



"International Carlow"

**An Exploration of the International Reach and Connections of
Companies around Carlow**



**County Carlow
Chamber**
Advancing business together

2023



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County Carlow Chamber works with companies in a range of ways to support them both locally and internationally. As an independent organisation, the Chamber was well placed to conduct this research on International Carlow.

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**Presidents
Welcome**

The initial survey was launched in the first half of 2023 and was open to all companies in the county to have their say on the focus areas which were looking at Imports, Exports, Supports and Communications. While the survey was sent directly to many companies and shared through media, the data collection was also supported by direct communication to member and non member companies.

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Imports

The research from International Carlow will be used by the Chamber and other stakeholders in making informed decisions to support the ambitions and growth of local companies. Assisting them in building connections and exploring opportunities to further expand their presence both at home and abroad.

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Exports

On behalf of the Chamber we would like to express our thanks to all companies who took the time to provide their views and insight. We look forward to working with you into the future and supporting you on your journey.

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**Support for
Busienns**

With any queries in relation to the results of the research or being part of the Chamber, please do not hestiate to get in touch with us on www.carlowchamber.com e-mail ceo@carlowchamber.com.

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Regards

Brian O'Farrell
CEO, County Carlow Chamber



Welcome



International business is important to Carlow, for several reasons, and its significance extends beyond just the local economy.

Economic Growth: Engaging in international business activities allows companies in Carlow to tap into larger and diverse markets. By exporting products and services to other countries, businesses can experience increased sales and revenue, contributing to overall economic growth in the county.

Job Creation: As Carlow-based companies expand their operations globally, they may need to hire additional staff to manage international sales, marketing, logistics, and other functions.

Diversification of Markets: Relying solely on domestic markets can be risky for businesses. International business allows Carlow companies to diversify their customer base, reducing dependence on a single market and providing a buffer against economic downturns in specific regions.

Technology Transfer: Engaging in international business often involves collaboration with global partners, leading to the transfer of technologies, knowledge, and best practices. This can enhance the competitiveness and innovation capacity of Carlow companies, fostering long-term sustainability.

Increased Competitiveness: Exposure to global markets encourages Carlow businesses to become more competitive. The challenges and opportunities presented by international competition drive companies to improve their products, services, and operational efficiency to meet global standards.

Attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): A strong presence in international markets can make Carlow a more attractive location for foreign companies looking to invest. This influx of foreign direct investment can bring additional resources, expertise, and employment opportunities to the region.

Cultural Exchange: International business fosters cultural exchange and understanding. Carlow companies engaging in global trade interact with diverse cultures, leading to a broader perspective and the development of cross-cultural competencies among local business professionals.

Infrastructure Development: To support international business activities, there is often a need for improved infrastructure. Carlow town is now the 12th(1) largest urban district in the country and has major plans in Carlow 2040. Investments in these areas can benefit not only businesses engaged in international trade but also the overall development of Carlow.



Resilience to Economic Fluctuations: Diversifying revenue streams through international business can help Carlow companies better withstand economic fluctuations. While a downturn in one market may occur, others may still provide opportunities for growth and stability.

Global Reputation: Successful international business ventures contribute to the global reputation of Carlow as a hub for innovation and business excellence. This positive image can attract further investment and partnerships, creating a cycle of economic development.

In summary, international business is crucial for the growth, diversification, and resilience of Carlow's economy. By participating in global markets, Carlow businesses can unlock new opportunities, drive economic development, and contribute to the overall prosperity of the county and south east region.

Throughout its history, County Carlow Chamber of Commerce has continued to work with and support local companies in their international ventures. In 2016 the Chamber launched Chamber Trade Connections, a programme focused on meeting existing and new trade partners to build connections allowing us to explore further opportunities for trade and collaboration. Working together we can continue to achieve so much more.

“International Carlow, An Exploration of the International Reach and Connections of Companies around Carlow” as a piece of research was carried out in early 2023 with businesses across Carlow to gain further insight and support the development of measures to assist them further in growing and expanding into global markets.

We invite you to look through the results from the study and look forward to working with you to further your International Ambitions and to supporting more Carlow companies on their journeys across the world.

Should you have any queries in relation to the findings, please contact the County Carlow Chamber directly on ceo@carlowchamber.com.

Yours Sincerely

Rowena Dooley
President County Carlow Chamber



Imports

Imports to Ireland accounted for €104 billion in 2021 (1) across a wide range of categories.

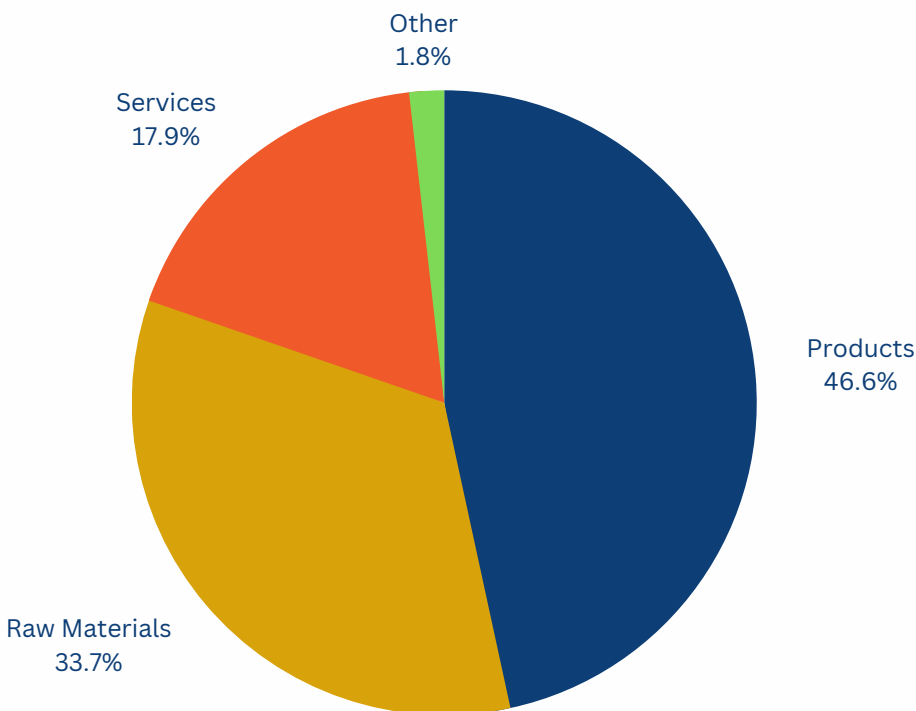
In the course of this research we asked companies details on what they import in terms of raw materials, products and services to gain a better view on the needs of Carlow Businesses.



69.2% of Co. Carlow Companies Import

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Imports of Products topped the list at 46.6% with Raw Materials accounting for 33.7% of imports to the county.

It should be further noted that while some respondents noted that they do not import, they advised that many of their suppliers import the Products, Raw Materials or Services that they subsequently use or sell.

Fig 1 - What Companies across Carlow are Importing

(1) www.cso.ie - Irelands Trade in Goods 2021



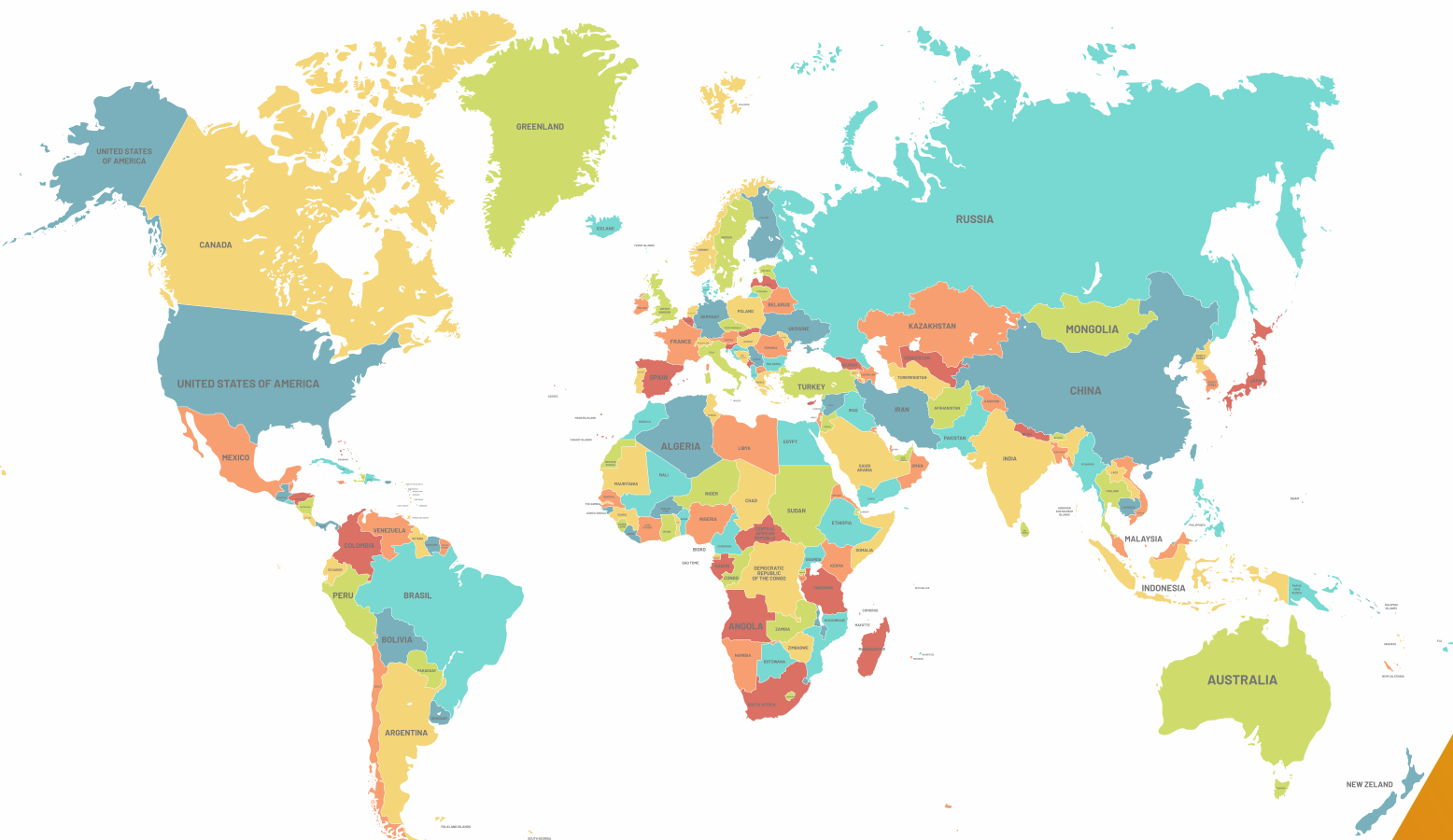
Imports

On average Imports account for 47.5% of total inputs to businesses across Carlow with over 27.6% of businesses advising that imports account for over 75% of total inputs to their business.

In identifying the top countries globally providing imports to Carlow companies, there were 32 countries/areas identified.

The top countries exporting to Carlow companies are as follows:

1. United Kingdom - 26%
2. Germany - 10%
3. China 9%
4. Netherlands & Spain 7%
5. France, Italy & USA - 5%



Other notable countries exporting to Carlow companies include Belgium, Portugal, Turkey, Poland, Romania, Denmark, India and Pakistan, Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Greece, Japan, Latvia, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and Taiwan. In addition Europe was noted by several companies without mentioning specific countries.



Imports

In the last number of years we have seen many issues affecting the movement of goods both globally and locally.

The impacts during and following the COVID pandemic right through to Brexit saw delays in supply chains, increased costs, issues with availability of products and materials to mention but a few.

The survey indicated that in the past 24 months (May 2021 - May 2023), 72.2% of companies importing experienced difficulties in doing so.

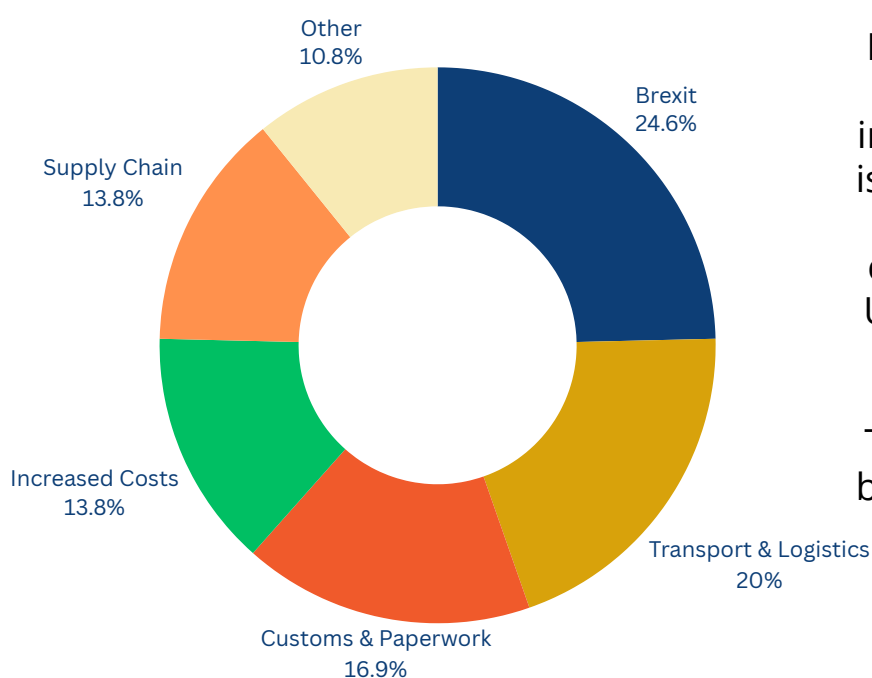


Fig 2 - The challenges experienced by Carlow Companies with importing over the last 24 months

Brexit came through as the cause of most of the challenges in importing, accounting for 24.6% of issues raised. The impact of Brexit has been enormous on Carlow companies given the fact that the UK is the top country exporting to Carlow companies.

The Brexit challenges were driven by issues on delays and availability of products and materials, additional costs and also problems with customs, customs agents.

Transport and Logistics was the next main challenge, with focus in particularly around the costs and delays. Higher fuel costs, blockages in the Suez Canal and container availability were all mentioned in this space.

Issues with Customs and paperwork centred around delays in the process for items to clear customs along with inconsistency in how postal & courier companies are applying charges some which are not potentially due. SME's have reported having to pay charges to get orders released and then go through a process to try and reclaim in order to speed up the delivery of goods.

72.2% of Carlow companies experienced difficulties in Importing over the last 24 months

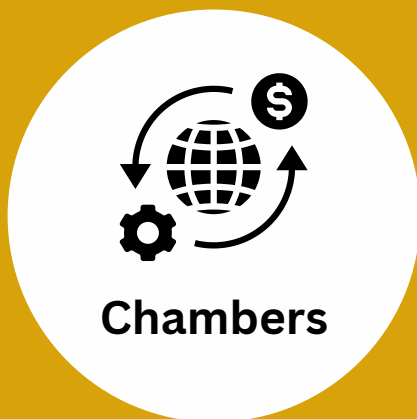


A Certificate of Origin is a form of export documentation that attests to the origin of a particular shipment. Many countries require them so that they can calculate the appropriate duties and tariffs, quota requirements, or rights of market access.



Why are Certificates of Origin Important?

- ✓ Traceability and security of the goods entering a country
- ✓ Taxes and duties applicable determined on the goods
- ✓ Rely of Chambers expertise in certification rules and procedures



- ✓ Issued by Chambers of Commerce
- ✓ Expertise in globally accepted certification rules and procedures
- ✓ Recognised as credible trusted third parties and legitimate authority

- ✓ Easier and faster Customs Clearance
- ✓ Productivity gained for companies





Exports

Ireland exported over €165 billion of goods in 2021 (2) across a wide range of categories. Over €102 billion of these exports were of Pharmaceutical, Chemicals and Related Products.

Enterprise Ireland is the government organisation responsible for the development and growth of Irish enterprises in world markets. Companies supported by Enterprise Ireland saw an increase in exports of 19% to a record €32.1 billion in 2022 (3).

Chambers of Commerce work with member companies in several ways to support them in International markets, including advice, building connections and specific export paperwork like Certificates of Origin.

While unfamiliar procedures, rules and paperwork can leave you feeling frustrated and out of your depth, advice and support is readily available to assist you on your export journey.



40.7% of Co. Carlow Companies are Exporting

The results of the survey indicated that 40.7% of Co.Carlow Companies are currently operating in Export markets.

Of the companies who are not currently operating in export markets, 20.5% advised that they are interested in exploring export markets in the future.



Chamber Trade Connections

Chamber Trade Connections is a series of events, designed by County Carlow Chamber which aims to assist in building connections for developing new and existing trade links.

Speak with the Chamber for further details.

(2) www.cso.ie - Irelands Trade in Goods 2021

(3) www.gov.ie - Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, April 2023



Exports

On average, 43% of business in Carlow companies is attributed to their work in International markets, with many indicating future plans to further grow their presence Internationally. We can see on further analysis that of these companies, just over 30% of them have a strong focus on International Trade, which accounts for over 80% of their operations output.



Top Export Destinations

Carlow Companies have a strong Global presence, but where are they exporting to?

The top current destinations are as follows:

United Kingdom inc Northern Ireland - 19%

United States of America - 11%

Germany - 7%

Belgium, France - 6%

Italy, Spain - 5%

Netherlands, Japan - 4%

Denmark, Canada - 3%

Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, China, Finland, Malaysia, Poland 2%

Other notable countries on who are importing from Carlow companies include Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Sweden and the UAE.

The United Kingdom as our closest neighbour remains a key trade partner despite the challenges of Brexit, in addition it is interesting to see that almost 60% of the member states in the EU feature strongly in the full listing of export destinations.



Exports

The EU negotiates trade agreements on behalf of the member states – including Ireland. These agreements deal with preferential duty rates on the shipment of goods between the EU and countries around the world.

They have also evolved to cover a wider range of areas to facilitate trade. Among these include government procurement opportunities, business visitor visas, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, the certification of products, intellectual property rights and the cross border trade in services.

These far reaching agreements can take a number of years of detailed negotiations.

The EU has preferential trade agreements with about 70 countries worldwide.[1]
These countries represent nearly 32% of the EU's external trade.[2]

€3 billion worth of Irish exports are eligible for preferential tariffs as a result of these agreements.[3]



[1] trade.ec.europa.eu

[2] trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/october/tradoc_157468.pdf

[3] EU Exports, Preferences Utilisation and Duty Savings By Members State, Sector and Partner Country



Exports

Companies across Carlow were asked which countries they might be interested in developing further trade and partnership relations with.

Countries across the EU featured strongly in the responses from participants with France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Poland and Eastern Europe receiving regular mentions. Some respondents did not highlight any individual countries but did indicate that they were interested in expanding further across the Union mainly due to the freedoms that currently exist within the single market.

Carlow Trade Missions

Over recent years the Carlow Local Enterprise Office in partnership with County Carlow Chamber of Commerce have conducted several trade missions including



Netherlands 2019



Liverpool 2022



Scotland 2023

Outside of the Union the key destinations of interest were

United States of America - 14%

Canada - 5%

China - 3%

Africa, Asia, Chile, Columbia, India, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand - 2%

[1] trade.ec.europa.eu

[2] trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/october/tradoc_157468.pdf

[3] EU Exports, Preferences Utilisation and Duty Savings By Members State, Sector and Partner Country



Support for Businesses

Whether you are already operating in International Markets or investigating the potential to expand into foreign markets, there is advice and support there to assist you.

Thorough investigation of new markets is important to ensure companies reach the right audience for their products/services. In Ireland we have a wide range of organisations and agencies who work to support companies on their international journey, while some may operate in more specific sectors like Bord Bia, others operate across a wide variety of sectors.

Companies across Carlow indicated that there were 5 main organisations/agencies they spoke with for advice ad support in relation to international markets, these being Carlow Local Enterprise Office, Enterprise Ireland, County Carlow Chamber, Irish Exporters Association and Revenue.

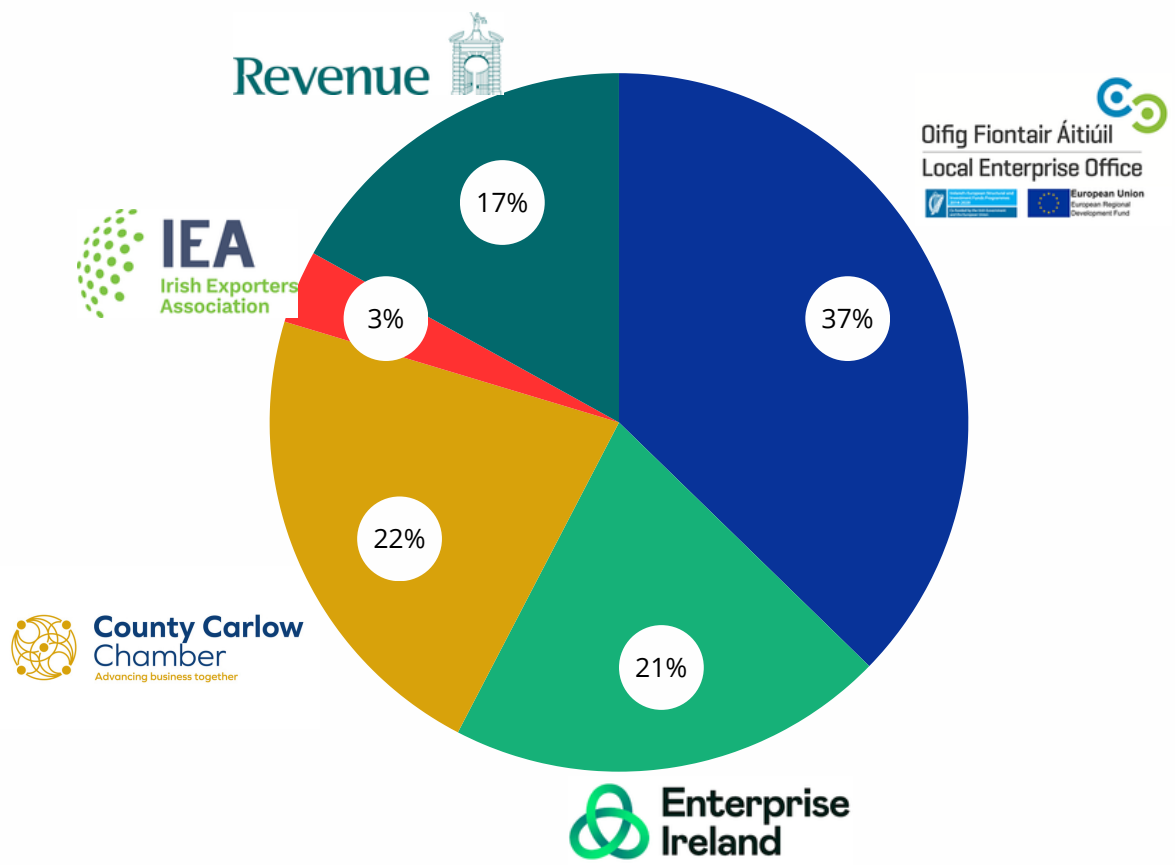


Fig 3 - The agencies and organisations Carlow companies are speaking with for advice in relation to International markets

[1] trade.ec.europa.eu

[2] trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/october/tradoc_157468.pdf

[3] EU Exports, Preferences Utilisation and Duty Savings By Members State, Sector and Partner Country



Support for Businesses

Carlow companies are gathering advice and support from across the network and this was clear to see from the results as over 35% of the companies seeing advice have spoken to two or more of the agencies/organisations indicated.

While Brexit related concerns were dominant in recent years, some of the other reasons why companies sought support include:

- Digital Marketing and Web development to support business promotion
- Mentoring
- Grants and Funding including TAME, Business Expansion Grants,
- Export Advice and Information on potential new markets
- Participation in Trade Visits with a view to expanding into new markets
- Advice in relation to importing

County Carlow Chamber is affiliated to Chambers Ireland and in turn part of the wider European Network of Chambers, and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the largest business representative organisation in the world.



Working together locally, nationally and globally in the Chamber Network, we highlight matters relevant to our members in a wide range of areas including trade, climate, planning etc. Add your voice to the conversation.



Support for Businesses

With a wide range of grants and supports available, several respondents indicated that they felt that more promotion is needed to highlight these along with easier access to the various funding and support measures available.

We asked companies whether there are particular grants or supports they would like to see developed or made available to support their International objectives, some of the suggestions include:

More Financial Supports

Inward Buyer Visits

Market Research Grants

Mentoring for expanding Companies with focus on International Tax or revenue legalitiess

Trade Missions

Support with participation at International tradeshows

Target reverse importing

Support for International Events



Communications

The EU is characterised by its cultural and linguistic diversity, and the languages spoken in EU countries are an essential part of its cultural heritage. This is why the EU supports multilingualism in its programmes and in the work of its institutions.



The EU has 24 official languages:
Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish.

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While English is the foremost—and by many accounts the only—world language. Beyond that, there is no academic consensus about which languages qualify; Arabic, French, Russian, and Spanish are other possible world languages.

Within Business we speak about the four main types of communication which include upward communication, downward communication, lateral communication, and external communication. At all levels and whether internal or external, it is important that all communication is clear, concise and easily understood. Some companies may see languages as a barrier to trade with some countries, while other companies embrace the opportunities to upskilling and developing their teams.

18.4% of respondents reported that they currently conduct International affairs in languages other than English. The reasons for this may vary from the export markets they operate in to the size of the company.



Communications

There are a wide range of languages used or available across Carlow companies and as part of this research we have outlined the most common in terms of usage/availability. We have not ascertained as to what levels they are used/available or the frequency of use.

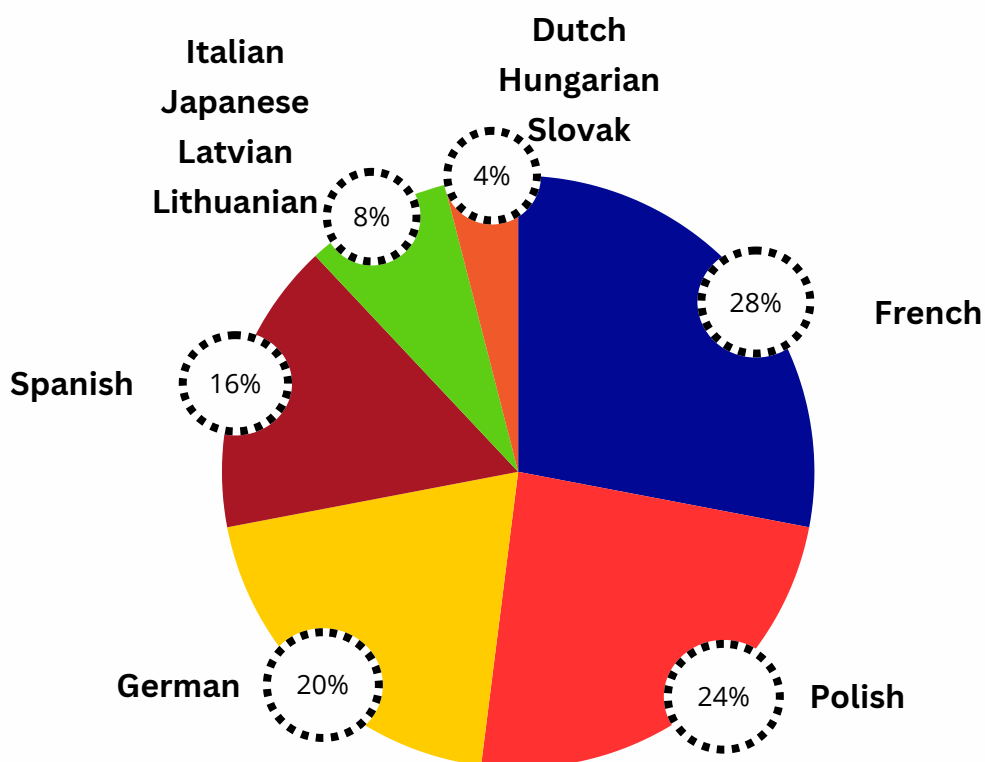


Fig 4 - The most common International Languages spoken or available across companies in Carlow

42.1% of companies advised us that they believed International languages were important to them in conducting business outside of Ireland, while **35.5%** disagreed.

The recruitment of staff with International languages was not deemed to be important for **43.4%** of companies, while **30.3%** of companies believed that it is of importance to them and their future plans. However **43.7%** of companies advised they would be interested in supporting their staff in learning International languages.

43.7% of Companies said they would be interested in supporting their staff in learning International Languages





Support & Advice

Whether you are already operating in International Markets or investigating the potential to expand into foreign markets, there is advice and support there to assist you. Some areas to get support include:

The Chamber of Commerce is an Independent Organisation and Irelands Largest Business network .



County Carlow Chamber
Advancing business together

Supporting, advising & connecting companies, bringing together firms to build new relationships, share best practice and foster new opportunities.

- Advice
- Networking
- Connections
- Export Documentation (Certs of Origin, ATA Carnet*)

www.carlowchamber.com



Enterprise Ireland

Enterprise Ireland is the Irish government's enterprise development agency.

They invest in and support the development of Irish-owned companies on their journey to achieving greater scale and to become global leaders in their field.

- Funding
- Advice
- Development Supports

Across a range of sectors, business types and areas

www.enterprise-ireland.com

[*] ATA Carnet are in Ireland are processed through the Dublin Chamber and Cork Chamber. County Carlow Chamber is authorised by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and Chambers Ireland to issue and certify export documentation including Certificates of Origin (EU Certs, Arab/Irish Certs), Invoices, Certificates of Analysis, Packing Slips, Certificates of Incorporation, Memorandum and Articles of Association, Company Reports etc.



Support & Advice



Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office



The Local Enterprise Office provides advice, information and support to you in starting up or growing your business. With 31 dedicated teams across the Local Authority network in Ireland.

- Funding
- Advice
- Development Supports

Across a range of sectors, business types and areas

www.localenterprise.ie/Carlow

Getting started with International Trade can be an exciting but complex process. In the first instance take the time to speak to your local Chamber and the other local agencies who can advise and support you in a range of areas including:

- Understanding the basics, tariffs, trade agreements, customs regulations
- Market Research
- Building your network
- Legal and Regulatory Compliance
- Financing
- Logistics & Supply Chains
- Documentation
- Risk management
- Cultural Awareness
- Keeping informed

County Carlow Chamber supports the

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





County Carlow Chamber

Advancing business together

Gateway Business Centre
Athy Road
Carlow
R93 C7P6

www.carlowchamber.com

