by providing insurance to exporters and guarantees to banks to share the risks of providing export finance. In addition, we can make loans to overseas buyers of goods and services from the UK.

In the past five years, we have provided:

- £14 billion worth of support for UK exports;
- direct support for more than 300 customers supported directly, with many thousands more benefiting through export supply chains;
- nearly 2000 individual guarantees, loans or insurance policies.

UK Export Finance is the operating name of the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD).

For more information and to arrange a free consultation with an Export Finance Adviser, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-export-finance>

New business enquiries:

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7271 8010

Email: customer.service@ukef.gsi.gov.uk



British Expertise

23 Grafton Street, London W1S 4EY

Tel: +44 (0)20 7824 1920

Fax: +44 (0)20 7824 1929

<http://www.britishexpertise.org/bx/pages/bx.php>



Department for International Trade (DIT):

If you have a specific enquiry about the Belgian market which is not addressed by the information in this guide, you may contact:

Email: enquiries@trade.gsi.gov.uk

Tel: +44 (0)20 7215 8000

Fax: +44 (0)141 228 3693

Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade

Otherwise contact the DIT team in Brussels directly, for more information and advice on opportunities for doing business in Belgium:

DIT Belgium

10 Avenue d'Auderghem/Oudergemsesteenweg
B-1040 Brussels Belgium

Email: DITBelgium@mobile.trade.gov.uk



British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium

Boulevard Bischoffsheim, 11 Bruxelles

Telephone: +32 2 540 90 30

Website: <http://britishchamber.be/>

Alexandra Trandafir

Business & Trade Executive

Tel: +32 (0)2 613 28 53

Email: alexandra@britishchamber.be

Language Services



AST Language Services Ltd

Unit 8, Ayr Street, Nottingham NG7 4FX
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)115 970 5633

Fax: +44 (0)845 051 8780

Email: office@astls.co.uk

www.astlanguage.com

Professional Business Services



Group S

Avenue Fonsny 40
1060

Brussels
Belgium

Tel: +32 2 507 18 80

Email: international@groups.be

www.groups.be

Contact name: Hugues Thibaut

Ecommerce / Logistics



Landmark Global – a bpost company

Unit A1 Parkway Heston
Cranford Lane

Heston
Middlesex
TW59QA
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 207 04 21 300

Website: www.landmarkglobal.com

Contact name: Mr. Jonathan Simons,
Director Sales

Email: jsimons@landmarkglobal.com

Relocation



Santa Fe Relocation Services

Jan Baptist Vinkstraat 9
B-3070 Kortenbergh

Brussels
Belgium

Tel: +32 2757 9285

Email: brussels@santaferelo.com

Website: www.santaferelo.com/

Contact name: Joost Schramme
Regional Sales & Marketing Director
BeNeLux

Tel: +32 475 32 79 59

Email: joost.schramme@santaferelo.com

**Servcorp**

European Quarter
Schuman Roundabout, 2-4
Levels 5 & 6
1040 Brussels
Belgium

Tel: +32 2 403 38 50

Website: www.servcorp.be/en

Legal / Law

**Stibbe**

Brussels office:
Central Plaza
Loksumstraat 25 Rue de Loxum
1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 533 52 11

Fax: +32 2 533 52 12

Email: brussels@stibbe.com

Stibbe

London office:
53 New Broad Street
London EC2M 1JJ United Kingdom

Telephone: +44 207 151 09 20

Email: london@stibbe.com

Contact Person:

Hendrik Viaene
Partner Brussels

Telephone: +32 2 533 52 38

Email: hendrik.viaene@stibbe.com

Website: www.stibbe.com

Education / School

**The British School of Brussels (BSB)**

Pater Dupierreuxlaan 1
3080
TERVUREN
Belgium

Telephone: +32 (2) 766 0430

Email: admissions@britishschool.be

Website: www.britishschool.be

Principal: Ms Melanie Warnes

Contact: Ms Kim Burgess, External
Relations Director

Useful links

Country information:

BBC Website:

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

FCO Country Profile:

www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Culture and communications:

ICC – The international language association:

www.icc-languages.eu/links/156-the-national-centre-for-languages-cilt

Customs and regulations:

HM Revenue & Customs:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs

Economic information:

The Economist:

www.economist.com/topics

Trading Economics:

www.tradingeconomics.com

Export control:

Export Control Organisation:

www.gov.uk/guidance/beginners-guide-to-export-controls

Export finance and insurance:

British Insurance Brokers Association (BIBA):

www.biba.org.uk

UK Export Finance (formerly ECGD):

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-export-finance

Intellectual Property:

Intellectual Property Office:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO):

www.wipo.int/treaties/en/text.jsp?file_id=288514

Standards and technical regulations:

British Standards Institution (BSI):

www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/

Export Control Organisation (ECO):

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/export-control-organisation

Intellectual Property Office:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office

National Physical Laboratory:

www.npl.co.uk/

Trade statistics:

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC):

www.uktradeinfo.com/statistics/buildyourowntables/pages/table.aspx

National Statistics Information:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements

Office for National Statistics:

www.ons.gov.uk/

Trade shows:

British Expertise Events:

www.britisheexpertise.org/bx/pages/bx.php

EventsEye.com online database:

www.eventseye.com

DIT Events Portal:

www.events.trade.gov.uk/

Travel advice:

FCO Travel:

www.gov.uk/browse/abroad

FCO Foreign Travel Insurance:

www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance

Healthcare abroad:

Travel health:

www.travelhealth.co.uk

TravelHealthPro:

travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries

NHS (Scotland):

www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx

NHS Choices:

www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Health-careabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx

International trade:

British Chambers of Commerce (BCC):

www.britishchambers.org.uk

British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium:

britishchamber.be/

British Council:

www.britishcouncil.org

British Expertise:

www.britisheexpertise.org/bx/pages/bx.php

British Franchise Association:

www.thebfa.org/international

British International Freight Association:

www.bifa.org/home

Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI):

www.cpni.gov.uk/

Confederation of British Industry (CBI):

www.cbi.org.uk

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS):

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy

Department for International Trade (DIT):

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade

DIT e-exporting programme:

www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting

Export Britain:

exportbritain.org.uk/

Exporting is GREAT:

www.export.great.gov.uk/

Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO):

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office

Freight Transport Association:

www.fta.co.uk

Institute of Directors (IoD):

www.iod.com



Getting UK businesses ready to sell overseas

What is Open to Export?

Open to Export is the online community helping UK businesses get ready to sell overseas. Backed by Government and business, we are a not for profit social enterprise dedicated to helping UK companies grow through export.



Getting started >



Selecting a market >



Reaching customers >



Pricing and getting paid >



Delivery and documentation >

For more information visit opentoexport.com

Institute of Export & International Trade (IOE&IT):
www.export.org.uk

International Monetary Fund (IMF):
www.imf.org/external/index.htm

Market Access database:
madb.europa.eu/madb/indexPubli.htm

Open to Export:
opentoexport.com/

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):
www.oecd.org/

Overseas business risk:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/overseas-business-risk

Transparency International:
www.transparency.org/

UK Trade Tariff:
www.gov.uk/trade-tariff

UK Visas:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration

World Bank Group economy rankings:
www.doingbusiness.org/rankings

World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report:
www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2016-2017-1

Belgian websites:

Belgian Bureau for Standardisation (NBN):
www.nbn.be/en

Belgian Office for Intellectual Property (OPRI):
economie.fgov.be/en/entreprises/Intellectual_property/Aspects_institutionnels_et_pratiques/OPRI/

British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium:
britishchamber.be/

British Embassy in Brussels:
www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-brussels

Business Belgium:
www.business.belgium.be/en/

Federal Public Service (FPS) – Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue:
www.employment.belgium.be/home.aspx

Federal Public Service (FPS) – Finance:
finance.belgium.be/en

Federal Public Service (FPS) – Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment:
www.health.belgium.be/en

Federal Public Service (FPS) – Interior (IBZ):
ibz.be/

Federal Public Service (FPS) – Justice:
justitie.belgium.be/language_selection?destination=%3cfont%3e

Federal Public Service (FPS) – Social Security:
socialsecurity.belgium.be/en

Flanders Investment and Trade:
www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com/invest/en

Invest in Brussels:
www.investinbrussels.com/en/

Invest in Wallonia:
www.investinwallonia.be/?lang=en

‘Le Soir’ road reports:
www.lesoir.be/trafic

ABOUT US

Launched in 2007, Start Up Overseas has become the definitive online resource for companies who are looking to expand internationally, export products or set up overseas operations.

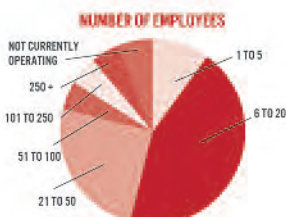
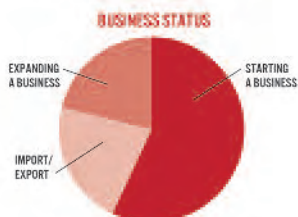
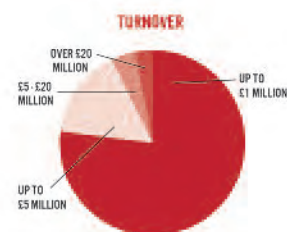
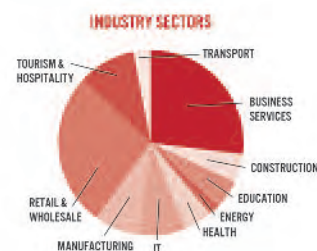
We have all the information you will need to trade in 60 countries.

LOOKING FOR HELP DOING BUSINESS IN BELGIUM?

You are not alone. In January 2017, 29,064 companies used Start Up Overseas to find up to date information – and to find service providers who could help.

WHY DO COMPANIES USE START UP OVERSEAS?

- **Country Guides** – the essential information you will need to trade on foreign soil.
- **Business Directory** – A helpful directory giving you the tools and contacts to run your business overseas.
- **Ask the Expert** – Experts are waiting to answer your questions
- **Start Up Overseas Forum** – Join our virtual community. Share knowledge & advice with people facing similar issues to you.
- **Editors News** – Subscribe to our free newsletter, and keep completely up to date with all the developments in international trade.



WHAT OUR ADVERTISERS SAY:

Accounting Advantage experience with Startupoverseas has been positive, since we have been able to help people to see Portugal as a potential market, and develop their business.

Startupoverseas provides us with the opportunity we need to reach other markets. Thank you for that.

Claudia de Oliveira
Azevedo Accounting Advantage

The startupoverseas website is a great platform to interact directly with entrepreneurs and SME's and has generated a number of good leads from the UK and Asia for us.

Nadia Rinawi RAK Free Trade Zone



ADVERTISE WITH US

Launched in 2007, StartupOverseas is the first port of call for companies looking to trade internationally for the first time.

Over 25,000 unique visitors a month use our website to source information, and to find suppliers who can help them achieve their aims.

If your company provides a service to organisations entering new markets, then advertising on www.startupoverseas.co.uk can introduce you to new customers.

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1-2-1 ADVICE & INTERACTIVE FEATURES

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www.goinggloballive.co.uk

Going Global runs every May at the ExCeL in London and every November at the Olympia in London. For the dates of the next event, please visit www.goinggloballive.co.uk

Trade shows

A trade show is a method of promoting a business through the exhibition of goods and services, an organised exhibition of products, based on a central theme, where manufacturers meet to show their products to potential buyers.

Taking part in overseas exhibitions is an effective way for you to test markets, attract customers, appoint agents or distributors and make sales. DIT's Tradeshows Access Programme (TAP) provides grant support for eligible SME firms to attend trade shows overseas.

Participation is usually as part of a group, a great advantage for inexperienced businesses, and is usually led by one of DIT's Accredited Trade Associations (ATOs). ATOs work with DIT to raise the profile of UK groups and sectors at key exhibitions.

IOE&IT's events:
[www.export.org.uk/events/
event_list.asp](http://www.export.org.uk/events/event_list.asp)

10 Times (formerly
BizTradeShows.com):
www.10times.com/belgium

British Expertise Events:
[www.britishexpertise.org/bx/
pages/bx_events.php](http://www.britishexpertise.org/bx/
pages/bx_events.php)

EventsEye.com online database:
www.eventseye.com

DIT online events search facility:
www.events.trade.gov.uk





Simon Chicken – Event Director of Going Global Live: Europe's leading event for expanding your business overseas

Hi Simon, can you tell us about how Going Global Live started?

The Prysm Group had been running The Business Show for 10 years. TheBusiness Show is Europe's largest event helping UK based companies grow domestically. It became apparent that many of our 20,000+ visitors were looking to expand internationally. There was a need, and there was a gap in the market, so we launched Going Global Live at ExCeL in November 2014, and we've done 2 events each year ever since. Going Global Live takes place twice a year, in May and November. For more information including event dates, visit the website at: www.goinggloballive.co.uk

What can people expect to find at Going Global Live?

Think of it as a trade show and conference. Visitors who come to the event will get up to date advice from world leading experts on the most attractive markets and overseas opportunities, and be able to speak to suppliers & service providers who can help with the challenging project of international expansion.



Why is it important for SMEs to attend the event?

Research has shown businesses are 11% more likely to survive if they export their products, Great Britain is currently in a fantastic position where we have good trade deals in place and British products are in high demand. At Going Global Live we put all the suppliers and services companies will need to meet in order for them to achieve international expansion, all under one roof. Trying to meet with all of these people would take years to arrange and do, at the event you can do it in 2 days! If you are serious about taking your business to the next level, the event is a must attend.



If you were to start trading in a new market, which country would that be and why?

Iran. This is a massive market which is just opening up, and I would want to get there before my competitors. More importantly, I need an excuse to put a trip to Shiraz on business expenses. A city that is famous for poetry, roses and wine needs to be visited. I'm guessing the food is unbelievable too.



Finally, what are your aims going forward?

We've reached a point where the event has firmly established itself. Visitors leave our events with advice and knowledge they need to grow their company's further, however we still feel the event can reach a whole new height. So we're expanding the team and increasing the size of the exhibition. The show has the potential to be four times the size it is now, in terms number of exhibitors, seminars, and visitors at the event.





N O R T H
S E A

N

Knokke

Oostende

Brugge

Gent

F I a n
Schelde

Sint-Niklaas

Kortrijk

Leie
Schelde

Aalst

BRUSSELS

B E L

Mons

La Louvière

F R A N C E

ETHERLANDS

Antwerp

Brussels

Mechelen

Leuven

Wain-l'Alleud

Hasselt

GERMANY

Liège

GIUM

Namur

Charleroi

Wallonia

Malmedy

Ardennes

Bastogne

LUXEMBOURG

Arlon

LUXEMBOURG

0 10 20 30 km
0 10 20 30 mi

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Doing Business in Belgium Guide **Quick Facts**

Location: Western Europe, bordering the North Sea, between France and the Netherlands

Area: 30,528 km²

Population: 11.3 million

Urban population: 97.9%

Capital city: Brussels (Pop: 1.168 million)

GDP per capita: US \$41,283.3

Language(s): Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%, German (official) less than 1%

Religion: Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant and other Christian 2.5%, Jewish 2.5%, Muslim 5%, Buddhist 0.3%, atheist 9.2%, none 32.6% (2009 est.)

Government: federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy

Legal system: civil law system based on the French Civil Code; note - Belgian law continues to be modified in conformance with the legislative norms mandated by the European Union; judicial review of legislative acts

Currency: Euro (EUR / €)

Climate: temperate; mild winters, cool summers; rainy, humid, cloudy

Natural resources: construction materials, silica sand, carbonates, arable land

Natural hazards: flooding is a threat along rivers and in areas of reclaimed coastal land, protected from the sea by concrete dikes

Time difference: UTC+1

Internet country code: .be

National holiday: Belgian National Day (ascension to the throne of King LEOPOLD I), 21 July (1831)

National symbols: lion; national colours: red, black, yellow

[Source: FCO Economics Unit (April 2017), CIA World Factbook (July 2017)]



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