

Blue Print Service: Market Study 3.0

During the process of deciding whether or not to enter a new market, as well as choosing the right export market for a given product or service, companies rely on market research reports and market studies to determine their commercial strategy. These studies regularly tend to be extensive texts with conventional information that offers generic business opportunities and little-to-none visuals.

Although the information provided by these reports is fairly useful, it can be overwhelming for companies. In other words, due to their vast amount of information, they do not answer the important questions of what to do and how to do it, and end up not being triggering enough. Because of this, there is no call to action and the result could be that Dutch companies decide not to mobilize their resources and pursue new opportunities. Also, these type of reports by larger, internationally renowned consultants, are also too expensive for SME's.

Experience shows Dutch SMEs prefer to-the-point, opportunity-based, pragmatic, “pay for what we can use” studies. Therefore, ‘Market Study 3.0’ has been designed to properly address market developments, trends and challenges, through concise, creative and resourceful means, and transform this information into clear business opportunities for Dutch companies.

Therefore NLinBusiness has developed this blue print for effective and cost efficient market reports for SMEs. Entrepreneurs can use this blue print to define their requirements for a market report, and make sure that they get the right information in a way that is useful for them

The study should be written in a descriptive and no-nonsense way, and should include visuals or infographics from which the total content can be comprehended. This new way of presenting information and results will make the study more attractive and prevent the study from being an overload of information. It has also been demonstrated that it will motivate the reader (e.g. Dutch exporters and entrepreneurs) to act upon the identified opportunities in a more consistent and effective manner.

Given the current Covid-19 pandemic, and the economic changes it has caused worldwide, Dutch exporters will not be able to travel to other countries in their habitual way and this has led them to actively map and compare new markets to define their long-term global commercial strategy. **A ‘Market Study 3.0’ generated by the service providers will act as an on-the-ground guide well before a company has set foot on another country and will portray the most relevant sector opportunities for all types of companies.**



Objectives and content of Market Study 3.0

The most important objectives for a Market Study 3.0 regularly are:

- a. Effectively synthesize all research information in order to properly map all relevant aspects of a given market/(sector(s)).
- b. Use this mapping to make business opportunities as tangible as possible for the specific client.
- c. Define a clear roadmap to seize the relevant market opportunities.

Five Steps to create your table of content in Market Study 3.0:

1. Market overview:

- Each study should include contextualization and illustration of the current status of the chosen country/sector(s). This section should focus on the overall opportunity of working in, or investing in, the given country/sector(s). It should be accompanied by key facts, comparative and absolute advantages, relevant ratings/ rankings, consumer profile, ease of doing business, GDP/sectorial growth percentages, compound annual sales, medium and long-term estimations, etc.
- Additionally, the study should include research focused on recent developments, trends, challenges and critical success factors that can occur in the chosen market. This section should include relevant mergers and acquisitions, trending initiatives/platforms, prolonging challenges (seen as opportunities for Dutch companies), success cases, etc.

2. Market structure:

- The study must include an elaborate mapping of sales and distribution channels for products and services in the chosen sector(s).
- Selecting the most interesting product and service groups, as well as a list of the most important actors/potential clients in the selected product-market combination (PMC) is key. These two sections should include the geographical location of product/service providers for the chosen sectors(s), list of top companies, their recent YoY sales, market share, etc., and national/sectorial medium and long-term growth estimations.

3. Market supply & demand:

- An overview of import development (main categories) is also highly recommended. This section should include national/sectorial export/import, overview of different categories to be studied, import per category comparison, etc.
- One of the most important additions is research on what the added value of Dutch companies (specifically SMEs), active in the chosen sector(s), can be in a given country. This section should focus on matching Dutch exports with import trends in the given country.

4. Market regulations & requirements:

- The study should also comprise research into legislation regarding import, import duties and registration processes of different product groups in a given country. This section should include the complete import regime process for a given country (regulations and requirements), relevant export/import institutions, current applicable FTAs, commercial relationship between The Netherlands and the chosen country.
- Research on commercial best practices should also be added to the study.

5. Moving forward:

- Advice on how to materialize export opportunities and generate sales (tips and tricks for market entry) is very well seen by clients. This section should cross-reference each chosen category with its key facts, demands and opportunities for Dutch companies. In addition, it should also include advice from experts on how to seize existing potential through insights (interviews).
- It is important to present opportunities resulting from the conducted research, including a roadmap to realize seizing these opportunities. In addition to the previously mentioned information, this section can also include a list of leading national/sector-related importers and distributors that will help Dutch companies materialize business opportunities. The scope of a study could be extended and should be mutually agreed upon with the client. The activities could also include extensive quantitative questionnaires or comparative market research. However, it is recommended to look for the right balance between the previously defined content and more challenging information.

Promotion

The wish to further explore a foreign market - combined with the need for valuable insights into the market characteristics and possibilities - should be translated into a winning proposal for a Market Study 3.0. The service provider will create a demand for this service by presenting its experience and track-record, and emphasizing the added value for SME companies:

- Tailor-made: the study does not include general information provided by other service providers. Instead, it solely focuses on in-depth information requested and obtained for the client.
- Creative (visual impact): the final document (visual presentation or infographics) stands out and can be easily differentiated from other text-based studies.
- Clear: the graphic design will prevent the study from being an overload of information, will help the reader absorb the content, and has a clear call to action.
- Opportunity-based: the study is carried out entirely with the objective to identify opportunities and provide a clear plan of action.
 - Value for money – the costs should be affordable for small en medium sized companies.

Variable	Traditional Market Study	Market Study 3.0
Target group	Companies of all sizes	SMEs
Size	Extensive (50+ pages)	Concise
Wording	Generic	Comprehensive
Teamwork	Individual	Collaborative (multidisciplinary)
Appearance	Text-based	Visual (creative/infographics)
Type of information	Conventional (traditional information)	Resourceful (interviews/quotes)
Usage	Exclusive (internal use)	Sharable
Pricing	Overpriced	Affordable (valuable)

Tips & Tricks for the Executing Team of Consultants

The service provider should prepare the responsible consultant optimally. Hereafter some of the most important recommendations from colleagues around the world will be presented.

- Constant communication with the client, to identify core interests, information needs, objectives and responsibilities.
- Always start by understanding and analyzing the “Dutch added value” and only then try to match it with the possibilities in the target market. This way, generic reports and opportunities will be avoided.
- Resourceful identification of quantitative and qualitative material to develop the research framework. This includes, but is not limited to: government institutions, international organizations (UN, WB, IMF, WTO, among others), companies relevant to the chosen sector(s), legal entities (and laws), and academic and economic research conducted by trustworthy entities.
- Brainstorm which of the information is most relevant to the study and strategize how you would like to see it laid down throughout the study.
- Grouping of related information, figures, images by categories. This will help the researcher to have a clear vision of the overall study, as well as at a later stage when infographics are being generated.
- Use different types of graphics (maps, company logos, bars, pies, lines, etc.) as to ensure that the document is innovative and stands out.

When transforming text-based information into visuals, remember to focus on the most vivid or striking information that can be easily transferred into a graph, map, etc. (aka. country GDP comparisons, sector rankings, etc.).

- Use strong, bold colors to make your visuals stand out.

- If using company logos (e.g. for showing key-actors in a sector), group them all under the same color; this will prevent having too many colors mixed together and can make a specific listing (raking, etc.) stand out.
- Avoid using pictures that may have copyright. There are various webpages that offer free pictures.
- Focus on comparing the studied market with regional and global counterparts, as to properly determine strengths (potential) and weaknesses (challenges). The study should identify positive indicators; however, challenges will also allow the researcher to identify opportunities for Dutch companies in the chosen market. Interviews should be conducted to assure that the information used is unique, current and relevant to the study.
- Double check all facts and figures, such as currencies, as numbers vary.
- Save all sources used throughout the study in a separate folder, as to verify them if needed.
- Challenge yourself to constantly follow and interpret political and economic developments, forecast economic trends, and understand country specific regulations and business practices.

Dont's:

- Don't assume country's business cultures are the same.
- Don't focus your research on a limited number of sources.
- Don't rely solely on internet-based information; academic publications are a great source of information.
- Don't use unreliable sources, such as Wikipedia, as to avoid fake news.
- Don't use outdated information; try to focus your research on the most recent year(s).
- Don't focus research on only one type of company in a given sector, as it will segregate important information available from other sub-sectors.
- Don't interview non-essential employees from a given company, as sometimes their words cannot be used as official statements.
- Don't leave the interview process for the end of the project, as it can take a while to be conducted.

