

# Researching the market

## Consultation and bespoke research

**Taking a strategic approach** British companies are advised to undertake as much market research and planning as possible. Doing business with Italy can be challenging, but taking a strategic approach is the key to making the process manageable. The first step is to spend some time thinking about your company's Italy objectives.

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 Italy strategy, although this may not be necessary or appropriate for all companies:

### Your Aims

- Do you wish to buy from Italy, sell to Italy or both?
- Do you wish to establish your own company presence in Italy, for example through an office (unità locale), new legal entity (impresa) or a branch (filiale)?
- Do you need to be involved in Italy at all?
- Do you see Italy as part of a wider plan including other EU or Mediterranean 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 Italy?
- Do you know if you can be competitive in Italy?
- Are your competitors already in Italy? 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 Italy you should start?
- Do you know how to locate and screen potential partners, agents or distributors?
- Have you carried out any Italy-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 Italy 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. You will be able to find out some free information from carrying out desk research.

Help available for you

The 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:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade/about/about-our-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade/about/about-our-services) for further information. The following details are a selection from the website:

**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 a move to get 100,000 additional companies exporting by 2020.

Launched in November 2015, 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 a new platform, [www.exportingisgreat.gov.uk](http://www.exportingisgreat.gov.uk), with many more set to come online each month.

“Exporting is GREAT” provides advice and expertise to support businesses at every step on their exporting journey, from initial interest to selling in-market, and includes a year-long roadshow travelling the UK, giving face-to-face assistance to potential

exporters, 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. The DIT's Tradeshow 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 the DIT's Accredited Trade Associations (ATOs). ATOs work with the 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: [www.events.ukti.gov.uk](http://www.events.ukti.gov.uk)

**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: [www.events.ukti.gov.uk](http://www.events.ukti.gov.uk) and search for webinars.

**Overseas Market Introduction Service** You can also commission a DIT Overseas Market Introduction Service (OMIS) to help you enter or expand your business in Italy. Under this service, the British Consulate's Trade and Investment Advisers, who have wide local experience and knowledge, can identify business partners and provide the support and advice most relevant to your company's specific needs in Italy.

**Other DIT services** The DIT assists new and experienced exporters with information, help and advice on entering overseas markets such as Italy. 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 Italian 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 Italy;
- Support to participate in trade fairs in Italy;
- Opportunities to participate in sector-based trade missions and seminars;
- Access to major buyers, local government and supply chains in Italy;
- Advice on forming international joint ventures and partnerships;
- Exploratory visits to Italy;
- Alerts to the latest and best business opportunities.

To find out more about commissioning any of these services, contact a Department for International Trade (DIT) Export Adviser at: [www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/ukti](http://www.greatbusiness.gov.uk/ukti) for a free consultation, or see further details at: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade/about/about-our-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-trade/about/about-our-services)

**E-Exporting Programme** The 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. The 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: [www.uktiofficefinder.ukti.gov.uk/contactSearch.html?guid=none](http://www.uktiofficefinder.ukti.gov.uk/contactSearch.html?guid=none)
- meet a Digital Trade Adviser where relevant, to help 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: [www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting#preferentialrates](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting#preferentialrates)
- access the 'E-Expertise Bank', a community of over 175 B2B/B2C service providers offering free advice. See: [www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting#eexpertise](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-exporting#eexpertise)
- join DIT's mailing list for opportunities to hear from industry experts, network with like-minded individuals and find out about e-commerce trends

**Open to Export** Open to Export is the DIT'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: [www.opentoexport.com](http://www.opentoexport.com)

**In-market support** If you already export, and have decided Italy is part of your business strategy, you are advised to contact the DIT team in Italy prior to your visit to discuss your objectives and what help you may need (see the 'Resources' section later in this guide). They can provide a range of Italy-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 Italy, or to promote your company and your products/services.

In addition, read the EU's practical guide to doing business in Europe:  
[www.europa.eu/youreurope/business/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm)

[Source: Department for International Trade (DIT) (Feb 2016)]

Sponsored By:

**Project Management / Design Engineering Consultancy Services**

# ARUP

**Law / Legal Services**



**Education / School Services**



**Case Study**



**Company Formation / Professional Business Services**

**Financial Services**



## Translation Services



;

Contact IMA  
International Market Advisor  
IMA House  
41A Spring Gardens  
Buxton  
Derbyshire  
SK17 6BJ  
United Kingdom  
Email: [info@ima.uk.com](mailto:info@ima.uk.com)  
General enquiries switchboard: +44 (0) 1298 79562  
Website: [www.DoingBusinessGuide.co.uk](http://www.DoingBusinessGuide.co.uk)