



## Discussion Paper - Bulgaria SME Agency's Online National Export Portal

### Key Facts

SBA 10 Sub-dimension:10.1.1-1.3-2.3

Good practice country:  
Bulgaria (EU)

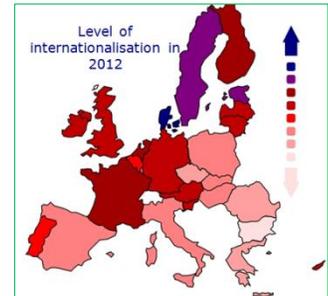
Further Facts & Figures:

- Portal-registered SMEs: 6,496
- Online visits: 185,063 in 3 years
- Request by foreign companies, searching for Bulgarian business partners: 138 in 3 years
- Market analyses published per year: 70
- SBA Factsheet for Bulgaria (2018) registers above-EU performance in "information availability", "Formalities", and "border agency cooperation"

### A. Policy Level

The Bulgarian SME Promotion Agency (BSMEPA)'s strategy follows the vision of the Ministry of Economy and contributes to the implementation of policy for improving the competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises. The main policy framework is the **"National Strategy on SME Promotion 2014-2020"**. It is in direct alignment with the SBA and plays the role of a strong benchmarking tool in Bulgaria.

Drafted in 2012, the above national strategy paper identified that "In Internationalisation Bulgaria ranks last in the EU." This was due to a number of reasons, such as cost and time of formalities for exports, lack of information on international opportunities but also on national partners.



Following the clear urgency stipulated in the above, the BSMEPA launched the project **"Promoting Internationalisation of Bulgarian Enterprises"** (2010 – 2013). This introduced the concept of an online **National Export Portal**.

#### Background

- The BSMEPA was established in 2004 as a unit of the Ministry of Economy.
- It acts as a policy implementation arm authorised to e.g. sign cooperation agreements with other countries.
- It delivers services in partnership with branch associations, chambers of commerce etc.
- Maintains relations with over 50 foreign organisations.



BSMEPA and Tunisia's CONECT sign MoU expected to help internationalisation of Tunisian and Bulgarian SMEs (30.10.2019)



## B. Programme Level

Each year, according to the Law for SMEs, the Ministry of Economy is tasked to draft an annual program, which describes the most urgent measures to be taken according to the results of the SBA factsheet on internationalisation (and others). Instruments, or called “actions” below, are then derived from the annual program’s section dealing with internationalisation topics. EU support is aligned with this. In the present example, this is best exemplified by the EU project: “Strengthening and expanding the presence of the Bulgarian companies at European and world markets and effective use of the advantages of the Single European market”. During the latter, the online National Export Portal was first implemented among other activity lines such as analyses of sectors, trainings on export tools, consultancy on tax and administrative topics, trade missions and promotional activities.

## C. Action Level

On the online National Export Portal, the following services are provided by the BSMEPA’s own expert team:

- Database of Bulgarian companies with export potential.
- Company matchmaking.
- Marketing research, analysis and reports are uploaded there.
- Recent trade and market information from the Bulgarian commercial offices abroad.
- Event calendar.
- Export strategies and policies for the priority *sectors*.
- Funding sources.



Screenshot of the online National Export Portal showcasing some functions

## D. Key Success Factors

- The portal supports and helps SME internationalisation by providing current information and creating a community of exporters, enhancing the sectoral cohesion but also cross-sectoral idea development.
- The portal supports SMEs by maintaining a database with information on export-oriented Bulgarian companies, therefore helping monitoring activities, lessons to be drawn and re-programming of projects.

