Lloyds Bank Trade Insights

Exploring opportunities overseas



At a glance

- The ever-increasing number of opportunities ready to be seized overseas mean that UK companies are better able to expand and flourish when they export, reaching more buyers.
- The UK Government's ambition to boost the value of UK exports to £1 trillion by 2030, coupled with the removal of outstanding trade barriers, mean that export conditions are becoming more favourable and businesses are feeling more optimistic about their trading prospects.
- The changing geopolitical and macroeconomic landscape means that emerging and developing markets in the Indo-Pacific region or Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, offer new, lucrative and dynamic opportunities for UK firms to reach new consumers worldwide.
- The business benefits of exporting are clear, with many companies acknowledging that exporting has not only caused a surge in profits, but has also driven innovation and digital transformation, enabled them to increase their headcount and prompted them to expand their product range.
- Exporting can help to mitigate the risk of unpredictability within the domestic market, smooth out the workflow and counter issues such as the seasonality of sales.
- Businesses can prepare to export for the first time and look at new markets to enter if they already export. In this report, we address the questions that firms need to consider in order to make the transformation from a domestic business into a thriving international exporter.



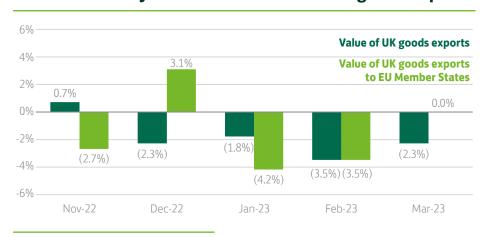
Exploring opportunities overseas

The race to £1 trillion by 2030: From optimism to opportunity

Embedded in a rich history steeped in trade and commerce, the UK has significant potential when it comes to exporting.

The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) most recent Annual Business Survey of Exporters and Importers revealed that just over 1 in every 10 UK businesses¹ (11.4%) are involved in exporting; a number that had only risen by 0.7% in the preceding three years. As highlighted in the Lloyds Bank Business Barometer earlier in the year, the story behind this figure is perhaps more complicated than it seems. Factors such as the economic landscape, geopolitical circumstances, logistical issues and red tape through to difficulties finding markets and an uncertainty of how to export successfully have resulted in a focus on domestic commerce.

Chart 1: A steady decline in the value of UK goods exports



Source: ONS - Balance of payments

The UK Government has recognised the economic potential of supporting businesses in their export journeys and published their <u>Made in the UK, Sold to the World</u>² export plan in 2021. The strategy aims to "fire the starting gun on the Race to a Trillion" – the Government's plan to encourage UK businesses to increase the value of exports to the £1 trillion mark by 2030 – and help change the focus of firms so that all businesses see their goods and services as potential exports.

While this is a sentiment shared by Lloyds Bank, the road ahead to achieving this target will undoubtedly prove to be challenging. Recent months have witnessed a steady decline in the value of UK goods exports with March 2023 (-2.3%), February 2023 (-3.5%), January 2023 (-1.8%) and December 2022 (-2.3%) all showing figures in the red. In fact, the last month that saw a growth in the value of UK exports was November 2022, which represented a 0.7% increase, fuelled in part by a 4.2% increase in exports to non-EU countries.

The UK's departure from the European Union has inevitably had an impact upon the value of goods being exported to Europe in the near term. In 2023, both January (-4.2%) and February (-3.5%) saw significant drops in the value of exports to EU Member States. In March, conditions appeared to stabilise³ – as emphasised by a 0% change in value – however a full understanding of how the EU-UK trade agreement – cited upon creation as the largest bilateral trade pact⁴ in history – is impacting trade across the Channel is still being developed.

What can be said, however, is that the changing trading relationship with Europe means that the world is now a level playing field for UK businesses looking to make the most of overseas markets. In a move they predict will boost UK exports by £75 billion per year, the Government has made a concerted effort to remove 175 trade barriers across 61 countries, 5 helping businesses export more freely and invest in global markets. This includes the

removal of unnecessary legal, regulatory, or administrative burdens such as out-of-date labelling and licensing requirements. As a result of the UK's new status, product acceptance and tariffs have become more equal in markets around the world so that the 90% of businesses that don't export – and indeed, the 10% that already do – have a broader choice of export destinations to choose from, whether that's Belgium or Belize, Tallinn or Tokyo.

What's more, not only are new markets becoming more viable as export destinations for UK businesses, they're also becoming more attractive with the rise of the emerging affluent. By 2050, it's estimated that the global middle class could reach 3.5 billion people⁶ – equivalent to one in every three people – and over half of these people are likely to live in China or the wider Indo-Pacific region. This means that the coming decades will offer UK firms the opportunity to find more lucrative markets with wealthier consumers.

55%

of UK companies reported a higher level of confidence in their trading prospects in April 2023, compared to 43% in November 20229

The process of exporting is also likely to become smoother with the introduction of the Electronic Trade Documents Bill (ETDB), due to receive Royal Assent in 2023. It is estimated that in any given year, more than 28 billion pieces of paper⁷ are exchanged in the course of trade transactions. By digitising the process, the ETDB is estimated to reduce bureaucracy for businesses looking to trade, making efficiency savings worth £224 billion.8 In parallel, the UK is not alone in their journey to make trade digital. France, Germany, Japan and the US are also removing legal barriers to trade, and the Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records looks set to allow the use of transferable trade documents in electronic form across the Commonwealth. The global drive towards trade digitisation will ultimately result in exporting becoming easier and more attractive for businesses.

Taking these factors into account, it is clear that there is a new world of export potential on the doorstep for businesses

in the UK. The spectrum of opportunity is reflected in an increase in business optimism about trading prospects, with the number of UK businesses reporting a higher level of confidence in their trading prospects rising from 43% in November 2022 to 55% in April 2023.9 The UK Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) Export Climate Index – a trade-weighted measure of global economic growth also reflected positive export conditions, rising from 49.0 in December 2022 to the neutral 50.0 threshold in January 2023. In the subsequent months, this figure continued to rise, to 52.0 in February, 52.5 in March 2023 and again to 53.1 in April, 10 not simply indicating a stabilisation of export conditions, but instead a significant improvement. In fact April's figure represented the fastest improvement in UK export conditions since May 2022 – once again confirming that with a bright future ahead, now is the time to be considering how you can transform your business into one that is both internationally connected and engaged in exporting.

Chart 2: UK Export Climate Index monthly trend vs world export trends



Source: Lloyds Bank UK Sector Tracker, May 2023

The benefits are not only financial¹⁴

4 in 5 businesses agreed that exporting has:



Fuelled innovation



Increased headcount



Expanded product range



Driven digital transformation

80% agreed that exporting is critical to their business' future

The astute exporter

While there are clear opportunities for UK firms to bring their products to new markets, what are the business benefits of doing so?

Accessing international markets means access to more customers, which can help boost resilience in the face of domestic turbulence and volatility. According to the ONS, 7 in every 10 businesses (71%)¹¹ reported some form of concern in May 2023. The main concerns noted included energy prices (18%) and inflation of the prices of goods and services (16%). With unpredictability in the domestic market being the dominant theme for the foreseeable future, businesses can broaden their horizons and diversify their operations by exporting goods and services to other markets. Gaining access to international markets means access to significantly more customers – the UK represents just 1% of the global population – as well as the ability to identify new opportunities for growth. Put simply, exporting can maximise exposure to your offering

while minimising risk and disruption.

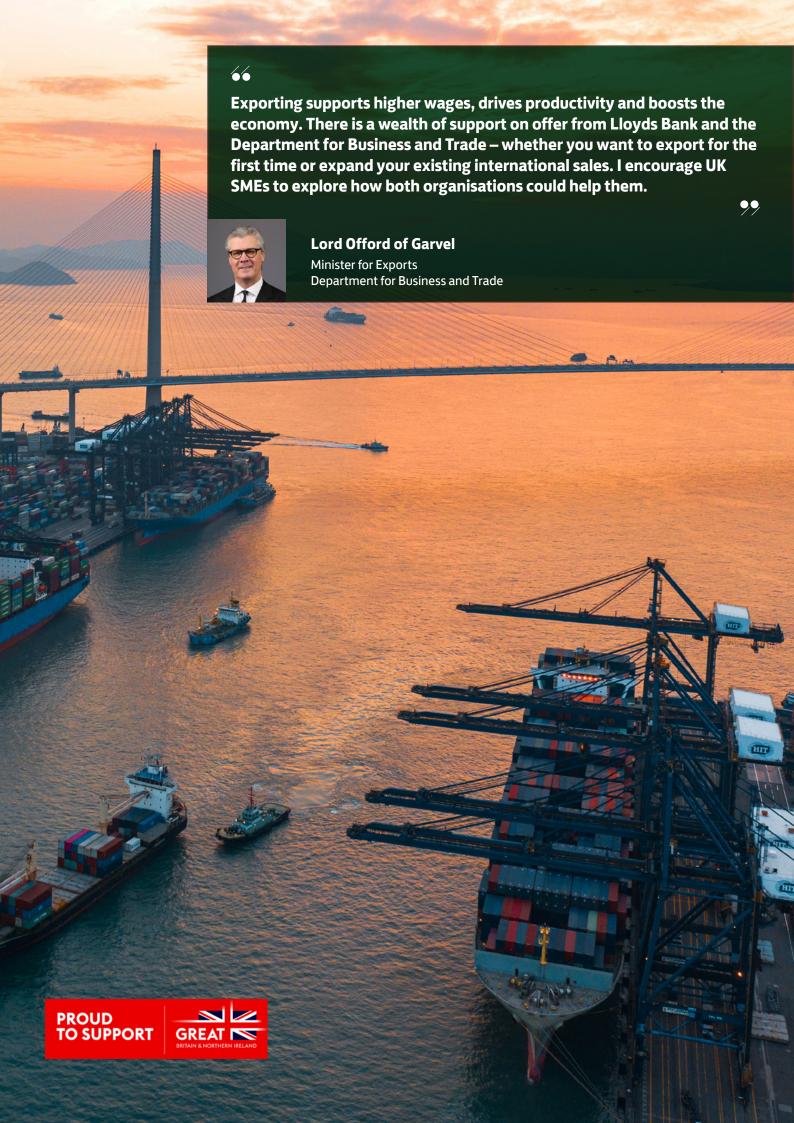
The evidence supports this hypothesis. Businesses that export tend to be more successful; on average, exporters tend to grow at a rate of 15.2%, compared to businesses with a domestic focus, which grow by 8.4%. Of course, this is not to say that exporting directly results in faster growth. While this may be the case, it's also true that businesses that export are often more agile, astute, and willing to pursue potentially lucrative opportunities. In this sense they are 'accidental' exporters, in that while their original business plan may not have included any references to exploring new markets, their own pursuit of relevant and profitable opportunities has lead to them finding customers overseas.

Whichever way you look at the issue, the conclusion is the same: exporting is financially rewarding. Research on behalf of UK Export Finance (UKEF), the UK's export credit agency, suggests that 42% of SMEs who export have seen profits surge by up to 20%, 12 and 1 in 10 (9%) believe the profit increase to be over 20%. Another piece of research from the Institute of Export and International Trade (IOE&IT)¹³ has drawn similar conclusions, suggesting

that for firms that export, almost half (49%) of their revenue comes directly from export sales. The argument is even stronger as the size of the business increases; 97% of businesses with over 500 employees agreed that exporting has boosted their revenue, while 96% said that cross-border trade has eased the pressure of doing business in the UK.

What's more, the benefits are not just financial. The same study found that 4 in 5 businesses agreed that **exporting has** fuelled innovation (82%), increased their headcount (79%), inspired them to widen their product range (80%), and driven digital transformation in their business (81%). The same proportion of firms (80%) agreed that exporting is critical to their business' future.

It can also have significant advantages from a risk mitigation point of view. Operating across multiple international markets can help to diversify revenue streams, expand customer bases, provide protection from domestic unpredictability, counter sales seasonality and smooth-out the annual workflow.



Open to the world

Given that UK firms now have a global choice when it comes to selecting export destinations, the question then turns to where businesses should be focusing their efforts. While Europe and the United States have traditionally represented strong export markets, global dynamics are shifting and lucrative opportunities are opening up in emerging high-growth markets further afield. It is no longer the case that companies in the UK need to focus on nearer - or even English-speaking **destinations**. In fact, demand for goods and services from the UK is, in some sectors, higher in countries where English isn't the primary language. What's more, the weakening of Pound Sterling (GBP) as a currency can be a strength for exporters, since it makes UK goods more affordable abroad.

The UK Government's campaign — Made in the UK, Sold to the World¹⁴ — aims to help businesses make the most of the UK's free trade agreements and acknowledges that placing stronger emphasis on developing economies will be a critical step in ensuring that the value of UK exports reaches the £1 trillion mark by 2030. According to the plan, China, India, Brazil, Russia, Mexico and Turkey are collectively expected to equal the G7's share of global import demand by 2050.

The Indo-Pacific region will play a particularly important role in this economic rebalancing. According to the UK Government, growth in the region is "shifting the world's centre of gravity eastwards" and by 2050, the region is expected to account for 56% of global economic growth in real terms. 15 In March 2023, it was announced that the UK would be joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), 16 a significant trade bloc in the Indo-Pacific region which now has a total GDP of £11 trillion. UK exports to CPTPP countries in the year preceding September 2022

already totalled £60.5 billion and the reduction in tariffs as a result of the UK's membership makes it likely that this figure will grow.

High levels of growth are also being seen within emerging markets in Sub-Saharan Africa. With over 1.2 billion inhabitants -50% of whom are young people countries in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe represent dynamic markets with good links to the UK and moderate-to-strong levels of demand for UK goods and services. Markets of particular note include Nigeria, which is already the UK's 30th largest export market, and <u>Côte d'Ivoire</u>, ¹⁷ which recently signed a trade-focused Economic Partnership Agreement with the UK.18 All of the aforementioned countries are Member States within the newly formed African Continental Free <u>Trade Area (AfCFTA)</u>, ¹⁹ the creation of which was supported by the UK.20 While UK to Africa exports totalled £16.5 billion in 2021, this represented just 2.6% of UK

exports as a whole. Given the highgrowth nature of many countries in the region, this could indicate that there is further potential for UK firms to identify export opportunities within the African continent.

The United States, of course, still continues to represent a wealth of export opportunities for British businesses. According to the United Nations COMTRADE database, 22 the value of UK exports to the US stood at \$64.6 billion (£52.1 billion)²² in 2022, making them our second largest export market after the EU. According to the Department for Business and Trade,²³ the low regulatory barriers, minimal language barriers and access to the global supply chain make the US an attractive market for British exporters. What's more, recent initiatives such as the Atlantic Declaration, 24 an economic partnership between the UK and the US, aims to remove trade barriers while also aligning the two counties' strategies on defence and data protection.



For many businesses, the exporting journey is as challenging as it is undoubtedly rewarding. As the UK government's export credit agency, UK Export Finance can help businesses large and small across the country navigate their export challenges with confidence.

Working alongside private sector lenders like Lloyds Bank, we can support UK exporters by offering attractive financing terms to their buyers, helping them access working capital, and insuring them so they get paid.



Tim ReidChief Executive Officer,
UK Export Finance

Supporting the trade journey

Prior to beginning your export journey – or entering a new market if you already export – there are a series of key questions to ask in order to ensure that your business is prepared for any eventuality. To support you in your preparation, Lloyds Bank has published a wealth of information, 25 including a flowchart 26 to guide you through the process.

What are the main questions I need to consider?

- Does your business have the necessary financial support to develop your export market potential?
 - If not, can you speak to your bank about the support they can offer?
- Are you receiving a high number of overseas enquiries about your product?
 - If not, do you have another indicator of demand?
- Do you have the necessary production capacity, human resources, skills and knowledge to meet demand?
- Do the goods that you're considering exporting meet the necessary overseas regulations and standards?
 - If not, speak to your bank or visit our International Trade Portal.

Am I ready for paperless trade?

Are you and your counterparts ready to transition to paperless trade²⁷ when the Electronic Trade Documents Bill finishes its legislative journey?

Is there a market for my product?

Having confirmed your business' capacity to export, next it's time to look at viable markets. <u>Lloyds Bank's</u> <u>International Trade Portal²⁸ offers businesses an easy-to-use gateway to explore international trade opportunities and access detailed market information.</u>

Open to all businesses and completely free to register, the International Trade Portal can support you across different aspects of the trade journey. First, it can help in making connections via a comprehensive database of buyers and suppliers organised by product and country, in addition to a trade show calendar to direct you towards opportunities to showcase your business. Next, it can help you explore new markets through detailed country profiles with a range of economic and market data, as well as cultural guidance on how to conduct business in specific countries.

You can also use the intuitive customs calculators to calculate the cost of trade and understand which shipping documents you will need. Finally, the International Trade Portal offers up-to-the-minute information on changing trade regulations and updates.

As a result, the Portal can help connect your products with new markets and consumers. You can also contact **UKEF**²⁹ **for assistance when it comes to making an international project happen**. UKEF's Export Finance Managers³⁰ act as local points of contact for exporters and businesses with export potential and can help in identifying solutions when it comes to export transactions.



The economic surge within the emerging markets means that UK businesses have access to exporting opportunities like never before. Lloyds Bank is here to support firms as they identify demand and bring their goods and services to the international arena.





Mansour Davarian

Managing Director, Head of Trade & Working Capital Sales, Lloyds Bank Corporate & Institutional Banking



Beyond the Bean, a Bristol-based family company, create and source innovative ingredients such as syrups, hot chocolate and frappés – as well as blenders and barista gear. They supply and support a wide range of national and international partners – ranging from high-street chains to independent coffee shops, to online retailers and coffee roasters, bars, hotels and restaurants all over the world.

The business wanted to find new products for their market to help boost their presence internationally and export to more markets around the world, ultimately growing their business as a result. Key to this was using the expansive data and insights provided by Lloyds Bank International Trade Portal to decide where it would be best for the business to target new markets.

Beyond the Bean have seen the Lloyds Bank International Trade Portal as –

- An essential tool for exploring export markets which is easy to use and saves the business time finding priority markets to export to.
- A key tool in relation to Beyond the Bean conducting due diligence for targeting new international markets.
- An effective way of researching their product ranges by using their Harmonised System (HS) codes to calculate import tariffs, which enables them to check if there are any preferential tariff arrangements in place that will make them cost effective in market.

Making the world your marketplace

Lloyds Bank is committed to supporting you in realising your exporting ambition. As an internationally-connected, UK-focused bank, not only do we understand the export challenges faced by businesses across the UK, we also have links to national banks in countries around the world in order to provide granular and comprehensive expertise and solutions, specific to whichever country you're looking to export to.

Lloyds Bank's export solutions³² include:

Export letters of credit: Our export letter of credit coverage³³ using our international network of banks can reduce the risk of exporting goods to almost anywhere in the world. Using an export letter of credit can give you the confidence to release goods knowing that payment will be guaranteed, so long as the terms and conditions of the letter of credit are fully met. Funding options available include discounting, enabling you to receive payment early.

Bonds and guarantees: Our bonds and guarantees³⁴ can be required to bid for overseas business and can demonstrate improved credit-worthiness with your trading partners. As a result, they can give your customers confidence in your business and may help you win new contracts or negotiate better trading terms. Our UK-based centre of excellence can support with wording reviews and drafting, providing you with operational support and reassurance.

Documentary collections: A costeffective way to mitigate the risk of non-payment and help manage your cash flow. Documentary collections ensures that you receive payment for the goods sent. Your customers can only take delivery of the goods once they have paid for them, or accepted a bill of exchange to pay at a later date.

Trade finance: A comprehensive range of finance and risk mitigation solutions³⁵ to help optimise your working capital cycle when exporting or importing. Lloyds Bank offers trade loans, pre- and

post-shipment finance, open account trade solutions, supply chain finance and receivables purchase. The latter can be particularly useful in the context of exporting, where it can unlock the money tied up in invoices that have not yet been paid.

International Trade Portal: Our powerful insights platform, the International Trade Portal, ³⁶ provides practical support with both free and unlimited permanent access, or you can use our Trade Tracker ³⁷ to check the status of your trade request within seconds.

Additional support is available through the <u>UKEF General Export Facility</u>³⁸ (GEF), which can help to free up working capital, fulfil multiple export contracts, ease cashflow constraints and scale up your export business. The GEF scheme provides a UKEF guarantee to Lloyds Bank, so that we can provide government-backed support to UK exporters looking to gain access to a wide range of working capital solutions.



At Lloyds Bank, we see that prosperity is typically linked to a company's capacity to export. Lloyds Bank is working closely with UK businesses, assessing the landscape and providing specialist trade expertise globally, through our international network of banks, in order to deliver solutions that provide both risk mitigation and much-needed financing to UK businesses.



Gwynne Master

Managing Director, Head of Lending, Trade & Working Capital, Lloyds Bank For more information on how Lloyds Bank can support your exporting ambitions, **speak to one of our experts today**.³⁹

You can also get the latest online insights, reports, expert commentary and client case studies direct from **The Source**. 40

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The editors



Gwynne Master

Managing Director,

Head of Lending, Trade &

Working Capital,

Lloyds Bank



Rogier van Lammeren Managing Director, Head of Trade & Working Capital Products, Lloyds Bank



Chris Pate
Associate Director,
Editorial, Transaction
Banking Solutions,
Lloyds Bank

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