

## INTERNATIONALISATION OF SMES BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

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# FOUNDATION “VENTSPILS HIGH TECHNOLOGY PARK” (VHTP), LATVIA

### Support program Export Express

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This is an internationalisation support project to SMEs, based in VHTP. Export Express was the latest implemented project by VHTP.

Export Express program was Estonia-Latvia cross-border cooperation project, where VHTP was the lead partner. See project webpage: <https://www.exportexpress.eu/> Together with other project partners – Gateway & Partners (the leading export consulting agency in Latvia) and business support organizations from Latvia and Estonia (Valmiera Development Agency, Tartu Science Park and Parnu Development Agency), VHTP implemented the support program to help start-ups/ scale-ups to start exporting and get first export leads or deals. That was 1 year support program which was implemented during 2018 – 2019. The target group were start-ups/ scale-ups with sales in the local market and with decent export-readiness, but with no or limited experience in export. 29 SMEs were taken on board of Export Express program. There was a preparatory phase of 5 months with 3 bootcamps (topics - business modeling; resource and process management & scaling; marketing, sales; and activities of speed-mentoring and site visits of experienced exporters) and mentoring between the bootcamps. Afterwards the trade missions to Scandinavian countries were organized. After the trade missions the follow-up consultative support in communication with potential export partners was ensures, as well as the final bootcamp on fundraising was organized. The program was finalized by final event where SMEs pitched their development and export progress, as well as successful exporters (start-ups) shared their experience.

The program was completed by around 20-25 companies and 5-7 SMEs got the first export leads/ deals, but other SMEs – knowledge, network and boosted motivation. High level of engagement of the participating SMEs testified of the relevance of the project activities to them. We had a chance to test Export Express approach – cooperation with companies in export development on a longer term – preparatory phase + trade missions + follow-up. The target group (type of the selected SMEs) and approach on overall seemed the right fit. Some lessons learned for improving the approach.

For more information on Support program Export Express, Foundation Ventspils High Technology Park (VHTP)

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 <https://www.vatp.lv/en/>

 [info@vatp.lv](mailto:info@vatp.lv)

 +371 63664934

