Export Promotion Project Greece

Technical Assistance of the Greek Export Promotion Action Plan

Grant Agreement SRSS/S2016/029

Deliverable Report 2.1

2.1.1 Identification and selection of relevant trade impediments
and
2.1.2 Definition of content and services provided by the help-desk

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List of Abbreviations

AHK	Außenhandelskammer – German-Greek Chamber of Commerce
AICEP	Institute of External Trade of Portugal
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
BMWi	Federal Ministry for Economy Affairs and Energy (Germany)
BoG	Bank of Greece
EC	European Commission
ECA	Economic & Commercial Attachés
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
ELOT	Hellenic Organization for Standardization
EPA	Export Promotion Agency
EU	European Union
EG	Enterprise Greece
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GI	Geographical Indication
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GNTO	Greek National Tourism Organization
GSCO	General Secretariat for Coordination of the Greek Government
GSDP	General Secretariat for Digital Policy
GTAI	Germany Trade and Invest
HELEXPO	Hellenic Exhibition Agency
HEPO	Hellenic Board of Foreign Trade
HRDAF	Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund
ICE	Italian Institute of Foreign Trade
ITC	International Trade Center
IXPOS	German Business Portal (GTAI service)
KEPE	Centre of Planning and Economic Research
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MADB	Market Access Database
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Greece
MinAgric	Ministry of Rural Development & Food

MoE	Ministry of Economy and Development Greece
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NTB	Non-Tariff Barrier
NTM	Non-Tariff Measures
OAEP	Export Credit Insurance Organization of Greece
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSE	Panhellenic Exporters Association
PSEPE	Panhellenic Association of Ship Suppliers
R&D	Research & Development
SEC	Exporters Association of Crete
SEV	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises
SEVE	Greek International Business Association
SEPE	Association of Greek ITC Enterprises
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SME	Small & Medium Enterprise
SPS	Sanitary & Phytosanitary Standards
SRSS	Structural Reform Support Service
TA	Technical Assistance
TBT	Technical Barrier to Trade
TFGR	Task Force for Greece
TIF	Thessaloniki International Fair
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
VAT	Value Added Tax
WEF	World Economic Forum
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Executive Summary

The present report covers the activities 2.1.1 “Identification and selection of relevant trade impediments” and 2.1.2 “Definition of content and services provided by the help-desk“.

- GIZ Team reviewed existing work and studies conducted by International Organizations & Greek bodies, such as EC (Small Business Act Factsheets, 2016 & “*The Puzzle of the Missing Greek Exports*”, 2014), OECD, ITC, Netherlands’ Ministry of Economic Affairs, McKinsey & Co, Panhellenic Exporters’ Association (PSE) and Eurobank, as well as the preliminary study carried out by Intraway, commissioned by the MoE.
- The findings of the above mentioned studies, reports and surveys, were further validated through meetings, contacts and validation questionnaires exchanged with key stakeholders and representatives of Greek internationalized enterprises, in order to get a better insight to the current status and the relevance of specific trade impediments in Greece.
- The information gathered laid the ground for the mapping overview, the ranking of trade impediments[1] and lead to first suggestions on how these impediments could be addressed through the format of a help-desk system.
- Under this scope, grouping and ranking of trade impediments and aligning them to help-desk functions, following World Bank’s criteria, led to suggesting the following 5 support axes:

    1. *Guiding*: The focus is giving assistance to find information, data, contacts, etc., thus enhancing business sophistication of Greek (potential) exporters.
    2. *Empowering*: The focus lies on supporting capacity-building, networking, consulting, coaching, mentoring and training and enriching human resources skill-sets.
    3. *Advocating*: The focus widens and includes acting on behalf of the inquiring company, trying to find solutions from all suitable sources (of public and private sector), in topics surrounding pre-customs & customs procedures, quality and technical compliance, legal framework and documentation of exports (regulatory compliance).
    4. *Coordinating*: The focus is the coordination of interactions within public sector authorities and between private and public sector bodies, addressing the challenge of overlaps and lack of synergies for export promotion in Greece.
    5. *Whistleblowing*: The focus widens to tackling inefficiencies and deficiencies within relevant public authorities and ensuring quality services are delivered to companies in a legitimate and timely manner, while in parallel providing policy makers with input and insight of the challenges faced by Greek exporters or companies trying to export, as part of the strategic planning for Export Promotion.

- Benchmarking best practices of help-desks in the EU was based on three criteria: a) alignment with EU guidelines and initiatives, b) country of origin

[1] See pg. 20 of the report.

export performance and c) similarity with Greek economy size, composition of exports and public sector structure.

- According to these assumptions the following examples were selected: 1) *Enterprise Europe Network, 2) Euromed Trade Help-desk – Trade and Facilitation Mechanism, 3) Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI), 4) Italtrade – ICE, 5) Department of International Trade -DITUK, 6) Enterprise Ireland* and 7) *AICEP – Portugal*
- The common characteristics of benchmarked help-desks consist of a) one organization as coordinator and as central entry point of enquiries with b) a network of *international* agents, in combination with diplomatic missions or own international office network, that c) streamlined information input through a management system (*procedures, actors, forms etc.*), under d) principles of Quality Assurance and predefined *Key Performance Indicators* (KPIs) and their Target Values
- As a service provider and a coordination mechanism, the suggested help-desk should be able to address the needs and expectations of Greek exporting companies and potential exporters, while contributing to the sharing of information generated surrounding Greek exports from public and private sector bodies
- Aligning service content and help-desk set-up, the central idea behind the suggested flowchart2 is that interested exporters will contact the help-desk as the entry point for information, and through the help-desk receive information or/and service requested, or will be delegated to other Stakeholders, other help-desks or other sources of information
- GIZ suggests a structure that requires development of internal hierarchies (front-desk, back-office, Key Account Managers, Thematic Specialists), in connection with a CRM system and in connection with a comprehensive IT-system for Export Promotion
- The CRM function will support the evaluation processes, by validating KPIs values, as an integral part of a monitoring and reporting system. The purpose of reporting and monitoring is a) to verify whether the help-desk's performance justifies the related deployment of resources, b) to enhance performance and stimulate continuous improvement of the services provided and c) to gather key consolidated data showing the main outputs of the help-desk in terms of service delivery.
- Specific KPIs suggested shall be monitored very closely in order to provide continuous information and regular reports on the help-desk's outcomes. Should performance problems or underperforming areas become apparent at any stage, the necessary measures need to be taken.

[2] See Figure in pg. 33 of this report.

2. Overview of trade impediments

2.1 Overview based on work/studies existing

The following existing work and studies conducted by Greek and International bodies were reviewed and used for mapping the major impediments to trade in Greece:

- "Small Business Act (SBA) Factsheet", EC, 2016
- "*Global Enabling Trade Report 2016*", World Economic Forum, 2016
- "*How to boost export performance in Greece*", C. de la Maisonneuve, OECD, 2016
- "*Navigating Non-Tariff Measures*", ITC, 2016
- "*Greek Exports: Prospects & Challenges*", Panhellenic Exporters' Association, 2014
- "*The Puzzle of the Missing Greek Exports*", EC, 2014
- "*Competitiveness, Internationalization: Incentives & Disincentives for Greek Exports*", Eurobank, 2014
- "*A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece*", Netherlands' Ministry of Economic Affairs 2012
- *"Greece: 10 Years Ahead"*, McKinsey & Co, 2011

The studies span from the year 2011 up to 2016 and use different methodologies, but nevertheless result in a similarity in their findings in connection with the trade impediments discovered, up to the newest reports.

2.1.1 "Greece: 10 Years Ahead" (2011), McKinsey & Co

Findings regarding trade impediments[3]

The oldest of the studies analysed, though not focused specifically on the issue of trade impediments but having a general scope (suggested by the study's title), outlines main deficiencies that hinder the extroversion of Greek companies:

- unfavourable business environment (including taxation framework)
- gaps in productivity and competitiveness
- inefficiencies of the public sector and informalities in the economy
- rigid and "narrow" use of human resources
- cumbersome legal and judicial system

The above, are indirectly linked to the work of a help-desk, but highlight the need to support the private sector by a) focusing on producing products and services tradable to foreign markets, b) identifying business opportunities at an international level and c) mobilizing human resources in terms of higher productivity and efficiency.

The study also suggests specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for monitoring purposes, such as Net Exports to GDP (improvement of trade balance), Investments on GDP (matching Southern Europe benchmarks) and Employment Turnover (converging to EU averages).

The findings support GIZ suggestions for the "***sectoral approach***" both in the IT system content (information, data, surveys etc.) and the help-desk support mechanisms (focused dissemination of support requests to relevant authorities/bodies, network of partners by sector)[4].

[3] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.
[4] See pg. 35 of present Deliverable Report and also GIZ Export Promotion in Greece, Draft Deliverable Report 1.1.1, June 2017.

2.1.2 "A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece" (2012), EZ (NED)

Findings regarding trade impediments[5]

Technical assistance provided by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs to the Greek authorities coordinated by the Task Force for Greece led to a report titled "A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece". While mapping trade impediments, Greek economy was characterized as an economy of:

- structural rigidities, with very high administrative burden (red tape),
- very small sized enterprises that lack the necessary skills and resources needed to prepare a proper export strategy and business plan and make the initial investment,
- overall low productivity levels in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors which are not coupled with low wage levels
- relative low-value products
- overall low value added margin for the export sector in general
- trade deficit in Greek tradable merchandise sectors
- narrow export base
- very low workforce participation rates (i.e. "*relatively small labour force, supporting a generally unproductive economic system*")

Furthermore, the report found lack of vision and strategy for trade and investment promotion in Greek authorities, as well as overlaps within the public sector, in trade and foreign direct investments (FDI) promotion.

In relation and relevance to the development of a help-desk for Export Promotion, the Dutch report having looked at best practices[6] proposes a national vision and a strategy on international trade and investment which includes a) Clear and shared Ambitions, b) Clear Strategies, c) Clear Roles, d) Clear Rules of the Game and e) Empowering for Exports.

The Dutch report served as a base for merging HEPO with "Invest in Greece", creating Enterprise Greece organization, while planting the seed for closer cooperation between public and private sector stakeholders in order to better facilitate exports.

The authors identify the need for clear SLAs and MoUs between all stakeholders, especially for the cooperation of public and private sector bodies, in providing support services for the exporters and potential exporters, clarifying "who does what" and introducing a concrete method for sharing information.

[5] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.
[6] See "A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece", pg. 8 & 16.

2.1.3 "The Puzzle of the Missing Greek Exports" (2014), EC

Findings regarding trade impediments[7]

In the European Commission's Economic Papers (No. 518), Greece is - yet again - clearly identified as "small closed economy" with an historical record of protracted trade deficits and low openness. However, the researchers use a different approach than the aforementioned studies by trying to unmask the problem of intensifying fragmentation of production focusing more in the increasing importance of global supply chains.

The authors of the paper support that poor governance entails negative externalities for private transactions, and consequently raises transaction costs with negative effects on international trade.

While the Paper does not map specific trade impediments, it shows the key areas of institutional intervention needed for boosting Greek Exports. And although the deregulation of "goods" markets" or the "macroeconomic environment", are not a direct part of the Export Promotion Project deliverables, empowering "business sophistication" and facilitating "trading across borders" surely fall in the category of the help-desk functions.

[7] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.

2.1.4 "Greek Exports: Prospects & Challenges" (2014), PSE

Findings regarding trade impediments[8]

Following up on World Economic Forum's methodology and findings in yearly "Enabling Trade Reports"[9], the researchers of the Panhellenic Exporters' Association (PSE) interviewed Greek exporters on challenges coming from the external environment (public administration, macroeconomic environment, transportation services) and at an operational level (corporate strategy, production planning, human resources).

The external environment impediments are grouped under the following topics:

- Working with relevant Authorities
- Lack of know-how support (Chambers of Commerce, Commercial Attachees etc.)
- High production costs
- Red tape at the borders
- High costs & delays in in-land transports
- High costs & delays in international transports

In terms of internal (micro level) the following inefficiencies and inadequacies are being acknowledged in the survey:

- Access to financing/funding
- Cost of Export Credit Insurance
- Access strategic export info/data
- Coping with quality certifications
- Effective marketing abroad
- VAT refunds
- Lack of skilled exports staff
- Low administrational ability
- Low adjustment to clients' needs
- Coping with timeline
- Coping with quantity ordered
- Lack of skilled technical staff

According to the PSE, to tackle the above-mentioned impediments, next steps for supporting Greek exporters should include actions such as more vocational training/coaching on exports; effective branding/marketing/promotion support; providing access to strategic export information; networking with foreign partners; facilitating investments in production lines and equipment; incentivize quality/technical compliance of Greek products. These suggestions reflect a major part of a help-desk's function.

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[8] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.
[9] See WEF "The Global Enable Trading Reports", 2016 pg. 13.

2.1.5 “Incentives & Disincentives for Greek Exports” (2014), Eurobank

Findings regarding trade impediments[10]

In November 2014, Eurobank’s Research Department presented a survey in the 1st Greek Exports Convention titled: “Competitiveness, Extroversion, Incentives and Disincentives for Greek Exports”. Prioritizing impediments the survey identified Greece as a closed economy with:

- Low share in global markets (exports & imports)
- Low tech exported goods
- Low trade specialization
- Lack of Research & Development (R&D) investments
- Low export concentration index (Herfindahl-Hirschman Index)

From the surveyed companies’ side impediments were categorized in the following major fields:

- *Costs* (High taxes, high cost of money, tax system, VAT refunds delayed)
- *National Strategy* (Lack of support mechanism, Lack of National Strategy and guidelines)
- *Financing* (High cost of money/liquidity, tolerance to non-viable enterprises)
- *Country Risk* (Lack of confidence to Greece’s macroeconomic prospects on behalf of trade partners abroad, demands for prepayments in imports, Greek Banks’ Letters of Credit not accepted by foreign clients)
- *Administrative Barriers* (in pre-customs and customs procedures)
- (own company) *Operational Deficiencies* (such as lack of strategic planning, risk management not incorporated in company policies)

In summary, the study emphasizes the need of reforms on both macroeconomic and microeconomic level or/and domestic and external environment, while focusing on the “technological” aspect of exports, as a key factor for value added exports.

The findings indicate the need for proper guidance to exporters and potential exporters and point out the necessity to first map domestic production and then attempt a shift aligned with international market needs and trends.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating an “export prospects” tools in the National Strategy for exports.

[10] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.

2.1.6 “Navigating Non-Tariff Measures” (2016), ITC

Findings regarding trade impediments[11]

The researchers of the International Trade Centre (ITC) with support from the European Commission have compiled a list of 17 major Non-Tariff trade impediments/burdensome regulations as raised by EU exporters. The so called “issues” vary from technical requirements and conformity assessment to pre-shipment inspections and from finance measures and subsidies to procurement restrictions and intellectual property regulations.

More specifically, the list consists of:

- A. Technical requirements
- B. Conformity assessment
- C. Pre-shipment inspections and other entry formalities
- D. Trade remedies
- E. Quantity control measures
- F. Charge, taxes and price control measures
- G. Finance measures
- H. Anti-competitive measures
- I. Trade related investment measures
- J. Distribution restrictions
- K. Restrictions on post-sales services
- L. Subsidies
- M. Government procurement restrictions
- N. Intellectual property
- O1. Preferential rules of origin and related certificates of origin
- O2. Non-preferential rules of origin and related certificates of Origin
- P. Export related measures

The results of the survey confirm the importance of providing institutional support to exporters, and in particular SMEs, in finding their way in the variety of NTMs that apply across markets, through initiatives such as the Market Access Database and ITC’s Market Access Map which provide data on tariff and non-tariff regulations imposed by more than 90 countries.

More recently, ITC, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), launched the ‘e-Ping’ alert system, which gives timely TBT and SPS-related information notified by WTO members. Such a mechanism should be integrated in the help-desk, either directly or via the IT System.

The survey also suggests the need to enhance efforts of the European Union and its Member States, in the context of its Market Access Partnership, to make information more available, to better publicize existing information and to further simplify procedures, which should the founding basis of the help-desk.

[11] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.

2.1.7 “How to boost export performance in Greece” (2016), OECD

Findings regarding trade impediments[12]

In 2016 the OECD Economics Department issued the Working Paper No. 1299, titled: “how to boost export performance in Greece”, analyzing the structure of Greek exports and presenting policy recommendations to boost export performance.

As per the trade impediments, the author identifies:

- Greek economy structure (characterized as closed and “dominated by SMEs”)
- Specialization in low-technology goods
- Difficulties in integration to global value chains
- Unfavorable business environment (structural problems in product markets)
- Procedural barriers to exporting and administrative burdens (high costs and time involved in exports procedures, at pre-customs and customs level)
- Difficult access to finance
- Low competitiveness and export performance”[13].
- Inefficiencies created by not liberalized or deregulated markets
- Low investment in infrastructure and logistics
- High need for the development of skills in human resources
- Lack of actual synergies between Exports, Tourism and Shipping

The paper introduces and suggests the adoption of a series of KPIs to ensure positive impact of reforms to Greek exports, following widely used methodology tools from international organizations, such as the OECD, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum and others.

The study furthermore highlights the importance “*to encourage the use of the new opportunities offered by information and communications technology, including the Internet, to overcome some of the barriers*”[14] to trade, including by directly engaging with foreign markets through electronic commerce and use of ICT tools for supporting exporters.

Such tools will be integrated in GIZ recommendations for the modes of operation and the IT set-up of the help-desk (see relevant Chapter 4).

Finally, the paper calls for the full operationalization of a 'national single window' for exports, as foreseen by the National Trade Facilitation Strategy and the full implementation of the export promotion action plan to promote exports and help SMEs reach international markets, through developing relevant support mechanisms, such as the help-desk.

[12] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.
[13] How to boost export performance in Greece, pg. 3.
[14] How to boost export performance in Greece, pg. 32.

2.1.8 "Enabling Trade Reports" (2016), WEF

Findings regarding trade impediments[15]

The most recent data available from the Enabling Trade Reports of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Enable Trade Index includes the following fields (in order of the most problematic factors globally):

- Access to trade finance
- Identifying potential markets and buyers
- Access to imported inputs at competitive prices
- Difficulties in meeting quality/quantity requirements of buyers
- High cost or delays caused by domestic transportation
- Inappropriate production technology and skills
- Technical requirements and standards abroad
- High cost or delays caused by international transportation
- Burdensome procedures at foreign borders
- Tariff barriers abroad
- Rules of origin requirements abroad
- Corruption at foreign borders

The Enable Trade Index confirms that Greek enterprises operate in a rather unfavorable business environment, impeding their capacity to export competitively to foreign markets, mainly due to the difficulties in accessing financing, the inefficiencies and lack of accountability on behalf of public institutions and the inadequate protection of property.

At the same time, the challenge of "identifying potential markets" and the need for "regulatory compliance" are becoming more "visible" to Greek exporters among the most problematic factors for exports, highlighting the need for more efficient support to enterprises, through mechanisms, such as a help-desk.

[15] See Annex 5.1 for general summary of the report.

2.2 Validation of the current situation of trade impediments in Greece

2.2.1. GIZ findings

Having reviewed the existing work and studies, some of them being carried out a few years back already, some of them not as accurate as to the actually performed measures but more based on future ideas that were not implemented (yet), a better feeling regarding the current situation in the middle of year 2017 needed to be achieved.

Since it was not requested and neither feasible nor necessary to carry out once more an empirical study to statistically prove or test the findings of the studies, various discussions and interviews, followed by a structured questionnaire, were held in order to develop a clear picture on the AS-IS status of trade impediments.[16]

The discussions and interviews also helped to get a better insight into more details of the individual impediments which are usually described as broader categories.

2.2.2. Small Business Act Factsheets (2016), EC

Trade impediments are indirectly identified also in the Small Business Act (SBA) Factsheets of the European Commission. In the 2016 report (using 2013 data), Greece still appears to underperform in comparison to the EU average.

The share of Greek SMEs exporting to extra-EU partner countries, despite the positive trend in the period 2008-2013, remains below the EU average (Greece: 6.85%, EU: 9.95%). Moreover, even though the administrative conditions for exporting are similar to those of most other EU countries, the costs for documentary compliance in the case of exports are almost double the EU average.

The report highlights the potential positive impact to export promotion from a) a single online contact point[17], b) a General Exports Registry[18] and c) funding programs and tools for Greek Exporters[19].

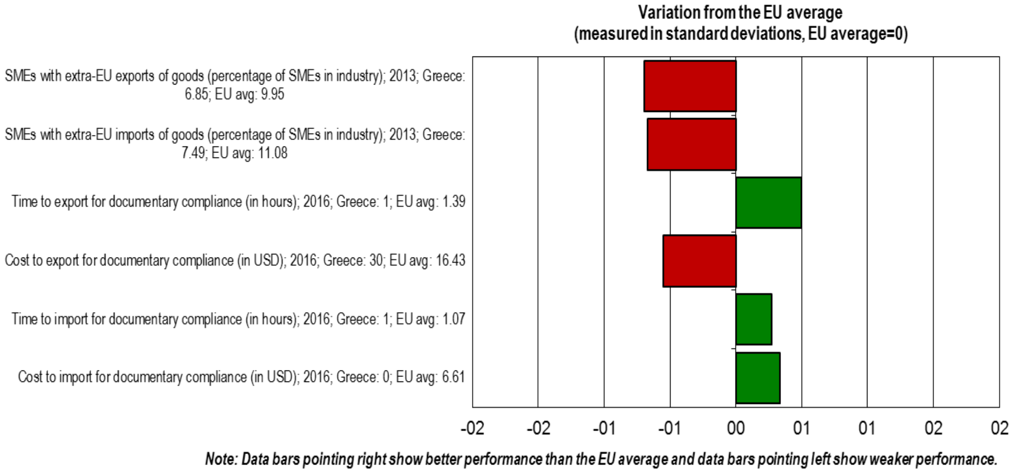
[16] See Annex 5.2 for list of contacts and interviewees.

[17] SBA Fact Sheet 2016, pg. 15. GIZ: Direct referral to the Single Window for Exports as part of the on-going Trade Facilitation Project implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Customs Authority.

[18] SBA Fact Sheet 2016, pg. 15. GIZ: Direct referral to General Exports Registry (GEME), which was legislated in 2013, but never activated at all, due to different policy choices by Cabinets and Governments that followed, since 2013.

[19] SBA Fact Sheet 2016, pg. 15. GIZ: Direct referral to the 'Internationalization Business Competitiveness I and II' Programs which were implemented for the provision of financial instruments to promote internationalization.

SBA Fact Sheet, Greece 2016



Source: EC, SBA Fact Sheet, 2016

Finally, the report showcases the online portal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the introduction of the 'Market Ombudsman' (www.agora.mfa.gr), "which aims to support Greek businesses wishing to enter into economic transactions in countries within the EU or beyond, by advising them on available funding programs and other business opportunities".

As per the Market Ombudsman (existing help-desk of the MFA), it is considered as an example of "assistance to Greek exporters with problems during their business transactions, providing customized responses to such issues and business mentoring on exports via seminars and other activities".

The report furthermore emphasizes the importance of a continuous support from the Greek government to Greek exporters and potential exporters "through additional mechanisms, such as coaching and training"[20], which is also relevant for GIZ recommendations for the help-desk's modes of operation.

These suggestions have been taken into account for the set-up of both IT System and help-desk, in terms of creating a single entry point for inquiries (from Exporters), establishing an Exporters Registry and providing information and guidance for financing/funding tools.

[20] SBA Fact Sheet 2016, pg. 16.

3. Ranking of trade impediments and first suggestions to address them

After carefully reviewing the studies, surveys and reports conducted by international organizations and Greek public and private bodies, covering a 5-year period (2012-2016), and having added to the picture a series of discussions and interviews as to identify the current status (2017) of impediments, it is safe to conclude that Greece, despite significant improvements and progress made, remains a relatively closed economy, based on SMEs of low-tech products, low-internationalization rates and relatively low competitiveness, affected by an unfavorable business environment.

Most of the studies reviewed distinguish trade impediments as those of the macro- and those of the micro-level, with access to financing/funding topping the ranking in the majority of cases. The latter is also supported by the validation efforts made.

The macro-level trade impediments are linked to the general business environment conditions (i.e. tax rates, VAT refunds, red tape procedures) and endogenous deficiencies of the Greek economy (closed type characteristics, low competitiveness, small size of companies, high country risk, low-tech production), along with rigidities of the transportation sector and other regulated[21] services sectors, that are laming the competitiveness of the economy as a whole. Adding to that, inefficiencies in the micro-level relate with inappropriate and out-of-date production lines, near to zero R&D investments, inefficient marketing strategies and low human capital investments.

Exporting companies interviewed by GIZ team, discussions held with the logistics group of AHK, as well as meetings carried out with various organizations and associations indicate that Greek exporters are thus in need of institutional support surrounding identification of markets/prospects to exports, networking with potential buyers, capitalizing on national branding and national promotional activities, while coping with export procedures/ formalities (red tape) and regulatory compliance. The findings provide arguments on the need for (in the ranking of their importance from a) to c)):

a) proper guidance to exporters and potential exporters, at a consulting, mentoring and coaching level

b) providing facilitating services for the interaction of companies with public authorities relevant to external trade and export promotion

c) monitoring and evaluating performance of different service providers of the public sector

[21] As per OECD report reviewed: R&D, engineering, design, financial services, insurance, communication, marketing, distribution.

3.1 Trade impediments mapping overview

The table below summarizes and groups – in keywords – the findings of the reports analyzed by GIZ, as reviewed in the previous chapters. The color markings are applied to individual cells of the table by GIZ in order to make clear references to matter relevant to support by the help-desk.

The individual impediments are listed in order of appearance in each study. Unmarked (white) fields obviously describe important trade impediments, which however cannot be tackled directly through the establishment of a help-desk, but require more structural reforms, mentioned in previous and on-going Adjustment Programs.

Mapping of Trade Impediments Fields for Greece as identified by various Organizations							
WEF (2016)	OECD (2016)	ITC (2016)	PEA (2015)	EC (2014)	EUROBANK (2014)	EZ (NED) (2012)	McKINSEY (2011)
Financing/Funding	Closed economy	Export-related measures	Financing/ Funding	Financing/Funding	Closed economy	Business Environment (taxes, VAT refunds)	Business Environment (taxes, VAT refunds)
Identifying markets & buyers	Low tech exports	Regulatory compliance	Business Interaction with Public Sector, Authorities	Competitiveness	Greek share in global market	Institutional support	Competitiveness
Business sophistication	Access to global value chains	Charge, taxes & price controls, related to cross-border transactions	Institutional support	Institutional support	Low tech exports	Small size/Narrow export base	Production line/Productivity inefficiencies
Regulatory compliance	Small size of Greek companies	Compliance with standards/clients' requests	Business sophistication	Business sophistication	Business sophistication	Regulated markets	Institutional support
Cost or/and delays in transportations	Production line/Productivity inefficiencies	Pre-customs, customs procedures & formalities	Pre-customs, customs procedures & formalities	Business Environment (taxes, VAT refunds)	R&D investments	Strategic Vision/ Plan	Overlaps of activities in Exports (public sector)
Compliance with standards/clients' requests	Business Environment (taxes, VAT refunds)	Rules of origin & certificates	Business Environment (taxes, VAT refunds)	Regulated markets	Small Size of Greek companies/ Export concentration index	Overlap of activities in Exports (public sector)	HR & skill-set
Pre-customs, customs procedures & formalities	Cost of export procedures	Distribution restrictions at import market	National branding/marketing support	Pre-customs, customs procedures	Financing/Funding	Identifying markets & buyers	Legal & Judicial System

Tariffs abroad	Regulated markets	Finance measures	Networking with foreign partners		Business Environment (taxes, VAT refunds)	National Branding	Widespread informalities in economy
	HR skill set	Anti-competitive measures	Costs of production, energy		Institutional support	Common agenda for export activities	
	Financing/Funding		Cost or/and delays in transportations		Country Risk of Greece	CRM functions while supporting Exporters	
	Synergies with Tourism, Shipping		Cost of Export Credit Insurance		Pre-customs, Customs procedures	Interministerial Coordination	
			Production line/Productivity inefficiencies		Strategic Vision/ Plan		
			HR skill set (administrative and staff level)				
			Marketing efficiency				
			Compliance with standards/clients‘ requests				
WEF (2016)	**OECD (2016)**	**ITC (2016)**	**PEA (2015)**	**EC (2014)**	**EUROBANK (2014)**	**EZ (NED) (2012)**	**McKINSEY (2011)**

Source: GIZ Export Promotion in Greece

	Help-desk related[22]

[22] Further elaboration should follow in 2.2.1 Deliverable Report “Development of modes of operation and IT set-up for the help-desk”

3.2 Ranking according to their relevance for support by the help-desk

In this context, it is important to understand that a help-desk may not always provide final solutions or answers, but mainly serves as an entry point for enquiries/questions on behalf of exporters and potential exporters and should possess the capacity and authority to disseminate and follow up on them accordingly.

Under the scope of setting up an institutional support mechanism for exporters and potential exporters in the form of a help-desk, mapping of trade impediments (as shown in the table above) is suggested to be categorized and transferred into 5 support axes:[23]

1. *Guiding*: The focus is giving assistance to find information, data, contacts, etc., thus enhancing business sophistication of Greek (potential) exporters.
2. *Empowering*: The focus lies on supporting capacity-building, networking, consulting, coaching, mentoring and training and enriching human resources skill-sets.
3. *Advocating*: The focus widens and includes acting on behalf of the inquiring company, trying to find solutions, in topics surrounding pre-customs & customs[24] procedures, quality and technical compliance, legal framework and documentation of exports (regulatory compliance).
4. *Coordinating*: The focus is the coordination of interactions within public sector authorities and between private and public sector bodies, addressing the challenge of overlaps and lack of synergies for export promotion in Greece.
5. *Whistleblowing*: The focus widens to tackling inefficiencies and deficiencies within relevant public authorities and ensuring quality services are delivered to companies in a legitimate and timely manner, while in-parallel providing policy makers with input and insight of the challenges faced by Greek exporters or companies trying to export, as part of the strategic planning for Export Promotion.

The above categorization can also be viewed in the following table, where already mapped trade impediments are ranked according to their relevance for support services provided by a help-desk structure.

[23] See "Export Promotion Agencies: What Works and What Doesn't" report, pg. 2 & 3, World Bank. *The analysis covers Export Promotion Agencies in 104 developing and developed countries.*
[24] Regarding customs procedures, the level of advocacy capacity and linkage with ICISnet (Greek Customs IT system) help-desk will be determined after GIZ legal experts will submit proposals for SLAs and division of labor among stakeholders.

Ranking of trade impediments *directly* relevant to support by help-desk			
Rank	**Impediment**	**Support Axes**	**Comments**
1.	**Business sophistication:** • Access to data • Identifying markets & buyers • Networking	Guiding/ Empowering	
2.	**Regulatory compliance:** • Procedures & formalities • Compliance with standards • Tariffs, taxes, controls	Guiding/ Advocating	
3.	**Human resources skill-set:** • Training • Coaching • Mentoring	Empowering	
4.	**Institutional support:** • National branding • Inter-ministerial coordination • Company interaction with public sector • Strategic vision/ Plan	Coordinating/ Whistleblowing	Information to help-desk clients about National Branding and coordinated export promotion plans is meant here
Ranking of trade impediments *indirectly* relevant to support by help-desk			
5.	**Financing/ Funding**	Guiding	Limited to linking to information sources strictly
6.	**Transportation of goods:** • Costs, delays and regulations	Guiding/ Empowering	
7.	**Business Environment:** • Taxes • VAT refunds • Licensing • Regulated markets	Coordinating/ Whistleblowing	
8.	**Productivity & Competitiveness:** • Economy openness & size • Country risk • Company size & market share • Production inefficiencies • Low tech exports	Guiding/ Empowering	Limited to feedback to help-desk clients as per their own capabilities and capacity

Source: GIZ

Whereas the first 4 impediments listed in the above table can and should be directly tackled and treated with priority by the help-desk, the last 4 impediments are rather long-term challenges inherent to the Greek economic environment. To these issues, the help-desk has limited possibilities to find concrete answers or solutions to the clients' needs. On the other hand, the provision of information towards the clients (for example on the organizations responsible or available for financing issues) should be foreseen, and giving feedback (coordination and whistleblowing function) to the authorities on these persisting impediments might help to initiate a process of improvement.

3.3 First suggestions/options to address trade impediments

Approximately 50.000 Greek enterprises of all sizes are exporting goods and services to extra-EU countries, out of a total of more than 700.000 active legal entities (about 7% of total, in comparison to 10% of the EU average)[25]. In an effort to strengthen the country's export base (meaning adding more than 20.000 companies to the equation just to be aligned with EU averages) effective support mechanisms should be developed, addressing the main challenges identified, mapped and ranked accordingly.

As highlighted in the EC SBA Fact Sheet, the Greek government should put the focus to support exporters and potential exporters to efficiently initiate and boost business relations across border, while helping them to cope with problems during their business transactions by providing customized responses to such issues. Moreover, business mentoring on exports via seminars and other activities and offering advice on available funding programs and other business opportunities should be made available. The SBA report emphasizes the importance for continuous support from the Greek government to Greek exporters and potential exporters "through additional mechanisms, such as coaching and training".

In the same context, a help-desk mechanism is aligned with the EU's Market Access Partnership, aiming to make information more available, to better publicize existing information and to further simplify procedures. Sharing and publicizing information, while simplifying procedures are key factors of success in the development, implementation and operational phase of the help-desk.

In the discussions held and interviews conducted there was consensus in the public and private sector for the need of a one-stop-shop structure, resembling that of Citizen's Service Centers (Kentra Exipiretisis Politon-KEP), empowered with political mandate to operate in an inter-agency coordinator/facilitator, staffed with skilled personnel and backed with an IT system and relative IT tools.

Examples of such tools can be found in international initiatives like the Market Access Database and ITC's Market Access Map which provides data on tariff and non-tariff regulations imposed by more than 90 countries. Respectively, alert systems like the "e-Ping" recently launched by ITC, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), can give timely and automated information to exporters concerning the majority of WTO members.

Adding to the above, the 5 main support axes of the help-desk critically depend on the quality and extent of the SLAs[26] drafted between stakeholders and actors both from public and private sector, as well as on the efficiency of the CRM system used to keep track and evaluate responses to the final beneficiaries, the exporting companies and the potential exporters.

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[25] See SBA Fact Sheet 2016.

[26] GIZ, as part of the Project's ToRs, will provide SLAs drafts to the stakeholders.

4. Recommendations on content, services and evaluation criteria

The recommendations to follow are based on a benchmarking study[27] of best-practices in the EU focusing on content, services and criteria to evaluate services of the help-desk(s), and take into account a review and validation of the findings of the preliminary study tendered by the MoE (Intraway-Study). Existing help-desks of various institutions in Greece are also identified.

A draft of service provision of a help-desk through various modes (e.g. email, telephone, personal assistance) and the contents of services provided by the organization or by outsourced partners/stakeholders, and the definition of criteria for an evaluation system on the performance of the help-desk services are elaborated further down.

4.1 Findings of the preliminary study and identification of existing help-desks

Intraway surveyed 56 public and private sector bodies involved in export promotion and support. Around 80% of those organizations stated that they provide help-desk services, even though only 36% of those included help-desk operation in their founding laws and only 13% have integrated a position of at least one IT/help-desk content manager.

As per means of service delivery, 31% of public and private sector help-desk provide information and guidance via e-mail, 28% by phone, 26% through face-to-face meetings and only 6% with tools like instant messaging. Other ways for service delivery were also identified, as follows: *seminars, while participating in fairs and business delegations, newsletters and awareness campaigns*.

According to the survey, smaller size companies and companies with products from the agricultural sector tend to use more help-desk services and rely on the information provided by such structures, while larger enterprises depend more on established networks of partners and facilitators.

Though responses from companies are backing the usefulness of a help-desk for the better coverage of their support and information needs, the development of a help-desk structure ranks second to last, with last being the interoperability of public authorities' IT systems. In that sense, Intraway findings suggest that Greek companies consider coordination among public authorities and recruitment of skilled, trained and qualified staff by public bodies as more important than a (decoupled) function of a help-desk.

Following a specific methodology, the study does not discriminate between content of information provided via a web information portal and a help-desk, though

[27] The study was assigned by GIZ to the German-Hellenic Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

supporting that a combined solution (information both from IT System and Help-desk), serves better the companies'/ clients' needs and expectations.

Moreover, though a conclusive list of help-desks mapped is not included in the published version of the Intraway study, GIZ identified help-desk services for exporters being offered also from other public or private organizations, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Market Ombudsman), Enterprise Greece, Exporters Associations (PSE, SEVE, SEC) and Business Associations (SEV and sectoral Associations), Chambers of Commerce, Banks (Eurobank's *exportgate* service, Alpha Bank's international trade platform).

In conclusion, the Intraway study provides input and data suggesting that smaller size companies and potential exporters are the most probable and frequent users of help-desk services; that a mixture of service delivery means should be integrated in the help-desk set-up; and that the help-desk should be backed with dedicated, skilled personnel, operating in a more coordinated environment of export promotion and support services provided by both public and private sector.

These findings are consistent with input to GIZ from interviews, small group meetings and discussions with Project's stakeholders, while other help-desks already identified will be subject to potential SLAs, according to EG/MoE priorities and policies, as well as deliberations with the respective operating bodies.

4.2 Benchmarking help-desk systems in other EU Member States

The benchmarking study points out that national or supra-national export promotion agencies use various ways to assist their national businesses to sell products or services to the international markets as well as to connect national suppliers with international buyers.

Usually an Export Promotion Agency (EPA) takes the role to coordinate export promotion stakeholders and be the first address for information and assistance for both national suppliers and foreign buyers. Such agencies – in most cases - are supervised by or are even integrated within Ministry(ies) with authority(ies) over Economic, Trade, Business, Industrial and Foreign Affairs. Close cooperation and coordination between the agencies and related Ministries, as well as with other stakeholders like Chambers, Business Associations, Exporters' Associations, local Administrations etc. is considered indispensable.

Office networks within the respective country usually act as information points for potential or even experienced exporters. International offices of such agencies in many cases are co-located or even integrated within the economic and trade offices of diplomatic missions.

Benchmarking best practices of help-desks in the EU was based on three criteria: a) alignment with EU guidelines and initiatives, b) country of origin export performance and c) similarity with Greek economy size, composition of exports and public sector structure. According to these assumptions the following examples have been selected:

European Union: The European Union is implementing several initiatives to promote bidirectional trade both between the EU member countries and between the EU and non-EU countries. For the present report, we selected two help-desk services in this regard:

- the *Enterprise Europe Network* and
- the *Euromed Trade Help-desk – Trade and Facilitation Mechanism*

Germany - *Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI)*: Germany is the export champion of the EU and one of the three largest exporters in the world. For years Germany has developed programs and mechanisms to assist national businesses to export their products in the international markets.

Italy – *Italtrade - ICE*: The example of Italy, also one of the big exporting countries in the EU, has been named by the beneficiaries as a case that is worth benchmarking.

UK –*GREAT Initiative of the Department of International Trade* : UK provides an interesting structure to assist exporters with local offices in the country and an international network that provide a wide variety of information and services to exporters

Also two other EU-countries that are of similar size to Greece but also have a common past as they have been also hit by the economic crisis of the last decade, are being taken into consideration.

Enterprise Ireland and **AICEP – Portugal** are the respective agencies in the two countries that offer comprehensive services to their national exporters.

By all above organizations the help-desk services are being linked (in some cases exclusively) with a dedicated internet portal. In general it is in all cases important to provide as much information as possible through the portal and thus:

- avoid deployment of resources through redundant interaction with companies
- give companies a comprehensive information package that might answer the majority of their possible questions

In this sense, information and content have pivotal roles within the services provided by the help-desk and in that matter are being supplemented in most cases by services for customized assistance, trade fairs participations, trade missions, training, seminars, workshops etc.

Services of export assistance organizations are being usually offered upon registration, even for free services. Usually general information, guides, newsletters and marketplaces are free services. Certain organizations though require remuneration for customized assistance/guidance services or for certain training courses and workshops.

Communication with the “clients” (interested local or foreign companies) is being primarily made through the internet portal or Email. Phone services are being offered twofold: as general service to help “clients” find information in the portal or as customized service (i.e. in case of GTAI with remuneration). In general help-desks in EU countries try to channel enquiries through documented means (Web forms or Emails).

A network of local offices is also in some cases providing more personalized assistance and guidance to companies. *Development Advisers (Ireland)* or *Key Account Managers* (Portugal) have a central role in the continuous liaison and assistance between the organization and its “clients”.

The information provided is also not necessarily generated directly by/in the export promotion organizations themselves. Other national stakeholders (for example Commercial Attachés in Embassies or Consulates, Chambers of Commerce, EU institutions, business associations and private services providers) can be integrated as service providers or be interconnected as such with the help-desk’s web interface.

Common characteristics between the Export Promotion Help-desk Services benchmarked under the AHK study confirmed the categorization made on areas of intervention of EPAs, while assisting exporting companies and potential exporters.

In the cases examined, help-desks in EU countries do offer:

1. ***Guidance:*** By providing information or personalized assistance in topics such as:
    - Generic information on trade framework by target market (procedures & formalities, tariff rates, quality/technical standards, documentation)
    - Business sophistication through access to more in-depth export data (i.e. information on tenders abroad)
    - Identification of markets & buyers tools
    - Information on financing/funding instruments

2. ***Advocacy:*** By operating as support mechanisms of points of delegation of enquiries concerning:
    - Pre-customs & Customs documentation
    - Quality/Technical compliance
    - Rules & Certificates of origin
    - Legal export related measures

3. ***Empowerment:*** Through the help-desks, Exporters, potential Exporters and all interested parties from Greece and abroad are also able to network with partners and facilitators, in fields like:
    - Transfer of Know-How for international trade and marketing (i.e. Advisors and consultants networks, Exporters/Business Associations, etc.)
    - Financing/Funding
    - Export promotion and branding activities (i.e. through Events Agenda and Calendar)
    - Training and skill development (i.e. awareness campaigns, e-learning programs, seminars, workshops etc.)

4. ***Coordination:*** Help-desks are also focal points for better coordination among public authorities and facilitate private and public sector interaction in Exports, by:

    - Operating as the main public institutional support mechanism
    - Promoting actual synergies with the private sector

5. ***Whistleblowing:*** in the form of a main point of contact for complaints related to questions on conduct, informalities, infringement and corruption within the export promotion authorities and mechanisms.

In the same context, similarities and common characteristics have been also identified in terms of means of service provision by a help-desk structure. All of the help-desks examined in order to assist interested companies use a) web interface, b) workshops / seminars / webinars, c) mail / web forms for submitting enquiries and d) phone service/ call center.

As per sources of information, input mainly derives from:

- International Network of Commercial Attaches, External Partners / Agents[28] etc. for country, sector and case-by-case specific information
- Information from National and International Organisations (Central Banks, EU, Chambers, Business Associations etc.)

[28] External Partners and/or Agents are usually public bodies or non-profit bodies (for example the AHK/bi-lateral chambers network that supports GTAI). There might be also private service providers (for example KOMPASS database provider) that provide information/ content.

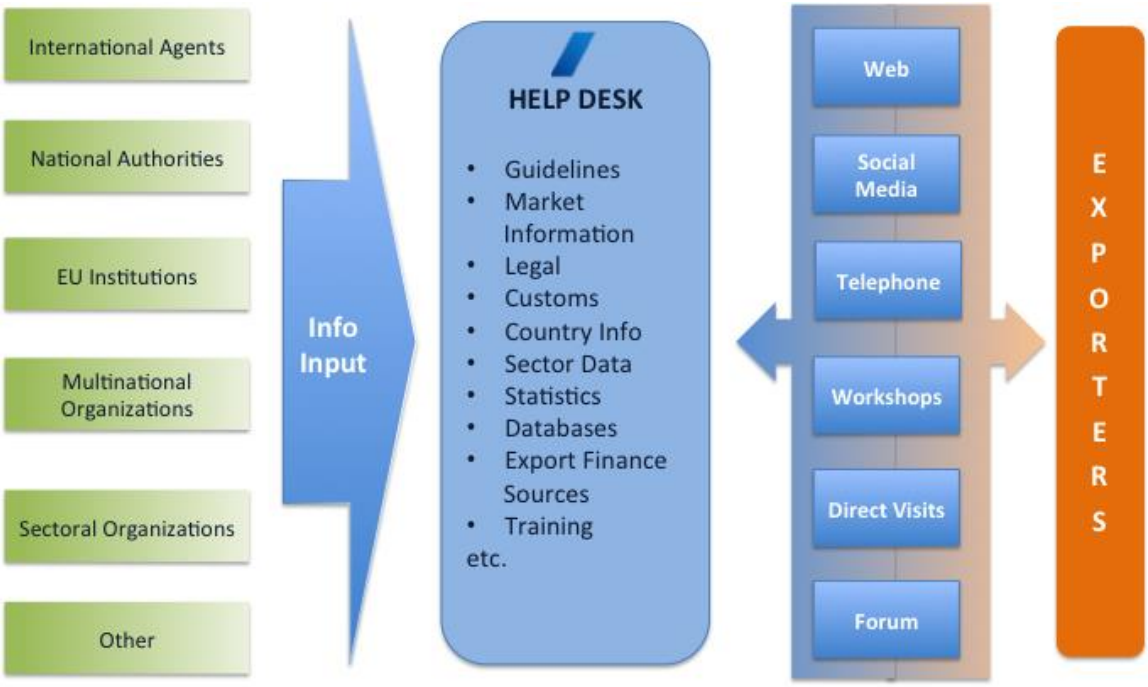

Figure: Export Promotion Help-desk Information Flow

Customized services to exporters

While there is an on-going discussion[29] on whether EPAs should sell services at cost for companies, in EU countries services of help-desks are provided mostly without remuneration, with the exemption of company participation in Workshops / Seminars / Webinars or personalized guidance/advocacy (for example: GTAI 42,5 EUR per 30min phone assistance, the first 30min for free. Italtrade: 300 EUR +VAT per man-day).

The customized services are provided mainly through/via:

- Telephone Service
- Personal Assistance / Mentoring / Advising
- Regional Offices (own or in cooperation with local entities like Exporters Associations or Chambers)

and consist of:

- General Assistance Packages like
    - Introductory Company Audit, Export Maturity / Readiness Assessment
    - Networking with Partners / Statistics etc.
    - General consulting etc.

- Personalised Assistance like
    - Customized Consulting
    - Visits and Participation on Fairs
    - Participation on Business Delegations

[29] See "Export Promotion Agencies: What Works and What Doesn't" report, pg. 11, World Bank.

- Legal Issues (contracting, regulatory compliance etc.)
- Financing issues
- Customs issues (Procedures and documentation)
- Quality requirements / Technical Compliance
- Logistics – Freight-cargo forwarding

In the case of customized services, as sources of information, two ways of service provision are identified a) authorized help-desk personnel / in-house consultants and b) external experts.

Structure of help-desk service provision

Following the above, one can summarize the common characteristics of help-desks in benchmarked EU countries, as below:

- One organization as coordinator and as central entry point of enquiries (DE-GTAI, IT-Italtrade, GB-DIT, PT-AICEP, IR-Enterprise Ireland etc.)
- with a Network of *international* agents, in combination with diplomatic missions (example Portugal) or own international office network (example GTAI)
- that Streamlines information input through a management system (*procedures, actors, forms etc.*)
- under Principles of Quality Assurance and predefined *Key Performance Indicators* (KPIs) and their Target Values.

The following page includes a comparative benchmarking for the offered services from the selected organizations.

Comparative service mapping of selected help-desks in the EU

	enterprise europe network	ITC EUROMED TIFM	GTAI Germany Trade & Invest	Exporting is Great	ITA	Enterprise Ireland	aicep Portugal Global
Own Regional Offices			X	X	X	X	X
International Office Network			X	X	X	X	X
Co-operation Network (national and/or international)	X	X	X		X		X
General Guidelines On-Line	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Country Profiles			X		X	X	X
Market Information[30]		X	X		X	X	X
Sector Information Countries		X	X				X
Marketplace / Business Opportunities / Business Partnering	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Database Exporters				X	X	X	X
Database Importers per Country					X		X
Trade Statistics		X			X		X
Database Events (Fairs, Trade Missions etc.)	X			X	X	X	X
Personalized / Customized Assistance	X				X	X	X
Training Courses and Workshops / Seminars				X	X	X	
Mentoring						X	
Phone help-desk			X		X		X

Source: GIZ

[30] Market Information includes country specific guides, legal conditions and possibly opportunities. Sector Information specializes on selected sectors in every country covered.

4.3 Recommendations in content of services

The primary objective of the help-desk is to assist Greek suppliers to internationalize their products or services and to find the way to international markets. As a supplementary service to this, the help-desk can include information for foreign companies that wish to *buy from* Greece.

In this point of view, documents and information provided by the help-desk itself have to be delivered, to the most possible extent, in Greek language to facilitate Greek potential exporters to better assimilate the information contained. This practice is being also followed by all benchmarked agencies; GTAI, iXPOS, Italian Trade Agency and Portugal Global (countries that do not have English as a national language) include guides and information for exporters in their local language only. Information for *international clients* like marketplaces and exporters registries is also available in English language.

As already mentioned, the content of services shall not necessarily be generated within the relevant agency, as information might be available from other sources, either already publicly available (i.e. Export Promotion IT System to be developed) or through dedicated sources and databases (i.e. ITC, Kompass).

Aligning the findings of benchmarking help-desks in EU with the Main Services Categories already identified in paragraph 3.2, content[31] of services should include:

1. **Guiding** (potential exporters) towards sources of export related information and data, including the IT System for Export Promotion and external databases
2. **Advocating** regulatory compliance (procedures & formalities, documentation) at a pre-customs level and across borders, as well as conformity assessment (quality/technical requirements)
3. **Empowering** exporters through networking with other public and private sector bodies (consulting, coaching, mentoring, training)
4. **Contributing** to the improvement of coordination within the public sector and interaction of private and public sector.
5. **Whistleblowing (**in all above fields), by appointing a main point of contact for complaints related to questions on conduct, informalities, infringement and corruption within the export promotion authorities and mechanisms.

Guidance

Guidance services (produced within EG or obtained by outsourced partners from public and private sector through SLAs) should include detailed information for companies in topics such as:

- Advantages for a company to export
- Guidance to self-assess readiness on exporting
- Guides how to get ready to sell abroad

[31] Modes of service delivery, division of labor and financing of the help-desk will be further elaborated in the Deliverables to follow (2.2.1 & 2.3.1)

- How to grow the export business (larger volumes, new markets, new counterparts)
- Methodology to research the markets
- Guides about usual contract terms, pricing, forms of delivery and payments on exports
- Create export plans
- Guides how to finance exports
- Shipping and logistics guide
- Customs and licenses guide

General exporting guides are being offered by all benchmarked EU help-desks.

Furthermore, these guides shall also take the form of Country or Sectoral reports. Such reports shall be prepared in a common form for every country and include information as:

- General Economic information (population, GDP etc.)
- Sectors/Countries of priority for Greek exporters
- Trade statistics by country/sector
- Legal issues on trade by country/sector
- Country/sector related regulations on customs and products
- Country/sector specific business news
- Business opportunities in the country/sector
- Events (like fairs, trade missions, inward visits etc.)
- Importers database for the specific country/sector

Comprehensive examples for country reports is the respective information in GTAI and iXPOS portals.[32]

Advocacy

Information on Taxes, Import Tariffs, Customs and Procedures is considered of high importance for potential exporters and already exporting companies. This information should be categorized as country-specific or sector-specific and should include, in the provision of service, a network of relevant authorities and experts.

GTAI offers detailed information on Customs and Tariffs per country (in German) while also supports companies in dispute resolution. On the other hand the Italian Trade Agency offers customized assistance on developing trade relationships with foreign customers.

EU help-desks depend on the Market Access Database for providing detailed information per country and product (-code) in English language (only).

[32] Example of a country profile for China is:
http://www.gtai.de/GTAI/Navigation/DE/Trade/Weltkarte/Asien/china.html
The profile under iXPOs for China is:
http://www.ixpos.de/IXPOS/Navigation/DE/Ihr-geschaeft-im-ausland/Laender-und-branchen/Laenderprofile/Asien-pazifik/china.html
(GTAI and iXPos country profiles are available only in German).

The help-desk should not only guide to relevant information sources, but also actively support in coming to solutions for the “client”, i.e. establishing contacts with the relevant authorities and follow up result-finding.

In some case, advocacy can be achieved indirectly, i.e. an on-line discussion forum where exporters can exchange experience and information regarding selected markets (i.e. iXPOS in Germany). It is strongly recommended to foresee such a forum, though it should be closely moderated in order to avoid placement of advertisement or inadequate posts.

Empowering

Networking support is an essential operation/function of the help-desk. The content of information and services, in that matter, should include:

- Registry of Greek Exporters
- Registry of Greek and foreign companies/bodies supporting exports (freighters, forwards, transport/ shipping companies, export consultants, exporters & business associations etc.)
- Alerts on export opportunities
- Classified ads/ specs placed formally from importers for Greek products or services
- Alerts on tenders abroad

Almost all benchmarked help-desks offer Marketplaces for exporters to place their products and services internationally. The establishment of such a marketplace (i.e. in form of a website “buyingreece.gr” or similar) is strongly recommended.

Empowering Greek companies to export also consists of empowering human resources and developing skill-sets for entrepreneurs and exporting companies’ personnel. For example, Enterprise Ireland offers mentoring and coaching support to Exporters and Export Training courses or Webinars.

The development of training courses and webinars[33] should start and become an integral part of the help-desk.

Coordination

In all examples reviewed, help-desks in EU countries integrate useful links to external information sources either country specific or general (like EU sources, national statistic authorities, diplomatic missions, local or bilateral chambers of commerce, business associations etc.).

[33] GIZ under WP 3 will provide a manual with minimum criteria for the financing of training and consultation programs for exports and recommendations on a coordination framework for such activities (Deliverables 3.1.3 & 3.2).

Moreover, using detailed FAQs and providing answers to common questions contribute to avoid duplication of effort within relevant authorities, while providing input to policy makers on trade impediments.

As a central entry point for enquiries, help-desks incorporate in their web interface or content of information events' calendars and agendas.

A common events agenda, a FAQ monitoring and establishment of a relative section in a web-portal, should be foreseen and will help enforcing the coordination tasks that we suggest that should be carried out by the help-desk.

Whistleblowing

Many of the help-desks reviewed are coupled with whistleblowing mechanisms in the form of a main point of contact for complaints related to questions on conduct, informalities, infringement and corruption within the export promotion authorities and mechanisms.

According to knowledge and practice within GIZ[34], these focal points act autonomously and independently, are impartial and maintain confidentiality in these cases. Often they co-exist with an external ombudsman (lawyer), which can be directly contacted by clients (companies), partners, stakeholders and staff, so that a confidential consultation can be arranged.

To ensure this task for the EG help-desk, the whistleblowing function will be elaborated as part of the coordination management model (see WP 3), foreseeing the need for an official mandate and reporting structures to the bodies responsible for export promotion, which may then act accordingly[35].

[34] GIZ Integrity Advisors mechanism.

[35] GIZ: Another idea could be the establishment of an "Export Promotion Ombudsman". We will be discussing this issue also with the legal support we will get on board, and within WP 3 – coordinating framework.

4.4 Recommendations for service delivery

One of the basic information sources from which the help-desk can draw data and other information input (and vice-versa insert new information and input learned), is the Export IT-System under development. The web interface of such an IT-System should enable interested parties to easily find information on many questions and topics by themselves. Operating also supplementary to an IT-System, in order to interact with interested companies and potential exporters, more means of service delivery should be used, as follows:

- **Web Forms or Email**
  Web Forms or Email have the advantage that inquiries are documented and give the ability to the qualified[36] help-desk personnel also to collect the necessary data in order to respond properly to the inquiry.

- **Phone/Call center**
  Phone enquiries shall rather be limited on guidance to the content of the Web Portal. Phone communications for other issues will deploy resources while the necessity to respond timely over the phone to complex issues includes the risk of misunderstandings or incomplete information. As far as concerns phone contact the German GTAI offers phone assistance at a fee (EUR 43 for 30 minutes) deploying experts on regions and subjects. Other help-desks, like Italtrade, offer only a very limited time to be accessed by phone (2½ hours daily) and clearly define that individual services are payable at a rate of EUR 300 per man day.

- **Customized Assistance/Guidance**
  Customized Assistance in the form of Key Account Managers (Portugal) or Export Advisors (Ireland) should be offered by qualified and trained personnel or by external partners of the help-desk.

As per the beneficiaries of the support, the provision of services should follow a registration procedure. While the registration is proposed to be free of charge, it gives the opportunity to the help-desk to identify and classify each client and monitor both the individual service delivery and trace enquiries and contacts with the client. This function should be supported be the incorporation of a CRM tool.[37]

More customized services can be payable at certain rates that have to be pre-defined (i.e. Italian Trade Agency).

[36] See paragraph 4.5.
[37] See paragraph 4.5.

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Examples of Services as provided by other EU Organizations							
	enterprise europe network	ITC EUROMED TIFM	GTAI GERMANY TRADE & INVEST	EXPORTING IS GREAT	ITA ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY	ENTERPRISE IRELAND	aicep Portugal Global
GENERAL EXPORTING GUIDES	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
COUNTRY REPORTS		X	X	X	X	X	X
SECTORAL REPORTS		X	X	X		X	X
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
TRADE STATISTICS		X			X		X
MARKETPLACE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LINKS TO EXTERNAL SOURCES	X	X	X	X		X	X
FAQ		X	X		X	X	X
EVENTS	X			X	X	X	X
EXPORTERS FORUM			X				
CONTACT – INDIVIDUAL QUERIES SERVICE	X		X	X	X	X	X

Source: GIZ

4.5 Recommendations in help-desk structure (set-up)

Following the Benchmarking study of the selected services in the EU, the extent of services and the service delivery can vary from general information to customized personalized assistance of individual clients. In the same way, the service delivery points (or *interaction* points) can vary from the internet presence up to a world-wide network of own offices and agents.

Given that Enterprise Greece is the eligible body for submitting a funding proposal to the relevant authorities for the development of a help-desk, fulfilling respective MoE strategies on export promotion, EG's help-desk, as a service provider and a coordination mechanism should be able to address the needs and expectations of Greek exporting companies and potential exporters, while contributing to the sharing of information generated surrounding Greek exports from public and private sector bodies.

To better adapt best practices to the case of Greece, the following assumptions were taken into account:

- Help-desk as a physical structure will be integrated into Enterprise Greece
- Help-desk's main source of information will come for the development of an Export Promotion IT System, coupled with a CRM System
- Enterprise Greece does not have national branch offices (besides Athens and Thessaloniki) or international offices, and the current State Network for export support and promotion offices consist of the MFA's ECA Bureaux and GNTO's offices abroad.
- Help-desk services for exporters are being offered also from other public or private organizations, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[38], Exporters and Business Associations, the *exportgate* service of the Eurobank[39] and other EU or private sources.

Aligning service content and help-desk set-up, the central idea behind the suggested flowchart (see below) is that interested exporters will contact the help-desk as the entry point for information, and through the help-desk receive information or/and service requested or will be delegated to other Stakeholders, other help-desks or other sources of information[40].

As stated before, information to be provided can vary from general guides to specific answers on enquiries. Information should be generated within Enterprise Greece and provided through the help-desk (dedicated webpage/microsite, or part of the web-portal of the new Export Promotion IT-System, Newsletters, Phone service etc.), but could also be available via stakeholders or through other publicly accessible sources (for example Enterprise Europe, International Trade Centre,

[38] agora.mfa.gov.gr.
[39] www.exportgate.gr.
[40] GIZ: Help-desk should ensure and follow up that services/information have been provided in the agreed timely manner.

other export promotion organizations, national organizations help-desks like the customs help-desk[41] etc.).

The suggested flowchart is depicted below:

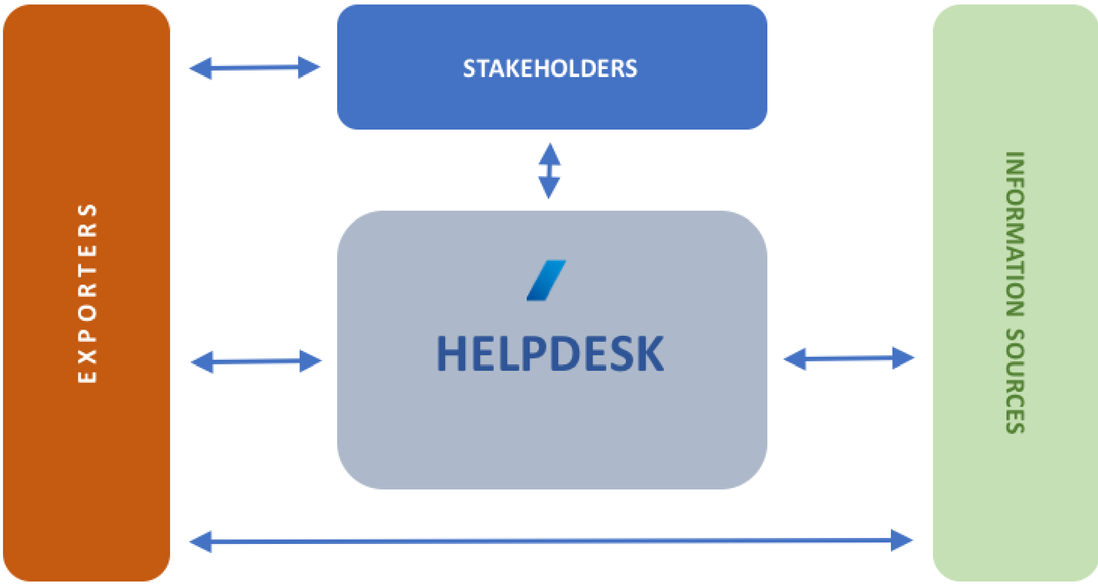

Figure: Help-desk Information flowchart

Currently Enterprise Greece has scarce human resources allocated to help-desk services for exporters (2 employees), while enquiries received are not processed in a unified way, depending on the means of submitting them (by web form, by phone, by direct e-mail to personnel etc.)[42]. The core organization (EG) in the AS-IS situation also depends on outside sources and databases to compile or generate information (EL-STAT, business associations, MFA, MinAgric, ITC, ICAP, Kompass etc.), while lacking physical presence in form of offices outside Athens (and Thessaloniki) or Greece in general, thus having limited capacity both in Guidance, Advocating and Empowering services.

Cooperation with other stakeholders[43] requires a high degree of regular stakeholder involvement and constant dialogue with other support service providers. This could be carried out in a variety of ways, including, for example, working groups involving all relevant stakeholders, or the establishment of advisory boards or regular meetings of relevant bodies. In case that certain stakeholders can be included as an integral part of the help-desk (example: Export Assistants/Advisors within the Exporters Associations or the regional Chambers as in the example of Portugal, Germany or Ireland), then such cooperation has to be documented through specific Service Level Agreements (to be drafted by GIZ) defining among others provision of services and the mutual obligations of the parties.

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[41] ICISnet of the Hellenic Customs.

[42] Recommendations on help-desk's modes of operation, human resources allocation and IT set-up will be presented in the Deliverable Report 2.2.

[43] The list of proposed stakeholders and contributors to the help-desk, along with suggestions for the division of labour between them, will be further elaborated in the Deliverable Report 2.2.

In this context, the suggestion for a structure and flowchart is depicted in the following graph:

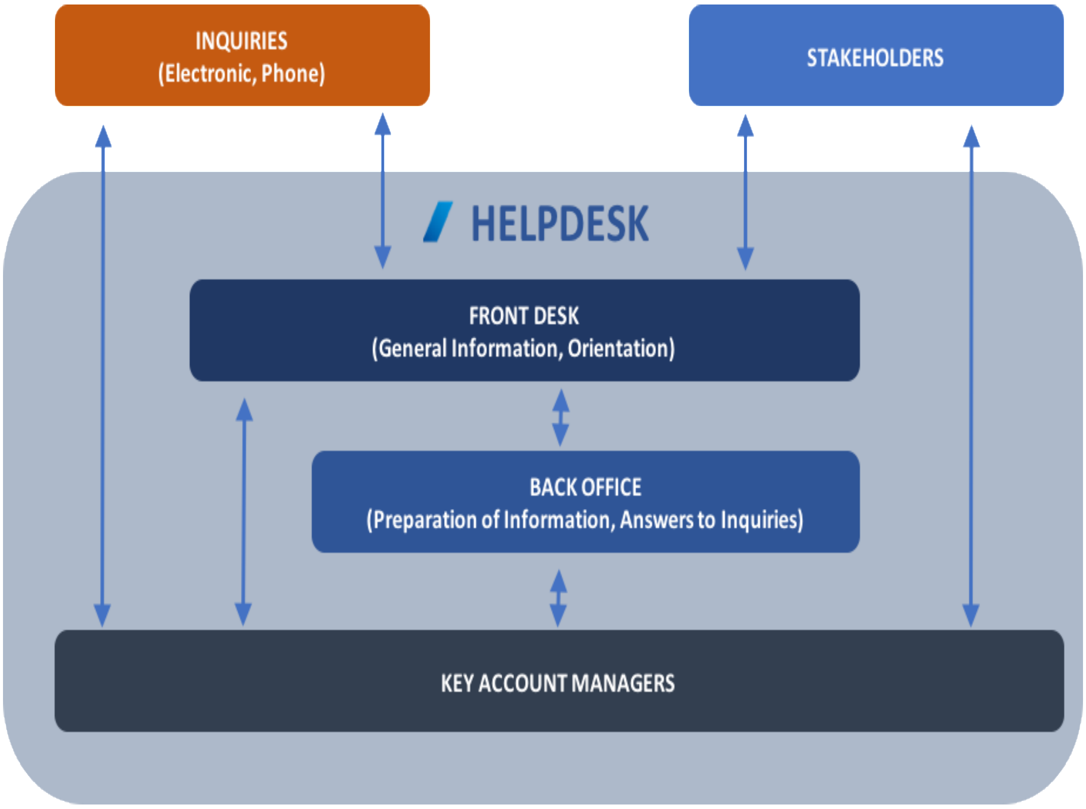

Figure: Help-desk Internal Structure

In this structure it is being assumed that a **Front Desk** within the help-desk is coping with the first communication on enquiries received by exporters. As such the Front Desk has two main tasks:

- To provide general information to exporters a far as to inform them where to search for or find the information inquired or to orientate themselves to better focus on their enquiries etc. The front desk shall also cope with incoming electronic enquiries.
- To delegate certain and concrete enquiries either to the back office or directly to the Key Account Managers for further processing. In some cases, it is the front office that might receive enquiries through stakeholders (say regional chambers) or delegate exporters directly to stakeholders/partners to receive assistance on their specific enquiries.

A **Back Office** is responsible for:

- Processing enquiries that reach the help-desk through the front desk.
- Collecting information from external sources
- Preparing information that will be provided through any means to the exporters (Web, Newsletters etc.)

The **Key Account Managers** shall be responsible for the assistance to groups of exporters. Such groups might be either geographical or sectoral or both. KAM shall be accountable only for registered clients[44] and most likely for clients that are considered to be eligible for assistance (for example those who are already experienced exporters or that are new but ready to export).

Responsibilities of the Key Account Manager should include:

- providing assistance to all companies assigned, in their promotional and commercial activities towards developing exports
- researching and selecting companies which have a potential to branch out into international markets
- monitoring and supporting large exporting companies already with a strong foothold in developed foreign markets
- making available to exporters the help-desk's (and stakeholders') collective knowledge of markets and industries

A job description and positions within the future organizational chart for *Thematic Specialists* for a) financing/ funding, b) regulatory compliance (procedures & standards) and c) logistics/ packaging, should also be foreseen, as these thematics relate to major trade impediments already identified and acknowledged in terms of companies' needs and data currently missing.

The structure described above requires development of internal hierarchies in the Front desk and Back office as well as a group of Key Account Managers. Experienced supervisors, sectoral specialists and administrative support personnel in connection with a CRM system will be necessary to build up a streamlined management system that will provide all necessary monitoring and information to control the help-desks processes and generate performance and statistical data.

The help-desk functions are linked with the development of a comprehensive IT system for Export Promotion and need to be supported with the necessary technical tools, such a user-friendly web interface and a CRM system. The CRM function will support the evaluation processes, by validating KPIs values[45] and including statistical information on usage and service delivery useful for the evaluation reports.

As a general remark, it needs to be pointed out that any new structure of the help-desk should undergo an evaluation after a certain period of functioning, and should not be perceived as static. On the contrary, it needs to adapt to changing environments, changing needs of clients, and technological progress. Thus, monitoring and evaluation processes shall support the continuous improvement of the help-desk.

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[44] GIZ: Client registration as validated by best practices is considered important so the Agency can better register and classify inquiries, thus leading to better resources allocation and higher quality of service provision (i.e. feedback and evaluation procedure). Registration can follow a formal procedure (example Web Form) or a less formal procedure (example: send an email with contact data). GIZ recommends that registration should be free of charge, as the process serve the purpose of building up a database of exporters and potential exporters.

[45] See paragraph 4.6.

4.6 Recommendations in criteria to evaluate help-desk services

The evaluation system for the performance of the help-desk services should aim:

1. to evaluate the impact of the help-desk for the target-users, i.e. companies in Greece that have contacted the help-desk to be assisted in their exporting activities
2. to assess the *quality* of the information provided in terms or reliability, timely updates, completeness etc.
3. to self-assess the overall service and result to proposals for improvements of the service.

The evaluation system shall be a continuous administrative process, at least as far as the collection of information and Key Performance data are concerned, and shall be carried out in regular terms, at least once a year.

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are meant to measure performance and support the help-desk management to identify possible inefficiencies and to improve delivery of services. KPIs are mainly intended to monitor the everyday performance and delivery of service as this has been designed by the management.

The development of the management structure of the help-desk will define the KPIs in detail as per their target values. A set of such KPIs in relation to service delivery are:

- **Response time** in enquiries
- **Average Waiting Time** by phone contacts
- **Average Phone Time** by contacts
- **Number of Enquiries received**
- **Average Response Time for Enquiries received**
- **Number of Enquiries answered in due time**
- **Number of Pending Enquiries**
- **Number of Companies registered**
- **Number of New Companies registered**

KPIs shall be an integral part of a monitoring and reporting system. The purpose of reporting and monitoring is:

- to verify whether the help-desk's performance justifies the related deployment of resources
- to enhance performance and stimulate continuous improvement of the services provided
- to gather key consolidated data showing the main outputs of the help-desk in terms of service delivery

The KPIs shall be monitored very closely in order to provide continuous information and regular reports on the help-desk's outcomes at three-month intervals. Should performance problems or underperforming areas become apparent at any stage, the necessary measures need to be taken.

Performance assessment shall be done on the basis of the **target values set** for the KPIs. Such target values shall be defined during the development of the evaluation system and reviewed in due course during help-desk operation.

Impact Indicators

Impact Indicators shall be set to evaluate the overall service delivery of the Help-desk towards exporters. Impact Indicators should provide information about the positive effects of the help-desk's activities and services on businesses in terms of results (export volumes etc.), employment (job creation or preservation), or other. While KPIs are measuring performance of the help-desk, the Impact Indicators demonstrate the positive impact of the help-desk and its contribution to promoting exports and the national economy in general.

Possible impact indicators are:

- **Exports increase**
  - How has the support of the help-desk contributed to improving the position of the client in terms of exports? Typically, this would be shown by an increase of export volumes or export items or clients or markets. Support actions by the help-desk in this context include:
  - Helping clients to reach to new markets or customers
- **Job creation/preservation of jobs**
  - To which extent has the support of the help-desk contributed to the creation or maintenance of jobs in the client company?
- **Quality improvement**
  - In how far has the support of the help-desk had a positive impact on the client company in terms of the quality? (such as implementation of new quality management systems, new quality certifications, improvement of the company's environmental record, working conditions, or health and safety standards?)
- **Innovation**
  - Has the help-desk's support enabled the client to improve their competitiveness or sustainability by means of embracing an innovation or an innovative technology or process, or by improving its innovation strategy or innovation (management) capacities?

Evaluation Tools

Possible evaluation tools (taking into account the benchmarked ones which are proposed within the Enterprise Europe Network) are:

- **Online and offline questionnaires:** Clients of the help-desk shall be contacted through questionnaires to provide answers about their opinion of the service. Help-desk clients shall be asked to fill questionnaires immediately after service delivery. A second questionnaire 1 year after service delivery might complement feed-back information necessary to assess the impact of the services delivered and the clients' satisfaction with the service.

- **Expert Interviews / questionnaires:** Expert from the business society might also be asked to provide their opinion on the service either in the form of structured interviews or in the form of regular questionnaires. Such experts can be representatives of business and exporters associations, executives from financial departments of banks, representatives from regional and bilateral chambers of commerce and industry, etc.

- **Website traffic and thematic "clicks":** Measurements of the website traffic and the thematic "clicks" of the website content (such as content download) among the time shall deliver useful input on the interests and the awareness of exporters to the services of the help-desk.

- **Phone, Web and Mail enquiries statistics:** Measurements of the enquiries received by any mean (mainly Phone, Web forms and Mail) and their status as well as their timely response will deliver useful information for the respective KPIs.

- **Comparison (Benchmarking) with similar services:** The help-desk service will need to compare with similar services offered by other national or international organizations. A regular systematic comparison (Benchmarking) between the help-desk and similar services will deliver useful input and ideas on enriching or improving the services offered.

- **Evaluation reports:** The evaluation system should provide for regular evaluation reports, for example as follows:

    - Quarterly presentation of KPIs

    - Annual quantitative progress reports (KPIs and Impact Indicators) and a self-assessment

    - Every two years a user and experts survey and assessment on activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts

    - Every three years a Benchmarking report comparing with similar services

In any case, the definition, data collection and monitoring of KPIs and Impact Indicators has to be an integral part of a comprehensive management system that has to be developed for the help-desk. Such management system can follow international standards (like ISO or EFQM) or national standards and guidelines (like ELOT).

5. ANNEX

5.1 Studies' summaries

5.1.1 "Greece: 10 Years Ahead", 2011, McKinsey & Co

In September 2011, the McKinsey & Company Athens Office published the study "Greece: 10 Years Ahead" aiming "*to define a new growth model and strategy for economic development in Greece in the next 5 to 10 years, founded on the principles of competitiveness, productivity, extroversion, investment stimulation, and employment opportunities*"[46].

A key element of the study was the analysis of the structure of specific economic sectors, and fundamental cross-sector challenges, along with macroeconomic drivers and opportunities of the Greek economy.

As stated in the study "*a combination of economic, political and social factors has contributed to Greece's poor competitiveness, foreign investment, productivity and employment record. The Greek economy has grown on an unsustainable demand structure, chronically suffering from unfavourable conditions for business. There are substantial hurdles in investment planning with adverse effects on operational cost. It is one of the most regulated economies in Europe, creating 'red tape' that affects businesses, from the development of land to the competitive intensity of several regulated professions. A complex administrative and tax system creates legal, bureaucratic and procedural disincentives to set up and expand businesses (…)*"[47]

According to the authors of the "Greece: 10 years ahead" study there are five principal causes that can explain the gaps in productivity and competitiveness (a) the structure of the economy discourages investment and economies of scale; (b) the broader public sector is large and inefficient; (c) labour force utilization stifles flexibility and job mobility; (d) the legal/judicial system is cumbersome and deters investment; and (e) informality is widespread.

The explanation is further elaborated on the following table:

[46] "Greece: 10 Years Ahead", pg. 5.
[47] "Greece: 10 Years Ahead", pg. 7.

Productivity and growth barriers in the Greek economy	
A. ***Investment and scale discouraged***	▪ Fragmentation and small scale of businesses across sectors ▪ Over-regulation of markets and professions ▪ Complex and restrictive licensing and operating processes ▪ Lack of integrated and systematic zoning and real estate planning ▪ Highly complex and volatile tax framework creating scale disincentives
B. ***Large, inefficient public sector***	▪ Large, expensive public sector with low quality outputs ▪ Very low efficiency driven by highly fragmented and overlapping tasks ▪ Lack of mechanism to inject market sourced management talent ▪ Low performance transparency and accountability; limited use of double entry system
C. ***Rigid and 'narrow' use of human resources***	▪ Low employment participation of youth and female ▪ Limited flexibility (e.g., part-time, mobility) and employment turnover ▪ Binding and inflexible collective agreement framework ▪ Disconnect between market and education; lack of innovation support
D. ***Cumbersome legal and judicial system***	▪ Over-abundance of laws; sometimes conflicting and with unclear applicability ▪ Heavy administrative burden in courts resulting to long lead times
E. ***Widespread informality***	▪ Extensive tax-evasion; detection and collection reforms still emerging ▪ Substantial wealth creation and transaction outside formal economy

Source: McKinsey & Co

Having mapped the gaps and the impediments of - at the time - AS IS situation in Greece, the study also describes the Future Growth Model for the Greek economy putting an accent on export promotion and facilitation, among other structural reforms.

In the opinion of the study authors, Greece needs to adopt a new National Growth Model, involving radical changes[48]:

- *The economic model should become much more outward, focused on foreign markets both for producing export goods and services and importing foreign capital*. Tradable sectors like tourism, manufacturing and business services should get a large share of resources and investments, allowing them to build scale, expertise and competitiveness at an international level.

[48] "Greece: 10 Years Ahead", pg. 23.

- (…)
- The productivity and efficiency of the public and private sector needs to be improved. This could be accomplished by eliminating redundant or obsolete public sector entities that do not contribute to the public good and step-improving the operating efficiency of the public sector. *The private sector should be activated to pursue business and investment opportunities that would enhance the country's extroversion and international competitiveness and build larger, more efficient organizations that better utilize human resources, investment capital and technology*. Labor market reforms would also contribute to higher productivity.
- (…)
- The country also requires a new employment culture. *Employees, including women and young people, should be encouraged to join private sector business enterprises. There should be meritocracy, particularly in the public sector, with individual effort and skill adequately rewarded*. Part-time work needs to be incentivized to broaden the employment base and increase flexibility. Changing jobs is a sign of a robust economy that creates new opportunities for employees and should not be discouraged. (…)

All the above, are directly and indirectly linked to the Work Packages of the Export Promotion in Greece Project and Action Plan, as the deliverables aim to support the private sector a) to focus on producing products and services tradable to foreign markets, b) identify business opportunities at an international level and c) mobilize human resources in terms of higher productivity and efficiency.

The study also suggests specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in each case, such as Net Exports to GDP (improvement of trade balance), Investments on GDP (matching Southern Europe benchmarks) and Employment Turnover (converging to EU averages).

The study identifies 5 major sectors and 8 “rising stars’ of the economy, suggesting that reforms should focus in sectors with Gross Added Value potential.

The 5 major sectors are:

1. Tourism
2. Energy
3. Food Manufacturing
4. Agriculture
5. Retail

As per the “rising stars” of the Greek Economy, the authors believe that the greatest potential is found in:

6. Manufacturing of generics pharmaceuticals
7. Aquaculture
8. Medical Tourism (mainly outpatient)
9. Elderly care
10. Regional cargo hub

11. Waste Management
12. Specialized food categories
13. Graduate/ postgraduate Classics education hub

These findings support GIZ suggestions for the "***sectoral approach***" both in the IT system content (information, data, surveys etc.) and the help-desk support mechanisms (focused dissemination of support requests to relevant authorities/bodies, network of partners by sector)[49].

Adding to the "sectoral approach" for reform planning, the McKinsey & Co study also emphasizes on "*prioritizing target export markets*"[50]. In this context, the study proposes to first cluster foreign markets based on common retailer presence and commercial synergies, and a subsequent prioritization based on their size, growth potential and receptiveness to Greek products (proxied by Greek diaspora and tourist origination)[51].

As per the projection of the study, reforms of that kind could lead to the creation of 520,000 new jobs and €55 billion in GDP terms in the five major (the five largest production sectors of the economy) and eight emerging, 'rising star' sectors, alone. This means that even if the rest of the economy would grow at a moderate long-term annual rate of 1.5% over the next decade, this upside could double annual growth to 3%.

Summarizing, the McKinsey Study though outdated in some points (published in September 2011), has put forward several broad economy-wide priorities and set out strategic growth measures that can be taken in selected established and major sectors of the economy.

Mainly, it proposed that the Greek state embark on a systematic, economy-wide effort to remove competitiveness and productivity barriers in the economy and promote growth and investment, with emphasis on stimulating export income.

Identifying businesses' need to develop scale through consolidation, build healthier and more productive operating models, it puts the accent in supporting Greek enterprises to be more proactive in promoting Greek-branded products and services in core export markets, while introducing possible KPIs in evaluating the progress of reforms made.

[49] GIZ Export Promotion in Greece, Draft Deliverable Report 1.1, June 2017.
[50] Greece: 10 Years Ahead", pg. 40.
[51] Securing strong access in priority target markets would also require coordinating marketing and trade marketing campaigns, which are also being referenced in Work Packages 1 and 3 of the Export Promotion in Greece Project.

5.1.2 “A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece”, 2012, EZ

In 2011/12, the Greek authorities signaled their interest to receive technical assistance, at the State level, for designing and implementing a trade (promotion) strategy and identified the Netherlands as “best practice” which they would like to emulate. The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs responded favorably to this request and took on a leading role for providing assistance to the Greek authorities as the domain leader for the development of Greece's Export Promotion Strategy.

The Netherlands' assistance to the Greek authorities coordinated by the Task Force for Greece led to a report titled “A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece”. While mapping trade impediments, Greek economy was characterized as an economy of:

- structural rigidities, with very high administrative burden (red tape),
- very small sized enterprises that lack the necessary skills and resources needed to prepare a proper export strategy and business plan and make the initial investment,
- overall low productivity levels in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors which are not coupled with low wage levels
- relative low-value products
- overall low value added margin for the export sector in general
- trade deficit in Greek tradable merchandise sectors
- narrow export base
- very low workforce participation rates (i.e. “*relatively small labour force, supporting a generally unproductive economic system*”)

Furthermore, the report found lack of vision and strategy for trade and investment promotion in Greek authorities, as well as overlaps within the public sector, in trade and foreign direct investments (FDI) promotion. The overlaps were depicted in the following table:

Greek stakeholders involved in trade promotion & attracting foreign direct investments Who does what?
Promotional activities: HEPO (exports), HELEXPO and TIF (various fairs), Invest in Greece (FDI), GNTO (tourism), HRDAF (privatizations), SG Communication • Branding: HEPO, Invest in Greece, GNTO, TIF, SG Com/Info • Information: HEPO, OAEP, Invest in Greece, GNTO, SG Com/Info • Fairs: HEPO, HELEXPO, TIF, GNTO, Invest in Greece • Business missions: HEPO, TIF, GNTO, Invest in Greece • Conferences: HEPO, HELEXPO, TIF • Networking (domestic): HEPO, Invest in Greece, HRDAF • Analysis/studies: OAEP, Invest in Greece, HRDAF, KEPE • Networking (abroad): HEPO, Invest in Greece, GNTO, HRDAF • Financial support: HEPO • Resources (structural funds & state budget): HEPO, Invest in Greece, GNTO

Source: “A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece” Report, Netherlands Domain Leader, Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs

Elaborating on the above, from the authors' point of view "*promotional activities do not target the high potential markets, strategic issues are not being addressed. The fundamental relationship between trade promotion, attracting FDI, stimulating innovation and an accommodating economic diplomacy is not being recognized. There is (therefore) no collaboration between trade promotion and attracting FDI - the implementing agencies do not seek collaboration.*

There is currently no clear division between the design of trade promotion policies and the implementation of those policies. A policy unit dedicated to the Greek investment climate and attracting FDI seems to be absent. There is no culture of making the public sector or public authorities 'accountable' for the effectiveness of their policies. Neither are the implementing agencies being held accountable for their results - this is currently not possible as there are no mutually agreed upon targets and results". Moreover, the Dutch Ministry delegation came to the conclusion that "*current trade promotional activities are not addressing some of the structural problems faced by Greek businesses today. There seems to be a general lack of knowledge about the opportunities in foreign markets. More generally, Greek business lacks an outward-looking vision. The relatively large share of small-scale businesses in Greece poses a problem in reaching the critical mass needed to enter foreign markets. Last, but not least, the Greek economy is characterized by structural rigidities, including a host of red tape issues, but it can unlock enormous benefits by adapting to international trade*"[52].

The report also emphasized in the "*urgent need to engaging Economic Diplomacy*" in trade promotion and attracting FDI.

To address these challenges and tackle trade impediments, the Dutch Ministry submitted a proposal consisted of work streams in 8 fields, as follows:

1. *Building a vision & strategy for trade and investment promotion*
    a. Economic Diplomacy as point of departure
    b. Establish relationship between trade, FDI, export base, etc.
    c. Establish synergies with private sector
2. *Establishing an effective public infrastructure for Trade Promotion in Greece*
    a. Creation new policy unit Min Dev & MFA
    b. Capacity building for policy analysis & evaluation
    c. Justifying role of government - allocating scarce public resources
    d. Connecting relevant actors using MoU's and SLA's
3. *Establishing an effective public infrastructure for Trade Promotion abroad*
    a. Reallocation from staff MFA - from A to B
    b. Develop Training
4. *Creating a state Agency for implementation of trade and investment promotion*
    a. Merger of HePo and Invest in Greece (promotional functions)
    b. Describing relations with other ministries with Service Level

[52] See "A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece", pg. 5.

Agreement / Joint Venture

   c. Implementation of promotional activities, outsourcing promotional activities to third parties (including private sector)
   d. Capacity building, Monitor &Evaluation systems, customer's information system
   e. Business and Market Intelligence (how to gather relevant information)
5. *Developing Promotional instruments*
   a. Information & advice, Website, Prepare2Start for SME's, Collective Promotional Activities, Studies, Complex Foreign Markets, etc.
6. *Stimulating Public Private Partnerships*
   a. Collaboration with private sector, synergies, overlap
7. *Branding (nation and product)*
   a. Developing a brand strategy for trade and investment promotion
   b. Establishing consistency with nation branding strategy.
8. *Governance Roadmap*
   a. Design a Monitor Group to oversee implementation of the export promotion roadmap, the establishment of a working group tasked with implementation of roadmap (operational level)
   b. Define relations with other projects (pillars) of export promotion - export facilitation and broadening of the export base; development of options ensuring sufficient coordination between these three pillars.

Some of those proposals were partially adopted by previous Governments (leading to the merger of Hellenic Foreign Trade Board (HEPO) and Invest in Greece), while others found way into the present Action Plan for Export Promotion and Trade Facilitation, in the form of projects and deliverables – among others - such as:

- developing support mechanisms for Greek exporters[53]
- upgrading Economic & Commercial Attachés Bureaux[54]
- implementing an Administrative System for the improvement of inter-ministerial coordination (creation of Inter-ministerial and Operational Steering Committees)
- programming, monitoring and evaluating export promotion activities, while adopting a methodology to do so and launching a Common Agenda for Export Promotion Activities[55]

In relation and relevance to the development of a help-desk for Export Promotion the Dutch report having looked at best practices[56] proposes a national vision and a strategy on international trade and investment which includes a) Clear and shared Ambitions, b) Clear Strategies, c) Clear Roles, d) Clear Rules of the Game and e) Empowering for Exports.

According to the authors of the report, the clear and shared ambitions, the vision and strategy include a clear statement on what ambitions the country has and where it wants to go.

[53] See Work Packages 1 & 2 for Export Promotion IT System and Help-desk.
[54] On-going Action of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
[55] See Work Package 3.
[56] See “A Trade Promotion Strategy for Greece”, pg. 8 & 16.

- These goals and ambitions need to be endorsed by the relevant stakeholders, both from the public as well as the private sector.
- The goals and ambitions need to articulate a coherent set of promotional programs and initiatives which cater to the clients' needs. The client is the Greek entrepreneur, Greek businesses and knowledge institutes.

On the matter of Clear Strategies, it is stated that there is need to integrate them to Greece's Economic Diplomacy policy in a way which addresses the fundamental relationship between

- attracting foreign direct investment
- promoting foreign trade
- stimulating innovation
- and an accommodating economic diplomacy.

and thus aligning them to Greece's broader economic development policies.

In terms of Clear Roles, the emphasis is put on:

- the distinction and demarcation between the role of the public sector and private sector.
- the principle of efficiency, both in terms of efficient government (operational) as well as in terms of efficient allocation of scarce public resources.
- a clear division/separation between those responsible for policy making and those implementing those policies (i.e. implementation of promotional programs and activities).

At a fourth level, the Clear Rules of the Game include:

- ways of securing cooperation between the various stakeholders
- the structure for the inter-ministerial cooperation,
- the structure for the cooperation between the ministries, state agencies, private sector and the embassies abroad.
- a system of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that policies are effective and can be adapted if needed.

Finally, for Empowering Exports the report suggests that "promoting exports should go in tandem with empowering exporting businesses or those looking for export opportunities by:

- providing training to those who lack the proper skills to export,
- by facilitating small businesses to organize themselves to reach critical mass needed to enter foreign markets and by
- reinforcing and collaborating with private sector initiatives aimed at trade and investment promotion".

The Dutch report served as a base for merging HEPO with Invest in Greece, creating Enterprise Greece organization, while planting the seed for closer cooperation between public and private sector stakeholders in order to better facilitate exports. It is important to note, that the authors identify the need for clear SLAs and MoUs between all stakeholders, especially for the cooperation of public and private sector bodies, in providing support services for the exporters and potential exporters, clarifying "who does what" and introducing a concrete method for sharing information.

5.1.3 "The Puzzle of the Missing Greek Exports", 2014, EC

In June 2014, in the European Commission's Economic Papers (No. 518), a gravity model for Greek exports was developed based on WTO-OECD dataset of bilateral exports of value added in goods and services with sectoral breakdown for EU and OECD countries, in order to estimate Greece's potential export gain from structural reforms that lead to institutional improvements.

In the paper, Greece is - yet again - clearly identified as "small closed economy" with an historical record of protracted trade deficits and low openness. However, the researchers use a different approach than the aforementioned studies by trying to unmask the problem of intensifying fragmentation of production focusing more in the increasing importance of global supply chains.

To do so, they examined models and empirical evidence introducing institutional quality as a source of comparative advantage, supporting that institutions (i.e. from the judiciary system to tax framework and from education to the degree of markets regulation) matter because they facilitate transactions between self-interested economic parties and shows that institutional differences are in fact a significant determinant of trade flows, as countries with better institutions specialize in goods that are institutionally dependent.

Such models[57] have shown that complexity is the main source of institutional dependence across industries, and better institutions and higher levels of education are complementary sources of comparative advantage. In other words, countries with better institutions and/or more human capital per worker[58] will produce and export more in the more complex industries.

In other cases[59], findings link institutional quality as well as similar quality of governance to a significant, positive and substantial impact on bilateral trade flows (i.e. increasing the overall quality of institutions one standard deviation above its mean level would raise bilateral exports by 44% and bilateral imports by 30%).

They support that poor governance entails negative externalities for private transactions, and consequently raises transaction costs with negative effects on international trade.

Using methodology of international organizations such as the World Bank and OECD, the researchers have mapped indicators (and indicators' sub-components) to identify key fields of institutional quality. On the exporter side, "goods markets" and "business sophistication" as well as "enforcing contracts" and "trading across borders" stand out with relatively large significant coefficients. Also "political stability" and "regulatory quality" appear to come with a relatively strong impact on exports. Other sub-dimensions with significant influence are related to cyclical developments, such as "macroeconomic environment" and "economy and employment".

[57] See Costinot, Arnaud, 2009. "On the origins of comparative advantage," Journal of International Economics, Elsevier, vol. 77(2), pg. 255-264.
[58] Human capital per worker refers to the knowledge and skill accumulated by the typical worker.
[59] See De Groot, Henri L. F. et al, 2004. "The Institutional Determinants of Bilateral Trade Patterns" Kyklos, Wiley Blackwell, vol. 57(1), pg. 103-123.

On the side of the partner country, institutional quality plays a lesser role than in the exporter country, although significant positive coefficients can be observed for "market size", "protecting investors" and "regulatory quality”.

As seen in the other studies reviewed, the EC paper exploits also the sectoral dimension of the dataset to examine impact. In this way, the gravity model becomes a tool for identifying impact of institutional improvements by sector of the economy.

The Paper showed that Greece exports significantly less than what a standard gravity model would predict (around 33% compared to what regular international trade patterns would predict on basis of Greek GDP, the size of its trading partners and geographical distance), confirming a competitiveness gap persisting since the mid-1990s. The most affected sectors include electrical equipment and machinery, while transport, tourism and agriculture perform relatively favourable.

Furthermore, the regression results suggest that an improvement in the quality of Greek institutions up to the EU/OECD average would close the Greek competitiveness gap by between 54% and 78%, explaining large parts of the puzzle of the missing Greek exports.

These results point out the sectors in which Greece enjoys a comparative advantage (international shipping, tourism and agriculture) and the sectors in which Greece is lagging behind (manufacturing), as well as the need to identify more in depth exactly which specific institutions are essential for export growth.

While the Paper does not map specific trade impediments, it shows the key areas of institutional intervention need for boosting Greek Exports. And although the deregulation of “goods” markets” or the “macroeconomic environment”, are not a direct part of the Export Promotion Project deliverables, empowering “business sophistication” and facilitating “trading across borders“ surely fall in the category of the help-desk functions.

5.1.4 “Greek Exports: Prospects & Challenges”, 2014, PSE

In August 2014, the Panhellenic Exporters’ Association (PSE) conducted a survey among 114 Greek exporters – accounting for approximately 4% of total Greek exports – on behalf of the Bank of Greece (BoG), in order to map major impediments and disincentives to the country’s external trade.

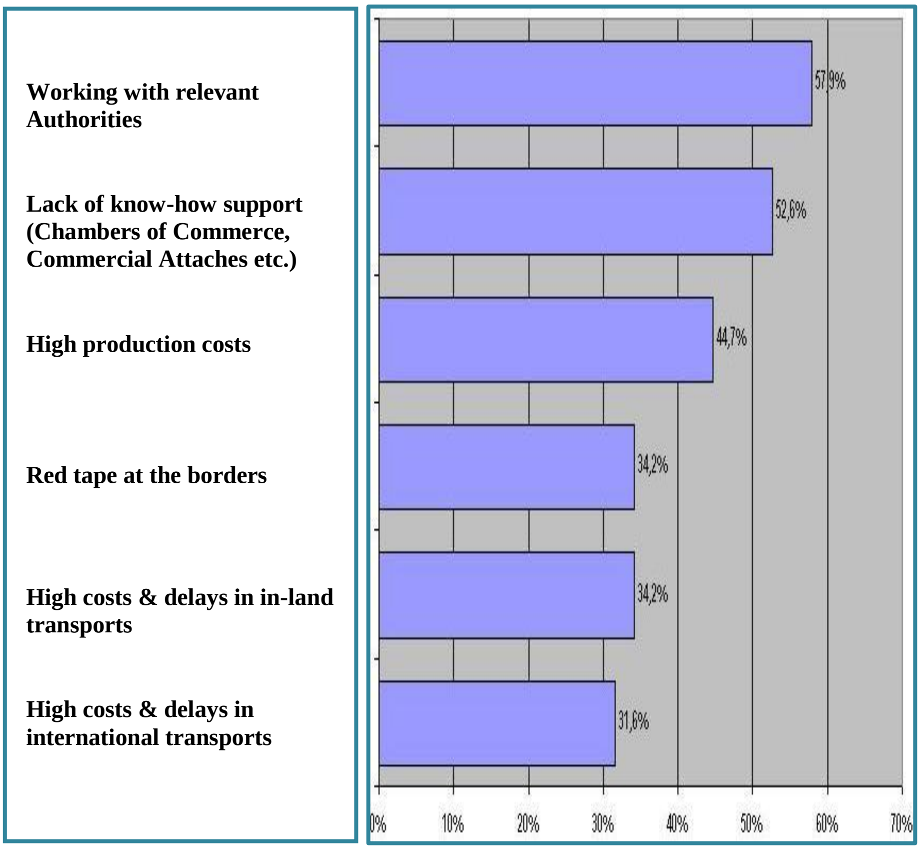
Following up on World Economic Forum’s methodology and findings in yearly “Enabling Trade Reports”[60], the researchers interviewed Greek exporters on challenges coming from the external environment (public administration, macroeconomic environment, transportation services) and at an operational level (corporate strategy, production planning, human resources).

With the exception of high costs of production and transportation (incl. delays mentioned), all other challenges are directly linked with the need of Greek exporters to have institutional support surrounding identification of markets/prospects to exports, networking with potential buyers, capitalizing on national branding and promotional activities, while coping with export procedures/ formalities (red tape) and regulatory compliance.

On the other hand, some of the internal (micro level) inefficiencies and inadequacies acknowledged in the survey, are still deriving from institutional background. Access to funding (71,1%), cost of Export Credit Insurance (57,9%) and access to Strategic Export information and data may be perceived as impediments at an operational/corporate level, but are also directly linked to the function of institutional authorities (banking system, Export Credit Insurance Organization and private sector companies, public sector information systems and mechanisms, VAT refunds framework).

[60] See WEF “The Global Enable Trading Reports”, 2016 pg. 13.

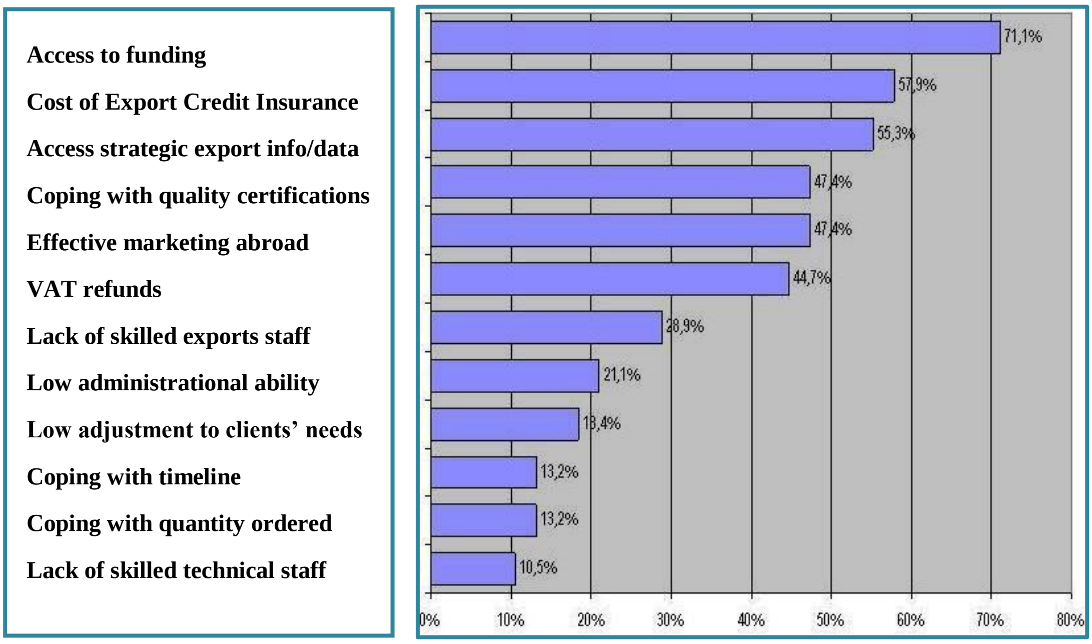
Main Challenges for Greek Exporters: External Environment



Source: PEA, 2014

As seen in other surveys reviewed in the present report, not coping with quality/quantity requirements or meeting clients' needs, along with the lack of capacity building at an administrative and human resources level, leads to impeding the prospects of Greek enterprises to successfully export abroad, as recognized in the answers seen below:

Main Challenges for Greek Exporters: Operational Level



Source: PEA, 2014

Further elaborating on challenges faced especially by SMEs, the PSE report also highlights the following:

- Lack of economies of scale (indivisibility of human and physical capital)
- Lack of information on technology and best practices
- Low interaction with other companies
- Lack of sources of advice
- Lack of capital and investment
- Resistance to change within the SME
- Low management capacity
- Poor understanding of the targeted market
- Poor understanding of their own key capabilities (unique selling propositions)
- Bad business strategies (little alignment of capabilities with market opportunities)
- Poor product development/improvement strategies (inability to make minor improvements)
- Poor production strategies

This kind of inefficiencies explain why the export base of Greece remains weak and showcases the need for reforms and interventions to effectively support Greek exports. According to the PEA, next steps include more vocational training/coaching on exports; effective branding/marketing/promotion support; providing access to strategic export information; networking with foreign partners; facilitating investments in production lines and equipment; incentivize quality/technical compliance of Greek products.

5.1.5 “Incentives & Disincentives for Greek Exports”, 2014, Eurobank

In November 2014, Eurobank’s Research Department presented a survey in the 1st Greek Exports Convention titled: “Competitiveness, Extroversion, Incentives and Disincentives for Greek Exports”. Prioritizing impediments the survey identified Greece as a closed economy with:

- Low share in global markets (exports & imports)
- Low tech exported goods
- Low trade specialization
- Lack of Research & Development (R&D) investments
- Low export concentration index (Herfindahl-Hirschman Index)

From the surveyed companies’ side impediments were categorized in the following major fields:

- *Costs* (High taxes, high cost of money, tax system, VAT refunds delayed)
- *National Strategy* (Lack of support mechanism, Lack of National Strategy and guidelines)
- *Financing* (High cost of money/liquidity, tolerance to non-viable enterprises)
- *Country Risk* (Lack of confidence to Greece’s macroeconomic prospects on behalf of trade partners abroad, demands for prepayments in imports, Greek Banks’ Letters of Credit not accepted by foreign clients)
- *Administrative Barriers* (in pre-customs and customs procedures)
- (own company) *Operational Deficiencies* (such as lack of strategic planning, risk management not incorporated in company policies)

After mapping and categorizing trade impediments and challenges the authors concluded to policy suggestions, both on a national and microeconomic level. In terms of a National Strategy, they recommended putting competitiveness boost as a priority, by:

- Launching a National Observatory of competitiveness
- Empowering Economic Diplomacy
- Improving country’s infrastructure (roads, ports, airports)

Along with ensuring macroeconomic stability, the study noted the need for structural reforms in product/services’ markets, coupled with improvement of taxation framework, tax reductions, and modernization of the VAT refunds regime, while providing incentives for R&D.

Rated as equally important is the lifting of administrative barriers to trade and the simplification of transportation of goods’ procedures, as well as pre-customs (certificates of origin, of quality, licensing etc.) and customs formalities.

On the other hand, at the microeconomic level, a National Strategy – according to the study - should focus on promoting (strategic) synergies, economies of scale, facilitating access to foreign markets, increasing market size and replacing imports with domestically produced goods.

Moreover, boosting exports of higher “tech content and features”, is considered of significant importance, due to the impact in Gross Value Added, couple with faster integration to global value chains. To achieve that, an increase in R&D investments is recommended, along with supporting cooperation with research institutes and bodies.

Especially for exports, Eurobank's study suggests focus on markets with high growth rates and on dynamic sectors of international trade.

In summary, the study emphasizes the need of reforms on both macroeconomic and microeconomic level or/and domestic and external environment, while focusing on the "technological" aspect of exports, as a key factor for value added exports.

The findings indicate the need for proper guidance to exporters and potential exporters and point out the necessity to first map domestic production and then attempt a shift aligned with international market needs and trends.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating an "export prospects" tools in the National Strategy for exports.

5.1.6 "Navigating Non-Tariff Measures", 2016, ITC

In 2015/2016 the International Trade Centre (ITC) with support of the European Commission conducted a business survey on non-tariff measures (NTMs) in the European Union (EU), among 8100 enterprises in 26 Member States. The aim of the survey was to understand the impact of NTMs and Non-tariff barriers (NTBs).

More than a third (36%) of the surveyed exporting EU companies reported facing restrictive regulations or related obstacles that act as important impediments to their exporting activities. The problems can derive from the stringency of the regulations, from bureaucratic complexities but also from lack of information on the measures and the procedures.

Most frequently, EU exporters report difficulties meeting technical and conformity assessment requirements related to technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) imposed by their respective partner countries. They also raise issues regarding compliance procedures with EU or home country regulations (export-related measures), as well as with the procedures to obtain certificates of origin.

Another key finding of this report is that the burden is entirely or partially due to procedural, rather regulatory obstacles. Thus in many cases it seems more difficult for exporting companies to prove compliance with a given regulation than to abide to the regulations themselves. According to the survey "the process of obtaining the necessary certificates often ends up being long and burdensome".

The researchers have compiled a list of 17 major Non-Tariff trade impediments/burdensome regulations as raised by EU exporters. The so called "issues" vary from technical requirements and conformity assessment to pre-shipment inspections and from finance measures and subsidies to procurement restrictions and intellectual property regulations.

The findings of the survey by type of impediment/issue are shown in the following table:

Issues with burdensome regulations raised by EU exporters, by type

	Share of Total (%)
A. Technical requirements	16.9
B. Conformity assessment	31.9
C. Pre-shipment inspections and other entry formalities	8.0
D. Trade remedies	0.6
E. Quantity control measures	3.0
F. Charge, taxes and price control measures	2.7
G. Finance measures	1.4
H. Anti-competitive measures	0.5
I. Trade related investment measures	0.1
J. Distribution restrictions	0.3
K. Restrictions on post-sales services	0.2
L. Subsidies	0.0
M. Government procurement restrictions	0.4
N. Intellectual property	0.2
O1. Preferential rules of origin and related certificates of origin	8.0
O2. Non-preferential rules of origin and related certificates of Origin	8.2
P. Export related measures	17.8
Total	**100**

Source: ITC business survey in the EU, 2015-2016.

Interestingly, but not unexpectedly (due to company size, product composition, market orientation) results on this matter from Greek exporting companies (82 companies surveyed) deviate a lot from the general picture. When asked to point out most often NTMs, Greek exporters raised the issues more of "*Export-related measures*" (31,06%), "*Conformity assessment*" (25,76%) and "*Charge, taxes & price control measures*" (15,91%).

None of the Greek companies surveyed seems to encounters problems in the fields of "*Trade remedies*", "*Trade-related investment measures*", "*Restrictions on post-sale services*", "*Subsidies*", "*Government procurement restrictions*" and "*Intellectual property*".

The answers provided by Greek exporters are given in the table below:

Issues with burdensome regulations raised by Greek exporters, by type

	Share of Total (%)
A. Technical requirements	7.58
B. Conformity assessment	25.76
C. Pre-shipment inspections and other entry formalities	6.06
D. Trade remedies	0.0
E. Quantity control measures	1.52
F. Charge, taxes and price control measures	15.91
G. Finance measures	0.76
H. Anti-competitive measures	0.76
I. Trade related investment measures	0.0
J. Distribution restrictions	2.72
K. Restrictions on post-sales services	0.0
L. Subsidies	0.0
M. Government procurement restrictions	0.0
N. Intellectual property	0.0
O1. Preferential rules of origin and related certificates of origin	3.79
O2. Non-preferential rules of origin and related certificates of Origin	4.55
P. Export related measures	31.06
Total	**100**

Source: ITC business survey in the EU, 2015-2016.

If answers were to be compared between Greek and EU exporters, one could see that "export related measures" impediments score almost double figures in Greece against EU total numbers, while "Charge, taxes and price control measures" are sevenfold higher among Greek companies and EU counterparts. Greek exporters seem to face fewer problems with technical requirements and quality control measures than the average European exporter, as well as deal with certificates of origin (50% lower than EU total).

In the majority of cases, Greek exporters perceive the NTMs more of a procedural obstacle (51.52%), rather than a fault of excessive strictness of regulatory framework (20.45%) or a combination of two (28.03%: both procedural and regulatory obstacles). Greek exporters "blame" mostly their home country for the impediments in trade (26.62%, seconded by Hungary with 24.53%) and are the most "generous" with the partner countries (second lowest marking with 68.18%, above only Romania: 31.71%).

In a way, these answers reflect a lack of confidence to the Greek regulatory framework, as well as the feeling of lacking of support from the Greek authorities.

The results of the survey confirm the importance of providing institutional support to exporters, and in particular SMEs, in finding their way in the variety of NTMs that apply across markets, through initiatives such as the Market Access Database and ITC's Market Access Map which provides data on tariff and non-tariff regulations imposed by more than 90 countries.

More recently, ITC, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), launched the 'e-Ping' alert system, which gives timely TBT and SPS-related information notified by WTO members.

The survey also suggests the need to enhance efforts of the European Union and its Member States, in the context of its Market Access Partnership, to make information more available, to better publicize existing information and to further simplify procedures.

5.1.7 "How to boost export performance in Greece", 2016, OECD

In 2016 the OECD Economics Department issued the Working Paper No. 1299, titled: "*how to boost export performance in Greece*", analyzing the structure of Greek exports and presenting policy recommendations to boost export performance.

In the paper, Greece is characterized as "dominated by SMEs" and "*specialized in low-technology goods which make it difficult to be well integrated into global value chains*". As per the trade impediments, the author identifies "*structural problems in product markets, barriers to exporting, access to finance and administrative burden that affect competitiveness and impede export performance*"[61].

These small-sized Greek enterprises often show inconsistent productivity, while dealing with an unfavorable business environment, in terms of the tax framework, judicial system inefficiencies and lack of innovation support. As other major impediments the paper identifies "*high costs and time involved in exports procedures (pre-customs, customs)*" and inefficiencies created by not liberalized or deregulated markets (especially in upstream services: R&D, engineering, design, financial services, transport, insurance, communication, marketing, distribution).

Low investment in infrastructure and logistics is also recorded as an impeding factor for Greek exports, along with the high need for the development of skills in human resources, the lack of access to finance and the lack of actual synergies between Exports, Tourism and Shipping.

On the other hand, Enterprise Greece is acknowledged as a key stakeholder and actor for boosting country's export performance. As stated in the paper "*the recently created export and investment promotion agency deploys annually an Action Plan for exports promotion and is responsible for promotional activities, branding, organization of conferences, and development of domestic and international networking. Export promotion can help solve information problems for local producers regarding tastes of foreign consumers, quality standards and regulations in other markets and business opportunities abroad that are hard to acquire for small firms*". According to the author "*in the case of Greece, more could be done to promote exports and help SMEs reach international markets. The new export promotion action plan aims at addressing several of the above mentioned issues*"[62].

The paper introduces and suggests the adoption of a series of KPIs to ensure positive impact of reforms to Greek exports, following widely used methodology tools from international organizations, such as the OECD, the World Bank, the World Economic Forum and others.

For example, after applying gravity model methodology to examine the impact of policy reforms to Greek exports, the author concluded to the following:

[61] How to boost export performance in Greece, pg. 3.
[62] How to boost export performance in Greece, pg. 15.

- *Increasing human capital* (as measured by average years of schooling) from the current level (10.3 years) to the average of the European Union (10.6 years) could raise total Greek exports by 3%.

- *Increasing capital per worker* from the current level (180 000 constant USD) to the average of the European Union (285 000 constant USD) could raise total Greek exports by more than 5%.

- *Reducing product market regulation* (PMR) from the current level (1.74) to the average of the European Union (1.42) could raise total Greek exports by around 6%.

- Finally, *improving the quality of institutions* (as measured by the index of Rule of Law of the Worldwide Governance Indicators - WGI, 2015) from the current level (67) to the average of the European Union (91) could raise total Greek exports by more than 8%.

Similar methodology was applied in terms of determining the impact of deregulating upstream services, as well as investing in infrastructure and the logistics sector.

The study furthermore highlights the importance "*to encourage the use of the new opportunities offered by information and communications technology, including the Internet, to overcome some of the barriers*"[63] to trade, including by directly engaging with foreign markets through electronic commerce.

Greece's investment in ICT is one of the lowest in OECD (OECD, 2013c) and is a drag on firms' productivity and ability to export. Regarding e-commerce, Greece lags behind with only around 10% of firms engaged in sales via e-commerce compared to 21% in OECD countries. Moreover, among the few having engaged in e-commerce, only around 40% have engaged into international trade.

As mentioned in the paper, Internet dramatically reduces the cost of finding buyers, both globally and domestically and ICT services enable SMEs to outsource some costly activities, reducing their costs and barriers to trade.

Furthermore, development of new ICT tools can facilitate cross border e-commerce and participation in global markets for smaller and new entrants. Enhancing access to ICT networks and enabling SMEs to engage in e-commerce can be an effective way for small firms to go global and even grow across borders where they can become competitors in niche markets.

Finally, the paper calls for the full operationalization of a 'national single window' for exports, as foreseen by the National Trade Facilitation Strategy and the full implementation of the export promotion action plan to promote exports and help SMEs reach international markets, through developing relevant support mechanisms, such as the help-desk.

[63] How to boost export performance in Greece, pg. 32.

5.1.8 "Enabling Trade Reports", 2016, WEF

In an attempt to further elaborate on a benchmarking level of trade impediments in Greece and the impact of those impediments to the degree of internationalization of Greek enterprises, especially SMEs, GIZ analyzed the most recent data available both from the Enabling Trade Reports of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Comparing Greece's markings since 2012 and the beginning of Action Plans related to Trade Facilitation and Export Promotion, one cannot but accept a significant improvement, leading up to 52nd place (among 136 countries worldwide), in 2016[64]. Mapping the AS-IS trade impediments situation, Greece is ranked higher in the Market Access sub-index, but are not scoring equally in border administrative procedures and functions, in availability and quality of transport infrastructure and services or the availability and use of ICTs (Information & Communications Technologies).

The Enable Trade Index also confirms that Greek enterprises operate in a rather unfavorable business environment, impeding their capacity to export competitively in foreign markets, mainly due to the difficulties in accessing financing, the inefficiencies and lack of accountability on behalf of public institutions and the inadequate protection of property.

Most problematic factors for exporting from Greece 2016/2013

	2016	2013
Access to trade finance	23.2%	24.6%
Identifying potential markets and buyers	14.7%	10.7%
Access to imported inputs at competitive prices	14.0%	9.0%
Difficulties in meeting quality/quantity requirements of buyers	10.3%	6.9%
High cost or delays caused by domestic transportation	8.3%	10.8%
Inappropriate production technology and skills	7.7%	7.8%
Technical requirements and standards abroad	6.5%	5.6%
High cost or delays caused by international transportation	5.6%	4.6%
Burdensome procedures at foreign borders	3.8%	7.5%
Tariff barriers abroad	3.0%	6.2%
Rules of origin requirements abroad	1.6%	1.5%
Corruption at foreign borders	1.3%	4.6%
Other	3.0%	1.7%
Total	**97%**	**98.3%**

Source: World Economic Forum, Enabling Trade Index

Trying to explain the numbers shift between 2013 and 2016, the "*access to trade finance*" impediment may seem rather unchanged, but if coupled with "*access to imported inputs at competitive prices*", which is directly linked to the country's macroeconomic fundamentals and the imposed capital controls since 2015, leads to the conclusion that Greek enterprises are experiencing a further deterioration of

[64] WEF, Enabling Trade Report 2016, pg. 142.

the business environment.

At the same time, the challenge of "*identifying potential markets*" are becoming more "visible" to Greek exporters ranked 2nd (from 3rd place in 2913) among the most problematic factors for exports, highlighting the need for more efficient support to enterprises.

"*Regulatory compliance*" is another important field of intervention, reforms and support schemes to exporters and potential exporters. Around 25% of problems are linked with "meeting quality/quantity requirements", "inappropriate technology and skills" and coping with "technical requirements and standards abroad". In 2013 these problematic areas accounted for only 20% of related answers.

High costs and delays in transportation remain also as major trade impediments in Greece, confirming the findings in other surveys and studies, while an improvement has occurred in figures surrounding customs and export formalities abroad (procedures, tariff barriers, rules of origin, corruption).

5.2 Validation of findings

Since the beginning of the Project, GIZ has established communication channels with all relevant stakeholders. Key stakeholders from the public and private sector have been giving input into the planning process of the project on a continuous basis.

On 14 March 2017, the official kick-off meeting of the project took place at the Ministry of Economy and Development with attendance by the Secretary General and Head of Minister's Office of the MoE, SRSS, MFA, Enterprise Greece and GIZ.

The technical meeting following the official kick-off was attended by the participants listed below:

Name	Institution
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Greece
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Greece
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Greece
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Greece
	Ministry of Economy and Development Greece
	Ministry of Economy and Development Greece
	Enterprise Greece
	Enterprise Greece
	SRSS / European Commission
	SRSS / European Commission
	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)
	Association of Greek ITC Enterprises (SEPE)
	Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)
	Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)
	German Greek Chamber of Commerce
	Association of North Greece Exporters (SEVE)
	Association of North Greece Exporters (SEVE)

Following the technical meeting, further meetings and contacts were held, while validation questionnaires were also used, in order to raise and elaborate more on the matter of relevance of trade impediments in Greece with the Project's deliverables and especially the help-desk, as listed below:

Name	Institution
	Enterprise Greece (EG)
	Enterprise Greece (EG)
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Greece (MFA)
	Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)
	Association of North Greece Exporters (SEVE)
	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)
	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV)
	Greek-German Chamber of Commerce (AHK)
	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
	UK International Trade & Investment (DIT)
	Federal Republic of Germany Embassy in Athens
	Panhellenic Exporters Association (PSE)
	Intraway
	Eurobank
	German Trade & Invest (GTAI)
	German Trade & Invest (GTAI)
	Alpha Bank
	Ferro S.A.
	Fillion Ltd.
	GS1 Association Greece
	Gold Air Cargo S.A.
	Intertrans S.A.
	Association of Industries in Thessaly & Central Greece (AITCG)
	Ministry of Rural Development & Food (MinAgric)
	Ministry of Rural Development & Food (MinAgric)
	Nireus Aquaculture S.A.
	Panhellenic Association of Ship Suppliers (PSEPE)
	Attiki S.A.
	Soya Mills S.A.

	Adelco S.A.
	Gerentes Bros S.A.
	SEVE
	SEVE
	SEVE
	SEVE
	SEVE
	GreekExports LTD
	Kechagias OE
	Samaras SA

Source: GIZ

5.3 Definition of “Trade Impediments”

Trade impediments are defined to be any circumstances that hinder international trade. A common division of those impediments is made by separating tariff protection and non-tariff protection measures or barriers. Both, however, imply as an assumption that impediments are imposed by the importing country rather than the exporting one.

In the focus of this study, trade impediments examined are mainly those predominant in the exporting country (Greece), thus hindering exports to prosper. Those impediments, as reviewed under different methodologies by international and domestic organizations and as empirically identified, cover a big range from administrative obstacles and bureaucratic procedures up to logistic infrastructure, information deficiencies and general business environment issues found in Greece.

Although of course existing, trade impediments imposed by specific target countries (i.e. the importing country of Greece’s exports) are not focused upon, and one may state that they do not differ from those faced by other EU-countries and their respective constraints when exporting to third countries (neglecting some bi-lateral trade treaties, and differences or deficiencies when it comes to GI-protected products). They are analysed only to the extent of the Greek exporters’ possibly missing information about those target country impediments.